

Values, Lifestyle, and Discipleship: Session 4

By Bob Kraning

Bob Kraning:

Let's begin. We have gathered people on the bleachers. Undoubtedly with Jill not here today, that's made a difference.

Let's just take a minute this morning. Let me just tell you that I have enjoyed being with you the four days, and I know some of you have been with me every day, and I just have enjoyed being here. And hopefully maybe one thing we've done or said or shared has stirred your thinking in some area that may just be helpful to you in kind of our pursuit and our pilgrimage and our journey together. I think we're kind of all in process. I know I am.

And there are times when you feel like you've whipped a thing and find yourself six months later right back in the same place again. And I think that's kind of what the life is all about. I have often used a little illustration. When I was a kid, the neighbor of my grandfather raised bird dogs. As a boy, I used to hunt a great deal, particularly pheasant and quail, and hunted a lot.

During my high school years. I hunted a lot with a good bird dog. And if any of you guys have ever hunted, if you've watched a really good dog work, it's a beautiful thing to watch an Irish setter, which is what we had beautiful red dog with a lot of feathers and a beautiful tail. And they're just beautiful to watch. And when this guy would raise, he raised pups and trained them and then sold them to Hunt.

And in litters. It's very common in a litter of six or eight puppies of hybrid stock to get one pup that has something wrong with it. And very often it's the prettiest pup in the litter. And nobody can explain that, but they'll have. And what is most common is a bird dog with a rabbit nose, and nobody really knows why.

Like, they'll go out in the field and they'll hunt, and that's all instinctive with them. They're hunting and the scent is all instinctive with them. And you'll get one who every time he crosses where a cotton tail rabbit went through in the last hour or two, he picks up that scent and he immediately tracks it and everything changes. It's the funniest thing you've ever seen. You see this beautiful stately Irish Setter with this very upright position as he sweeps through the field, very quiet.

The minute he hits that rabbit scent, he slinks like he goes into a Beagle stance. He gets very low to the ground and he starts howling. And it's totally contrary to everything you know about bird dogs. And he'll just all of a sudden catch that scent and he'll just hear "woof woof!" And he's gone. I mean, he just takes off and he'll follow that track till he runs out of it around a brush pile or wherever it is.

And I've watched my granddad and this other gentleman, Mr. Spidell, I used to watch them, and they'd go out and find that dog, bring him back, put him on the track. He'd start again and he'll do it again. And after they've worked with him for a month or two, you usually cannot break them. Like you just can't break them. And finally they sell them for pets or give them away.

And I think two things intrigued me about that little illustration just about our lives. One is it seems to me that Christian growth is basically the distance between rabbit tracks. You just think in your own life how often you get yourself centered on your goal and what you're really going after. And you really know, I want to do this and I want to please the Lord, and I want to be this. And I'm going to spend time in the word, and I'm going to do all of these things that everybody told me is right.

And then something happens in your life and you just track off into oblivion for a period of time in one area. Not your whole life could be your whole life, but usually it's an area and we just track out into oblivion. And when we're brand new Christians, like in 1 John, where it talks about us being babies, we don't even know we're in the brush. Have you ever had that happen? You're just kind of out there and, you know, you're getting scratched, but you don't even know why somebody has to come out to you and say, excuse me, you're in the brush.

You go, oh, and they take you back. See, as we get into the center section of one John, where he talks about the young men that are in the process of overcoming the evil one, we get a little more maturity to us. We're aware of the brush, and when we get out there, we have a desire to get back. And the Holy Spirit will often use many, many things. Holy Spirit can use a Torrey conference can use somebody in a Torrey conference to just pinpoint an area of our lives.

And immediately the Spirit of God creates a need in our thinking, and it's us coming back from the brush. That's exactly what it is. And then we get our goal and we get on track again. And to

me, the growth process is the distance between those track offs. It's the distance between rabbit tracks.

And we get a little discouraged sometimes in Christian life. If you look back, if you've been a Christian a little while, if you look back, if you can see a process, you get encouraged. You may be just really out of it right now because of something that's happened. But when you look back, you see that it used to be two steps and zoom, and now it's five steps and zoom. You see that's a growth process, and that's what growing is all about.

And that's really in my mind, what a conference like this is all about. We have had an incredible amount of material that's come into your ear-gate in these last three or four days, and it isn't over yet. And obviously, you cannot assimilate all that material. Nobody can. But if you can pick out something that just gets you out of the brush in one area, that's the process that we're in.

And to me, that's what I hope I have done for maybe one or two people is just that one thing they've pulled in and they say that is going to be part of me. I'm going to move in that area of my life. And that's what we're all about. It's interesting. I sit at Forest home in the summer for nine weeks of family camp.

I hear three speakers a day. And that's just a lot of people doing a lot of things. We have some of the very best guys in the United States to come to Forest Home to speak, and they very often do what they consider their best series. So we're really hearing the best of the best very often. And yet it's funny as I listen to all that just now and then somebody really gets my ear and just

something in my life changes because a guy said something that I had never thought about that way before.

I hear very little that's new, but I hear things that are stated in a way I can get a handle on. And I guess that's what we're all kind of all about as we're in process. Let me ask you a couple of questions. Do you remember our definition for a value?

Without looking it up, I see people going, anybody remember? Just basically, you don't have to quote it. Just give me an idea. Anybody speak up? What do we call it?

How do we define a value?

Wonderful. Come on. Somebody remembers. Yes.

Student:

[Inaudible]

Bob Kraning:

Okay. Okay. It's a characteristic we said that demonstrates. And that's what you say. It's an action that we believe.

It's a characteristic that demonstrates, see, how I have decided to use my life? That's what the value is. And you remember the second day we tried to take some values and put them up there?

We took things like the Biola code and put it up there.

And we discussed it not as to its content, but as our integrity in signing it. See, our integrity is our value system. And I want to tell you something. I talked to two guys that are probably in here this morning. We discussed the whole concept of integrity, which they felt is not all that important in many areas of life.

I want to say something. Without integrity, everything in the world is shot. My friendship with you depends on your integrity and my integrity. My marriage with my wife depends on her integrity and my integrity. And if I'm not interested in integrity, then I've missed the whole point because we can't have much of a relationship if integrity has blown out the window.

So that's critical as we set our value standards. Then yesterday we talked about discipleship, and we're using this little section of one, Thessalonians chapter five. We began yesterday, verse twelve, and we wanted to look at four things. We looked at two of them yesterday. We talked about the concept of the disciple and leadership.

How do we handle leadership? Had two great conversations yesterday with some people that were here just talking about the need to understand leadership and how to respond to it. And I think it's very important. Then we talked about the weaker brother. We talked about how do we define the weaker brother?

How do we see that ultimately came to a conclusion that we are all weaker brothers and sisters, and we are all stronger brothers and sisters, because as we meet people and work with people, we discover a weakness in their life where we have a strength, we're to Minister to that weakness in

our strength. They discover weaknesses in us in areas where they have strengths and they Minister to us. And that's the concept of the body and the whole relationship. Now today we want to look at two other areas very briefly to kind of finish. We want to look at one, the disciple and resentment or anger.

And then we want to look at the disciple and how he lives, or I like to think how he celebrates his faith. And I just want to try to talk about those two things for a little while this morning. First of all, disciple and anger, we have some very pointed things in scripture. One that probably comes to my mind. The quickest is, don't let the sun go down upon your wrath.

How do we handle anger? Let's read just a word in here about it. Let me just start where we began yesterday and read all of this. And then we'll stop on that particular part, verse twelve, chapter five. 1 Thessalonians we request then of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, those who have charge over you in the Lord, that's our leaders and admonish you or give you instruction and our responsibility.

Remember that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live at peace with one another. Then we moved into the second little section. We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly. We talked about holding one another accountable, encourage the fainthearted and help the weak.

Be patient with all men. Then, in verse 15, we come to this little phrase, see that no one repays another with evil for evil, but all we seek after that which is good for one another and for all

men, see that no one repays another with evil for evil. Now in the day. And this was written, just keep in mind, there were Greeks in the country who loved paganism. There were Jews who were really locked into legalism Christians were in the process of being driven out.

They were persecuted in many ways. And there were lots and lots of hassles. There were lots of things happening that could very quickly and very easily create resentment in the heart of the Christians in Thessalonica and as Paul writes, he said, Remember, do not repay someone else evil for evil, but rather do those things that are good for all men. In Romans, Chapter 14, there's a neat little verse, and Philip does a nice thing with that verse, and it's about 21, I think. And Philip says this.

He said, Let us then concentrate on those things which make for harmony and on the growth of one another's character. That is a great verse. Let's together concentrate on the things which make for harmony. Let me tell you something. You basically today, as you sit in this room, you are basically a person who is a thankful person or you are basically a person who is a critical person.

You met people who are always critical. Lee just talked about this. And to me, as we get older and when you meet people that are now grandmas and grandpas up in their 70s, you very quickly get a feel around them. Whether they're basically appreciative people and thankful people or critical people. The older we get, the more evident it becomes, because the more set we become in our ways.

You get around people in their 70s or in their 80s, if they are basically critical, you will not have five sentences to them until that will come out. They will have something negative to say about somebody. But it's funny how that all starts way down here. We become resentful kinds of people. We become retaliatory kinds of people.

We can retaliate in many ways. You don't have to retaliate with a fist fight. We can retaliate with words. We can retaliate with boxes. You ever talk to people and you ask them, maybe somebody knew you just met on campus?

You go up to somebody and say, did you meet so and so they go, oh, yeah, what did you think? Well, I thought so and so and so and so, however, and then they box them. They immediately are critical of them in some area, and they box them. They put them in a category and they pigeonhole them in. And he's saying to us, hey, don't get in.

That kind of a habit. Don't be resentful and don't be angry. God has an interesting thing. He tends to do things that are protective of us. You ever discovered how much anger gets to you when you're angry at somebody?

You ever had somebody you really got ticked at, and you get into a whole thing of rehearsing speeches. You ever done that? I have driven down the freeway rehearsing a speech that I'm going to say to this person when I see them and I go over it out loud in my car.

And the further I go, the more. I get upset. I get really hostile. And by the time I finish that speech, I'm angry. And I'm going to say, I'm going to say it today.

Then you don't. You see them and you see them coming and you think, Hi, how's it going? Hey, how are you? I'm fine. It's neat.

And you walk by and you go, one of these days I'm going to say it. And you continue to do that. And boy, it wells up in you. It eats up your insides. It hurts you.

It takes away your whole spiritual tone toward God. And then the day comes when you get up your courage. I'll never forget several years ago, a guy that I worked with, and he and I just are two different individuals. And I got to the point where he drove me nuts. And I finally just thought to myself, this guy is going to drive me crazy if I don't go tell him that he bugs me.

And we got to get this thing settled. And I rehearsed and rehearsed and I did this for like three weeks. And I was really upset. And finally the day I went in to see him, I was like this. I walked in and I said, I've got to talk to you.

He said, hey, sit down, sit down. He lose as a cat. He's got a cup of coffee on his desk, makes a big swig. Sit down. And I go.

And I sat down. He said, well, some coffee. I said, no, I don't want coffee. I said, I got to tell you something. And I started in on him and I got about ten sentences.

And just this shocked look came over his face. And I'll never forget it. He looked at me and he said, I had no idea. And suddenly you think I've been hot about this for three weeks. I've got high blood pressure and heart trouble over this thing.

And he didn't even know it. Here. He's been having a ball. He's been loving life. You know, it's funny how God tells us, hey, don't let the sun go down on your wrath.

Little promise my wife and I made to one another that we would never go to bed angry at one another. We've almost done that. Not quite. We were just talking. We were laughing about that the other night.

We were talking about I think there have been maybe in our 24 years, there have been that we could recall. There have been four times when we went to bed mad at each other and laid back to back. That's an awful feeling. And, you know, if you just said, all I would have to say is, honey, and the tears would come, oh, honey, I'm sorry. And it would be over just like that.

And you're back to death. And you're going, if she says it, I'll forgive her. And she's saying, if he says it, I'll forgive him. And it's a terrible thing, and God knew that. But way beyond that, God knows the harm that comes in the family of God.

When God's people begin to get even with one another. Let me give you a great example. My greatest example. I used to speak and I still go once in a while, but I used to speak I did about

four years in a row in Orange City, Iowa, the first time I ever went there. I flew back to Orange City and I had never gone there in my life.

I had the program in my little leather case I carry I had my program and flying on the plane, I'm looking at this thing I'm going to it's called the Sulan Sunday School Association Rally. And I'm flying on this Ozark Airlines, thinking, Why am I doing this? Looking at this title, thinking, can this be good? And I went back there and walked in the opening night. I walked in at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, Dutch Reform School, and walked into gymnasium.

And there were probably 2600 people in the gym from all over that part of the country for this big deal they hold once a year. And the overnight I preached. And it was a very exciting crowd, really fun. I had a great evening and I spoke. And when I got done, I walked down off of the stage in this big high stage in the gym.

And I walked down off the stage and some people came up. I didn't know anybody in the place other than the person I had corresponded with before I went. And this group came down very friendly people, all Dutch people, and they're all Van Hasselt and Van Dortrix and all of those kind of people. So all these Vans came down to talk to me and we're all standing around. There are probably ten or twelve of us, and we're just getting acquainted and saying they were glad I had come.

And we're talking and they were discussing my clothes back in the it was about eight or nine years ago, and our styles were a little more radical out here than they were in the Midwest. It's

always like that, but it was worse than so anyway, we were talking about that and laughing and just having fun. And all of a sudden right through the middle of them came this man. He was 63 years old, I found out later. Came right straight into the group, walked right straight up to me and took his hands and locked them around the back of my neck.

I have never had that happen before. And it startled me like he just came up and he went boom. And he's got my head right there. And I'm going, I'm just trying to move back because I was just very startled by the thing. And he said very quickly, he said, young man, he said, you don't know me and I don't know you.

And it isn't important. I have something terribly important to do tonight, and I need you to pray for me. And he uncrossed his hands and he was gone. He never gave me a chance to say, who are you? I will.

I won't. I don't care nothing. And he was out the door and I said to these other people and they're all related. I said, do you know that guy? And these people all said, We've never seen him before.

Well, it turned out he was in South Dakota and had come down and was staying in a hotel there. I went to bed that night and boy, as I got in bed that night, I was really puzzled. And I thought, who is that guy? Just in my mind. And I thought, Will I ever see him again?

And that night, as I lay in bed, before I went to sleep, I prayed for him. I said, God, I don't know who the guy is. I don't know what he's doing. I don't know where he went. But whatever it is, help them and help us to see each other again.

I want to know what's going on. My curiosity was up. Well, the next night I got to the gym and I had to sit. When I sat on the platform while the other program was going on, they had chairs way back and you couldn't see because of the high stage, I couldn't see the front four or five rows. So when I walked up to the podium, I laid my stuff out.

As I glanced down on the front row, is this guy, obviously his wife, another woman, another man, and an empty chair. And as he sees me looking at him, this huge smile comes over his face and he points at this other guy and he reaches down, he goes like that, all right. And I have no idea. I just went, hey, neat. I have no idea what's going on.

I'm way up on this stage and I just preached to keep my mind on my notes. I was so intent on what this whole thing was all about. Well, the minute the meeting was over, they were there wanting to know if I could have coffee with them. And we went and had coffee and they told me the most incredible story I ever listened to. And they told it in tears.

These two guys grew up as boyhood friends, lived very close to each other all through. From the time they were like two years old all the way up and had been very close, personal friends, 20 out. You got to think this through. This is crazy. 23 years before I was there, not days, not weeks, not months.

23 years before I was there, the two of them had attempted to buy the same piece of property. The one guy had an offer in on it. The other guy came in and slipped the realtor a few Bucks and bought it out from under him. It was speculating property in a swamp where an interstate highway was going to go through. And for 23 years, these two guys had never spoken to each other.

They went to the same Church. They served on the board of that Church four different times. They sat right across from each other on opposite sides of the Church every Sunday in the same seat. And for 23 years, never spoke over that piece of property. The night before, I had not even spoken on forgiveness.

But somehow the spirit of God nailed that guy. And he left that building that night. He was staying in a hotel right there in Orange City. A little hotel. He got in his car and drove 97 miles to that guy's house and went to the door a little after midnight and knocked on the door.

And when the guy flipped on the porch light, opened the door and said, what are you doing here? And this guy said, My God, I'm sorry. And the other guy just jumped out on the porch and grabbed him. And then they sat in the living room until three in the morning and discussed their ignorance. And when we sat in the restaurant that night, these two guys shared with me in tears all of the damage that they had done to the Church of Jesus Christ in 23 years.

Everybody in the community knew about it. Everybody in the Church knew about it. It was the joke to every pagan in South Dakota was that these two wonderful Christian men do not speak. And everybody knows in a small community like that. And yet one little phrase, four words, My God, I'm sorry.

And it's all repaired. Is that incredible? Not the damage they've done, but the relationship. You want to hear the irony of the story?

The interstate never went through.

That's the irony of the story. That property never appreciated diddly. It's still a swamp.

Let me tell you, that's the most extreme story in all of my years in the Ministry, of stupidity, in that area. But let me tell you something I believe he's saying to us, if you've got anything against anybody, go get it squared. Maybe you're bugged at somebody on campus. You've been gone for four or five weeks. You've just come back, you've had a little riff with somebody.

Maybe it's over a relationship. Maybe it's over a friendship. Maybe it's over a roommate. Maybe it's over an issue that happened on the campus, off the campus. Maybe it's in the family.

He's saying, hey, do you want to be a disciple? You have a responsibility. You know what your responsibility is? To concentrate on the things which make for harmony and on the growth of one another's character. And that has to do with forgiveness.

Remember Matthew five when it's approaching that Lord's Prayer section? He's talking about you're on your way to the altar with your sacrifice. Gives us an old Testament concept. And suddenly in the midst of your walk down the aisle to the altar, you remember, and the interesting translation there is you have Aude against your brother, or it could just as easily go the way your brother has ought against you. He said, what's your responsibility?

Lay your sacrifice down. Go make it right with your brother, then come and offer up your sacrifice. God's not interested in the stench of your smoke when it's for the purpose of appeasement the thing we talked about the opening morning. God wants your obedience and God wants you to move into these areas of forgiveness. Hey, I just want to encourage you.

If you have anything against anybody, you think, Well, I am bugged at them, but they don't even know it. So it's not important. Oh, yes, it is. It's important to you. I had a Cook chef on my staff.

He's a full fledged chef, been at Forest Home for 17 years. And about three weeks ago I was walking through the dining room just on a weekday. He came out of the kitchen. He said, I have to see you, and Don. And I sat down at the table and big tears rolled down his face and he said, I owe you an apology.

He said, I said something about you eleven months ago that wasn't true. And I want to ask you forgiveness. I never knew it happened. It never affected me in any way, but it affected him. And we just had a neat time talking about our friendship.

If you got something against somebody, go make it right. One, it's healthy. Two, it's scriptural. And if you're going to be a disciple, you've got to handle your resentment. You've got to handle those little things that crop up and we got to keep the body together. Those little anger shots are the schisms that come into relationships.

If you don't handle your anger well, you will have a tough time being married, let me tell you, because you just find over and over you've got to say I'm sorry. It's just part of the whole thing. You bring two imperfect people into an impossible situation and neither of them are willing to say, I'm sorry you got trouble, so you better learn it and learn it now. If you got anything gets to anybody, I encourage you today before the day is over, go make it right, handle your resentment, get it out of your system and get rid of them, whether they know or whether they don't know. The point is, you know, and that's really where it all comes down.

Okay. Now we come into this last little section and this is to me the exciting section of this whole thing. Very familiar verses the fourth thing that we want to talk about briefly. We talked about the disciple and leadership, the disciple and the weaker brother, the disciple and resentment and how we handle it. And then the disciple and his faith.

How does he handle his faith? And I love this little section. Rejoice always or rejoice evermore pray without ceasing in everything. Give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Well, that is just a great little thing.

He's saying to us, hey, get excited about your faith. That's what he's really saying. Celebrate your faith. I am sure on a campus like Biola, there are people here that are really excited about their faith. There are other people who are really not very excited.

They're kind of bug with the whole thing.

Being an old Christian school person, I became aware very quickly. And particularly during my rebellious year, I became very aware of all of the people who skip everything spiritual that happens. There's a whole segment on every Christian campus that's like that. Because they're really not interested in their faith. They're bugged with anything that restricts them a little bit.

They're bugged with anything that pushes them in their faith because they're not excited about it. They're not even interested in their faith. They're interested in their own selfish little world, and they just do their thing, and that's their mentality, and that's how they function. He's saying, hey, Rejoice, get excited about your faith. Celebrate it.

Become a fan of your faith, if you please. I just think that's super. I'm a big sports nut. I enjoy sports. I last night drove home and then drove to Victorville last night to watch my son's team that he's coaching this year wrestle up at Victorville last night. We had a shot at the League Championship and got beat last night 35 to 33. And it was a spectacular evening. It was really exciting and just had a great time. I love that.

I love to see it and I love to do it. And I think the thing that intrigues me the most in watching sporting events, professional events, is the fans that are there now. There are some weird fans, but there are some great fans and people classify them. I was in a playoff game that the Dodgers were in and the Western playoffs when Ron Cey hit a home run and a guy right in front of us in the upper deck, way up high at Dodger Stadium through a brand new I mean, he had had it two months. He said, camel hair coat.

They're not cheap, folks. He whipped that baby right off the upper deck, stay at home run. And he went all right. And he threw his coat right all over the deck and it went all the way downstairs. He got an elevator and went down and somebody ripped it off.

He never got it back. He came back up about 30 minutes later and he came in and he came down and sat down, and everybody around him said, get you coat? Did you get your coach? He said, no. He was just kind of zombie. He said, no, somebody stole it.

And I loved the conversation around us. Nobody said. I didn't hear one person say, that guy's an idiot. That guy's crazy. I heard people saying, what a fan.

Now there is a Dodger fan. People they were taking with him. They said that guys something. He just sacrificed his camel hair and went right over the deck and they thought it was great. Have you ever discovered in the Christian faith, if you ever get your bod and your whole lifestyle up to normal, everybody thinks you're nuts.

You know why? Because we live so pick and subnormal that we get up to normal. Everybody thinks we're abnormal. That's how it is. People get excited about their faith and say, we're not fans anymore.

We're immediately fanatics. Boy, he's become a fanatic. I talked to parents whose kids get excited about the Lord. We were, at Forest Home last summer I had a family that was there, and they were there basically because their daughter got them to come to a family camp, high school daughter. They sat down with me one day at lunch and I'll never forget it, the mother said, and they didn't know how to open up the conversation with me.

But the mother finally said, she said, she said, Bob, you've been around this a long time, right? I said, yeah, a little while. She said, Is it normal for a teenager to read their Bible every day? I said, well, in my experience, not as normal as it ought to be, but I said, Sometimes, yeah.

Is it normal to really want to go to Church twice on Sunday? I said, well, there are people who do that, few. She said, Would it be normal to do all of that and then want to be a part of a group that meets on campus that also does religious things? I said, Well, Yeah, I meet people like that. I said, they're a little fanatical.

But I said, I meet people like that that go to Church every now and then. It was so funny because they're desperately wanting to say, is what this thing as our daughter has, whatever this thing is, she's caught, is it normal or is she weird?

And we talked. We got into this conversation about what it means to be excited about your faith. And this is just a girl who had kind of wandered along in Church, suddenly got excited about the things of the Lord, began to read her Bible, make notes, begin to discover that she could put into practice what had said in there. And she got excited about her faith. Well, she started wanting to be where the Christian people were.

And it became more than once in a while. And all of a sudden the parents who go to Church on Easter and Christmas couldn't really understand, why do you suddenly do these things? Now he's saying to us, Celebrate your faith, get excited about you. Doesn't mean you have to blow people down. But be excited about your faith.

Talking about our faith ought to be just as normal as talking about golf or basketball or studies or dates or friendships. We ought to be able to talk about the Lord in our dating relationships. It ought to be as normal as any other conversation we have. It doesn't mean we have to only do that, but it certainly ought to be as normal as that. To just have a good conversation about God is not weird.

And yet, if you want to shut a group of Christians up, start one. Many times you can be talking about things that people are just going and you get on the Lord and everything gets incredibly quiet. People aren't quite sure what and they're a little embarrassed and they're concerned about so and so because he might be offended. Always intrigued with people that are concerned about offending those that don't know the Lord. Do you know the average pagan, I know it, doesn't know enough to be offended.

See, immature Christian that gets offended. It's not the pagan that gets offended. He doesn't know enough to be offended. He's got to get some knowledge before he can get offended. Get a little knowledge, then he can get offended.

But he said, hey, celebrate your faith. Get excited about your faith. Don't make it something drab. Don't make it something that happens on Sunday. Don't make it something that's just kind of part of Biola.

That's weird and awesome, isn't it? That's an awesome thing. When God is saying it's part of our lives, celebrate your faith. Then he says, Pray without ceasing. You know, one of the great things I discovered in my life, prayer is a privilege and not an obligation.

It's one of the greatest discoveries I ever made. When I became Christian, somebody told me I was supposed to pray. That's an obligation. Say, I am obligated to pray. It's like praying before meals.

Does that ever get kind of weird to you? It does to me because I don't really get my head into it. You go in a restaurant, you see all these people go. Every now and then when I'm with somebody, I'll say, what did you say? I'm always intrigued.

What'd you say? I asked my kid that one time we went in a restaurant. My little guy, he's 15 now, but I think he was about ten. We went in a restaurant and it was over at the river, and it was

really noisy, a lot of people, and it was really noisy. And so our food came and I said, hey, just say your own prayer.

And we all bowed our head. And when we finished, I said to my little guy, I said, What'd you say? He said, what? I said, What'd you say? He looked at me and said, I mean what I say?

I said, when you bowed your head closed your eyes, what'd you say. I'll never forget he goes.

He says nothing.

And I thought to myself, you know, I bet he's not alone. I bet he's not alone. It's not an eye exercise. It's a privilege to talk to God. And, boy, if you discover that in your life, it's really exciting because then it is you as just that little, I like the little clay man. I like that. Having the privilege to walk right into the presence of God and be able to talk to him. Mark Lee said this morning, he doesn't need my prayer. He'll survive without it. But, boy, I need to talk to him.

And he's saying, hey, you got an incredible privilege to talk to me. Make it a part of your lifestyle. If you've ever read I don't know if you've read the book on pray and hide or not. The great missionary, I was so intrigued with one little area where this other missionary, Martin, went to visit him, and he went to find out how this guy prayed because he started praying for a soul a day and two souls a day. And it got up into the numbers.

And these people were finding the Lord all kinds of things. And he thought, this guy has got some unique secret. And he went to stay with him for a couple of days. And all he was there for was to hear him pray. And the first night he was there, they went in and they crawled in bed, and he figured, I bet he prays here.

And so he's listening. And Hyde turns the light out and he thinks, oh, I'm not going to be able to see what position he's in. And then he hears Hyde go, Good night, God.

And the guy goes, he must pray in the morning. So the next morning he's awake waiting for Hyde to wake up because he's got to hear what Hyde does. Hyde wakes up, stretches, says, Good morning, God, rolls out a bit and heads for the bathroom. This guy's going, oh, Gee, I hope he doesn't pray in the bathroom.

And after about two days of this, this guy is really strapped. I mean, he can't figure out what's going on. And he finally gets hide. And he says, when do you pray? And Hyde said, all of the time for each situation, isn't that good?

And at night, he just simply said, Good night, God. And in the morning, he simply said, Good morning, God, and started another day with God. We tend to think about every three days we got to get to him, oh, God, forgive me for the last two days. He's a parachute God to us. It's like, I don't really need you right now, but hang in there because I may have to pull a cord, and I hope you open.

It's kind of how we function with God. God's saying, hey, it's a privilege. Walk before me regularly, talk to me, pray without ceasing. See, and to me that isn't walking around mumbling to yourself, it's an attitude of your heart. I'm in touch with God in my heart and in my lifestyle and what I am because I'm celebrating the faith and I'm excited about the faith because it changes people and it's an answer that's eternal and it's incredible.

And then he says in everything, give thanks. Why? Because this is the will of God for you. You all know the will of God. I hear people say, what is the will of God for my life?

The general will of God is that in everything you give thanks that you get yourself in a thankful spirit mode so God can work with you. I've often said I believe the least of all of God's problems.

The least of all of the problems is geography.

Getting us to the right location is the least of God's problem with me. It's getting my heart attuned to him. The geography of the will of God is a very simple thing for God. It's where my heart is that's difficult and where my head is that's difficult in everything give thanks. I like to think about that in this way.

He's saying to us in everything, not for everything. And I think sometimes that's different.

Sometimes a situation happens and you're not really in a position to say, God, thank you for this.

This is really neat. You know what I discovered? My first time I went through a back surgery.

I've been through two of them, but I had a couple of discs cut and that's the most incredible pain

I've ever gone through. I did not know. I'm a real chicken anyway and I just didn't know there was anything quite like that. And lying there in that bed those first three or four days was really agony and I just could not get myself to the point of saying, Gee, God, this is super, let's do it again. I guess I should have because we did it again, but I just wasn't in that frame of mind.

But in the midst of that two things in that hospital that I've never forgotten, one was to discover that in the midst of the pain and the hassle, I could say, God, thank you that you're mine and I'm yours. I'm not thankful for the situation, but I am grateful that you are mine and I am yours in the midst of the situation. And that was a great, great help to me at that particular point in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God for you. Let me give you these things. Just read them to you and I'm done.

If you're going to be a true disciple, it will cost you probably many things. I wrote down four. It'll cost you four things. It'll cost you your personal rebellion, it'll cost you your complacency. It will cost you any hostility that you have and it will cost you your independence.

If you're going to really be a disciple, you think about that rebellion, complacency, hostility and independence have no part in the life of a disciple for the loss of that he will replace it by coming in and directing our lives forgiving our sins, giving us his love for every circumstance and ultimately bring us complete to himself. Let me read those again. Some of you are writing frantically. He will direct our lives he will forgive our sins he will give us his love in every circumstance and he will bring us complete to himself. He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it under the day of Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you a question. Are you a Mickey Mantle in spring training or could you wear the pinstripes every day?

The guys that are big in major League baseball or professional basketball are the long term consistent performers. You look at any of the guys in major sports who have been around for eight or ten years and are good the Jerry West types, The Abdul-Jabbar types. Why are they there? Because they are consistent performers. See, the guy who performs in spring training but can't perform in the season he's a headliner.

He's not a disciple, he's a headliner. Make a headline split for the brush, see? And there's a lot of difference. I think God's looking for people that can wear the uniform year round for the rest of your life. That's what discipleship is all about.

And God offers us to fill in all the gaps if we're willing to make the exchange. I just want you to know that's not a bad exchange for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God, thanks just for the good time that your word shares with us. Encourage us. We're kind of on the dime right now. Help us to get off some of us are rolled in well, help us to just continue and not to get complacent or smug. If we got something to get somebody help us to get it right.

If prayer has been kind of a kind of a drudge thing for us, Help us to remember that prayer is communication is an expression of ourselves to you. It's not an impression on the people around

us. Helps to be able to express ourselves to you and God help us to respond to leadership, help us discover our place. Help us to understand prayer. Help us to be a fan of what you've done for us and we'll just thank you as we, with our value systems begin to function in the family of God, we are grateful that you give us the privilege in Christ's name.

Amen. Thank you. Bye.