

Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation: Part 2

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OK why don't we get going again?

Before I address the third question, I just wanted to just put a statement up. I was talking with Doug at the break and we could have the. Ok cool. There's an old, you can see this. There's an old. This is kind of a stodgy doctrinal statement, but it says something like this, but it has some real implication. It says that sanctification, that's the process of growth, recapitulates salvation. Well the word recapitulates means rehearses. And what, what I've been talking about here is that the same ground, the same psychological turf everything that happened at our salvation. That's only going to deepen in our growth and our sanctification.

It's not as if I am saved a certain way and then all of a sudden I'm different turf, but rather in salvation, I became aware of my sin and my badness. I became aware of my need. I fell in love with the cross. That's what happened to me at 19. And I began to open to the Spirit. I didn't know what that meant, I just wanted to open to him. Well, sanctification is it's not a different ground. That's that's not like this was God's work and now this is my work. And what these old stodgy reformed theologians wanted to say was sanctification only rehearses and more deepens all of this. And so that means that in the process of growth I'm going to be taken more deeply into my sin. At conversion, I became aware of this and I loved, I loved God in that. And so I became aware of that much of my bad and my need and oh I needed the gospel and I responded to Christ that was so cool.

And now what is growth? Growth is going to be taken into whole new places of my neediness. I'm going to be taken to a whole new places to see sin to an extent that I never could

have even imagined it. When I was 19 and this will open up my need for the cross. This will open up my need for the Spirit. God I don't want, I don't want to live the Christian life in the power of myself. God I just want you. I need you. And whatever obedience I do it's to open it relationally to him because I want that life now in myself.

So here's the third question. Well you know maybe before I give that just give you a statement that one of the ancient spiritual writers had said. This is Teresa Vavilov. She's a 16th century Carmelite nun. She was talking about this kind of idea and she said you know what, what we need to do then as believers, we need to learn to sit amongst our weeds. And I thought, well that's a strange, sit amongst our weeds. And she says, yeah. Our weeds, those are our sins and Christ he's you know he's the gardener, the fathers the vineyard, he's a vineyard keeper. And you know my tendency is when I see my weeds, you know I want to do? I want to pull it. and you know something is just going to grow right back and Theresa says no what we need to do is we need to learn, open to the cross, open that I am totally accepted in him. There is no condemnation on me. I want to learn to just sit there with him. This is I think the beginning of a move to a relational spiritual formation.

Is it God. I don't want to run. I've just become aware of something in my life. Yes God, I am not the husband I ought to be. God I don't want to start pulling weeds, I do want to start fixing myself, I don't want to start developing a plan for how to be a better husband. Lord I want to like you said I want to take your yoke and learn from you. In fact God I take what I am open for you to take me on a journey into just how bad a husband I am. Because I don't fear your condemnation. I don't, in fact I want you to take me on that journey because here's what I want to learn that apart from you I can do nothing. Yes I can have a better. Aristotle can have an okay relationship, but he can't have a relationship that is governed and led and filled by the Spirit.

That's our possibility, but that means my first move is not will dog gone it then let's get away a good regiment, I'll start reading some marriage books. Now I did that as a young believer. When I got married, Greta and I read like 10 marriage books right away. We were good little moralists and God said that's cool John, you're such a little boy. Come on, let's go.

And we read marriage books and we worked on, and that was all wonderful. And then the Lord began to open up deeper motivations throughout my life. And now I just want to learn from him. I want to open to him and yes there will be regimens then and there will be these projects I can do in reading, but I don't want to do it without him now. God I need you, and the Lord may have to take you and me on a journey as Willard says, "To kind of break our heart" so that we'll really believe in the deep, slowly, slowly, slowly. God I can't do this without the Spirit now. That's the journey where he has now the matured enter into him.

The third question, how do we get this way? How did we become Christian moralist? Well the first explanation we've already talked about, original sin. And I always told my psychologist, I taught it Rosemead school of psychology for 17 years now, and I always tell them you know it wasn't, it wasn't just early caregiver's that messed you up. It was most fundamentally original sin that is at the deed. We are born with inherited guilt and inherited shame. We're born covering, we're born hiding. This is this is the disposition of the heart. Something is going to have to break into that to relater that disposition. And I'll tell you I'll just hint and we'll talk about this next time, it will be the love of God.

The love of God is going to have to penetrate places of your bad, experiences of your vices so that you will finally believe God really loves me in my bad because we all say that theological but then we see something else come out in our life. And so one Christian

psychologist said that gave us many abilities being created in His image, but there was one ability he didn't give us and that was the ability to deal with our badness, we just don't know what to do with it. And you know there's nothing you can do, you can't fix that stuff you can only try to cover it by being a good person or to try to cover it by being a successful person or to be an important person. There's so many different ways to cover. Morality is just a pretty big one used in the history of the human race.

But I want to go to the next one. The next is I think secondary, but it's there. I want to add to this. The problem is that most of us I think were parented to be moralists. Now I don't want to dump on my parents. I love my parents. They came to the Lord in their 70s and my dad and I became close friends, died a few years ago. About 93 years old he would probably say I was his best friend. But here's how parents can add to this. The first one is parenting by guilt. No I wasn't parent this way. My wife was, because it was a different kind of parenting. This is what takes place. When the child does bad and the parent can't endure the child's badness. There's stuff you felt that way? I just ah get it back in there. Try to stuff it back in there. And if the parent becomes condemning and punitive. Here's the thing splits off relationally. The parents can't just kick the child. When the [inaudible] something's going to take place and that child that continues to go on. This is the rejecting parent who is teaching this child slowly, slowly, but ever in the deep that the parent cannot tolerate or love or discipline or correct the child in their bad.

I'm a supporter of corporal punishment, corporal discipline, but this is when the parent the child becomes aware very acutely. My parents can't handle this. They can't all my stuff. And what happens this is guilt parenting because it sends the child into hiding. It sends the child into a life. I've got to hide this from Mommy. Mommy I can't see this stuff. And either now they're going to spend the life trying so hard to be good. In fact the result will be the child. If you were a

parent this way then you are a little monkey on your back. And that is that you could never be good enough to please your parents and you may come to believe in your deep that no one can love your bad because your parents couldn't experience that and love you right into that stuff. And so this child is I think this is really the psychological explanation for a lot of high achievers. They can never do enough, they're totally driven. They are totally driven. I'm going to work doggone hard to be accepted and loved. Or these are some children who give up. They act out. They become rebellious they say f you to your parents. And they say I've had it. And they leave.

These are a lot of our dropouts. And I wasn't parented that way. I was more in the second category. Again, I bless my parents. I was parented by shame. What's this? This is when the child, this is very could be very gentle kind parent. It's when the child does bad and of course if you have children, there are bad is out there right. Proverbs says Fali is bound up in the heart of a child right there a little falling machines, it's just coming out right, you know, just a little it's credible.

When the child does bad, the parents are unable to help the child enter more deeply and in age appropriate ways. Now there's a whole, there's a whole stuff behind there you know in my classes we spend a lot of time, but in age appropriate ways the parents are unable here to help the child enter into their badness, to see themselves in the context of parental love and what the parenting. The parenting merely does, this is the easiest parenting in the world, doesn't work, but it's what we do. Is we simply move the child to cover their bad by being good. Right? I mean, it's the simplest thing I do. I see Krista over here acting up Krista, quit hitting on, stop it, be kind to her.

Now, wouldn't be cool if you could say that. And she'd go, oh my gosh, I'm kind. You spoke reality into my soul. I am kind, so it doesn't work anyways. But I can, I can shape

behavior, I can get a whole set of reinforcements going. And I know I'm done these these are ok but, if that's all it is here's what you're teaching the child, that nobody can cover their bad except them and only they can cover their bad by being good. This is shame parenting because you know what it does. It just unconsciously in the deep of the heart. Slowly but surely puts in the mind of the child, sends to them a deep message that I must be good to cover my bad. I'm the one who must deal with my bad. No one else can deal with it, I must deal with it and the way I deal with my bad is by being good and I think in the case of both of these individuals I think there's a deep deep belief that they won't be loved in their bad. That's going to have incredible ramifications in our prayer life.

Now this shame parenting is the way I was parenting. I was parented, I was raised in North Dakota in a Norwegian farming community area. I was raised by a pair of all moderately healthy neurotic Norwegian farmers. And so here's what they would say, they were very kind. Jonny, they all spoke that way, I don't have that anymore. Jonny, that's nah nah, not good. Nah Johnny that's how you do. Johnny, that's not the way Osmin sin or Cole is do the good. Not don't do the bad Jonny, do the good and then maybe a little spank. The spank was ok. That was very kind. It was very accepting in many ways. It's what I call Aristotelian Roman parenting.

It's it's parenting little moralists to be good children. It's not Christian. You know what the gospel says, "Jonny," what my mom says God is Norwegian of course. Here's what the gospel says, "Jonny, you're failure. Jonny on your own you need me. Jonny, you can't do it no more, would you are please give up. Jonny, you must learn to abide in me. Here's Grace Jonny. Here's me Jonny, don't you want me. Don't you want to be filled with me Jonny? Here's my yolk my yoke is easy because it's me. It's me, and Johnny you have no idea what kind of journey I want to take you on. I want to open your heart Jonny, I want to search it, I want to split it open. I

want to take you on the journey of a lifetime. I'm going to take you down Jonny. I'm going to let you see your crap. And it will be all love. And I know Jonny you don't believe it now because we believe in the deed. We believe this from original sin." I'm not going to talk how we get there, but this is what guilt does to us. In guilt and in the way we're parenting that every human belief, human being coming to this earth at some point believes this. No one will love me in the deep of my bad, they will only love me. That's why I hide and that's why I defend.

So here's this interesting question for you and me. Did you feel more loved by your parents when you were being good or when you were being bad? Think about that. When you were being a bad little girl, you know, when what you're doing being a good little girl. Where did you feel more love. If it was when you were being good how many of you would say that you felt probably more loved when you're being good? If that's the case, then it's possible that this has slipped into your prayer life. That this is the deep belief of the heart and it slipped into your conscience. You see, we have a conscience kind of like Jiminy the cricket right? I'll do good, that's the neurotic conscience. The healthy consciences says, "I can't do it, and God I don't want it, I want you now." That's what the Gospels taught me, I want you and if it slipped into your prayer life that means you're trying to be good in prayer, trying to become acceptable. Working hard at prayer, working hard in the disciplines, working hard and service.

In that case you're using obedience and spirituality to cover your back, rather, you know what spirituality does? It opens it up. I'm coming out. There's no condemnation, I'm coming out. Again, though this would lead us into an issue of parenting and I will talk about this next time of how, how to an age appropriate ways parent your children so that you can begin to take them into little dips, little dips of opening up and staying sitting in the weeds with some of their badness. Not so they feel condemnation, but rather so that they'll experience your deep teaching

in love in the middle of their badness because here's what I want my daughters to do. See I I really think, now this is for you know I think for people who lead education ministries for children.

Why are our junior hires in high school or who are raised in the church often so bored with Christianity in the cross by the time they get there? I think part of the answer is because they've been spending so much time in their Christian life being good little boys and girls that the cross just doesn't have a meaning anymore. Yes, Jesus died for my sins how he died so that I could be good. And they're spending so much time being so doggone good, so much time trying to be acceptable to the parents to everything. That that Jesus forgave their sins and pardoned them. Those are just kind of words. I need to take my children, and get an age appropriate way, so there's a lot in that mouthful there, into the journey into that place. Because you know what I want here's what I want them to say at 19. We'll see. I hope they'll say this. "You know dad, I'm a student Biola now and I see a lot of crap going on at Biola. I see students just unraveling. You know dad, I am so glad that you parent and me morally. I'm so glad dad that you, you really did help structure my life, although you know times I hated it, because I really am reaping some of the benefits of self-control and kindness and some of these other whether they were just pure moral fruits natural law or something of the beginning of the spirit doesn't matter." But then here's what I'm hoping the other side says, "But you know dad, I also want to thank you for another thing. I want to thank you that you took me on a slow and steady journey into my heart, so that I've seen enough of my bad to know that no amount of my being good could ever cover and deal with how badness. Dad, I thank you for that journey because I need you. I have needed Jesus so much and I still do."

We'll see, because I know as a parent it's just easier to do what my parents did. Ana, stop hitting Krista, be kind. And now this tells me a lot about what I think of parenting, especially with children. I do not, and this is how I think psychology has affected me quite a bit. My interactions with it. Especially with young children I don't see parenting as primarily discipleship early on where I'm side by side a disciple and we're kind of going to Christ. I see rather that they have internalized me as the big one, dad dad. I mean my children always wondered how it is that when there was silence and they were doing something wrong. Ana Krista, I'm sure, dad's God, he knows. Their hands were in the cookie jar. Silence is always the tell-tale sign, something's up.

And so children are going to internalize this is a big one. And so I see especially early on, but even now my children 11 year old. Most fundamental about parenting is modeling the love of God. Is modeling how I can take them into their bad and you know children don't want to do that, children don't even want to admit it but then to sit there. How can I give them as, as powerful an experience of a love in the context of just seeing themselves, yes there will be correction training, but to give them a just a powerful experience and their bad so you know what I hope that helps them come when they get older. That's what they'll want to do in prayer. You know, dad, he journeyed into me and in my heart of what was going on and you know something that was good. And that's what I want to do in prayer. That's what I hope. That's not how it's parented and so in prayer I have a whole other set of habits of heart that the Lord is now beginning to teach me.

The fourth question. How can we resist this temptation to be a Christian moralist? How will we do this? This is what the ancient spiritual writers talked about, they called this the recollected heart, to recollect the heart. The recollected heart back into the central truths and realities of the Christian life and the central truths, especially we see in Paul, is that now I am in

Christ and Christ is in me. This is the very heart of the Gospel and so I'm just going to do this quickly and this isn't this isn't your notes so you'll have to write this, but what I want to do by the Spirit is I want I want to open deeply to what the cross has done, and that's that's what Paul meant by being an Christ and I want to open deeply to now the Spirit and that's now Christ in me. And so first, what does it to open to the cross? What does it, to open to what he did on that cross? Let me just read 2nd Corinthians 5:21 to you.

This is Second Corinthians 5:21 says this, "He made him who knew no sin. He" this is the father, "Made Jesus who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf. That we might become the righteousness of God." Now in that statement, is hid our whole doctrine of what we call justification by faith. Now, I want to talk about that just briefly and I want to bring up something, again this is a little theology here. This is an idea of what is called the double imputation.

First time I heard that I thought, that sounds exciting. The double imputation. Some theologians thought that up late at night and he wasn't thinking of that being very exciting. But here's the double imputation doctrine is. To impute means to wreckin. To impute means to set to somebodies account. And what we see in in Second Corinthians 5 in this doctrine of justification by faith, there were two imputations. There were two where God sent something to somebodies account and the first one is this is, that when Jesus was on the cross, and you all know this, when Jesus was on the cross all of my sin was imputed to him. All of my sins past, present, future, everything. In Galatians 3:13 it says, "While Jesus was on the cross, he became a curse so that we would be redeemed from the curse of the law."

And so the first imputation is that here, me, the sinner, God somehow to Christ who knew no sin. He took all of my sin, all of your sin so that the Son, the Son of God became sin. He became sin who knew no sin. And as a result for me it's pardoned. That's Romans 8:1. There is

no condemnation. There is no condemnation on you anymore. You are not guilty anymore because Christ took all of that. Well now what I want to do by the Spirit is I want to deeply meditate on that truth, that if there is no condemnation. If that is really true, if God looks at me and ah, John, everything that you've done wrong, and everything you'll do wrong it was on my son, you are pardoned. If that's the case, then you know what I want to do? Than the spiritual formation implication is this. Then John come out of hiding. And then come out of hiding. Don't, don't try to hide from seeing your bad because all of your bad has already been forgiven. When we experience our badness, I cannot help but slip back into my Adam, my father Adam's habit.

Dang, he feels the condemnation, the guilt. When I tell my children about their bad, I see it just immediately, caught. Wouldn't it be cool if they said, "Oh cool dad. Now I can come out of hiding with you. Now I can tell you how much I really am bugged with Ana. I hit her, but let me tell you, I wanted to kill her." I, if my sins are really put on him then dog gone it John, came out of hiding in prayer. You have the opportunity with someone even more than Greta to share everything, to share absolutely everything and to be taken on a journey of the yoke of Christ to be taught and to be then to learn something deep about what he has to teach me of why I've become the way I've become and why I still sin when I know so much. That'll be next time, I'm going to talk about this journey into the heart and so I just want to open to I what to, I want to recollect my heart continually God in this last three days. I've actually been sick I've had the stomach flu or food poisoning, I don't know what it was, but I was hugging a toilet bowl for two days and isn't that fun.

But during this time in bed it has been so great because I have I have spent literally hours just off putting my heart. God, no condemnation. I really am pardoned and beginning to see

pockets in my heart that don't believe that. I'm wanting to open those to the father and I see places of hardness on my daughter's where there's condemnation. See, it's one thing to convict it's another thing to condemn, that's the issue of guilt.

The other imputation is what I've really pondered these last three days in bed and this was the last part of the verse. He made him who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God, this is so great. The second imputation is where here is Jesus. So here's our Lord who merited righteousness. Do you ever wonder why he didn't just come to the earth die and get it over with? This is what theologians call his active obedience. He was obedient in life, because why? He merited before God righteousness and then what God did. This is an incredible act, he imputed to you and me who do not have, you know I don't have my righteousness. He imputed to me so that now I have the righteousness of Christ. That is the great that is the great point of Paul's being in Christ, that in Christ I am now I have his righteousness. Meaning everything he merited is now mine, not because I did it because the father just says that's how I am going to relate to John Coe now, through the acts of my son.

You know what that means for me? That means like Ephesians 1:6 says, "I am totally accepted in the beloved." I'm not accepted just as I am, I am accepted in the beloved. I am totally accepted. I want to meditate deep on that truth. I want to open my heart to that. That if he totally accepts me then John why are you wasting time trying to be so acceptable to others. And why are you wasting time working so hard even to be acceptable to him. And my advice to my own soul is John don't try to cover your bad by being good, you're already accepted in the beloved, rather this, live in the light of your bad. Obey in the light of your bad, not to cover the bad. God here I am, this is what I am and God I come to you, I want you and then secondly I want to open to Christ in me now.

I've been redeemed by the Spirit in Titus 3:5 with washing of regeneration and now I want to learn and this I who are totally retarded in, how do I walk in the Spirit? How do I open to the Spirit? How do I be filled with a Spirit? Now this is what I'll be interested in the next two weeks. But God I don't want to live alone anymore.

You know, I'm a grinder. Anybody a grinder here? You know what a grinder is? It's when you get a problem you just [nasally sound effect]. Sit in the shower and I have to do budgets for Institute and I'll be thinking about and I'm just [throaty sound effect]. You know I don't want to do that anymore apart from him. I just want to do that with. God, I want to invite you into this, I want to do this with you. I want to learn to open to you and so the cross has made it possible for three things in my mind on this. The first is to come out of hiding. To let your prayer life be a place of God I want to share everything with you, because that's where the loves at, that's where the transforming powers is at. That's where the transformation of the soul in part will be. There's other things and we'll talk of those.

Second thing the cross is made possible is I can stop covering myself with my goodness. I can give up on that project to make myself acceptable. And the third thing; what I want to do now in obedience because there's a place for obedience. It's to present myself. This is Romans 12:1 and 2 is to present myself to him for his work. It's to present myself to him relationally, God do your work. And so I tell my students that ISF when you obey, when you serve, when you do whatever you're doing, never think that transforms you. That's not the truth. All that your obedience and spiritual disciplines and prayer do is there ways of presenting yourself relationally to the Spirit for him to begin a work. And so as I do whatever I'm doing what I have one eye to do is to the obedience to, you know I massage Greta tonight, I don't know what's going to happen. But I want another eye to Spirit what are you doing because I never want to think that

massaging Greta is transforming me. What are you doing? He might show me all kinds of things. He might show me this is cool, I like massaging her. He might show me ahh, I don't want to massage her, I want her to massage me. And then you know that'll be cool, cool. Thanks Lord. That's why I need you.

God is so cool, selfishness. Yeah, cool, how shocking.

[Laughter]

How shocking, one who's born in original sin. We're coming near the end here. These are prayers. These are just prayers I wrote these down for you. These are prayers or intentions of the heart. I, we'll talk later in week I think four about how to maybe do something more with this, but right now, these are just prayers of intentions. They're just intentions that we offer to the Lord and the first prayer is just, Lord I, this is what you can do now. You can just pray this, tonight, tomorrow, next day. "Lord, I don't want to deal with my guilt in the power in the self. Lord I don't want to deal with my guilt by hiding. I don't want to be afraid of seeing myself, I don't want to hide. I just want to come into the open with you because you're the lover of my soul. Why should I be afraid of seeing it when you see it all and you love me and take me on a journey of love?" The bottom line in spiritual formation that we'll talk about tomorrow I mean next week is that the Spirit's loving power, that's where the power of transformation is, and I want to open these places to experiences his love. I can't just say he loves me, that won't do it because there are deep places in my heart that don't believe that.

You know what this will bring you into? This will bring you into deeper weakness. It will bring into a deeper neediness. This is Second Corinthians 12:9 to 10 where Paul said I learned

the secret that powers perfected in weakness. No we don't believe that. We believe, just like the world does that powers perfected in power. That's why I'm tempted always in fortitude. And yet the Lord is so kind to us. He does so many things to bring as always to God I need you. That's where his powers perfected. God I need you.

I don't want to minister out of my strength. Some people say we minister out of the abundance, I think that's wrong. We minister out of weakness, we minister as like now and said as wounded healers. Just, Oh my God I need you, God I need you. That, that's otherwise if we minister out of our strength. You're going to spend your whole life trying to get strong. Boy, that's tough, because I know that, I'm tempted daily to do that.

The second prayer of intention. Lord, I just I no longer want to deal with my shame and the power of myself. I don't want to be good as a way to cover. I don't want to try to fix myself, grow myself by myself. Lord I want to open up to your righteousness to be my covering. I'm accepted in you and I want to obey in the light of my badness. God this is what I am, I come to you. A relational Christianity. This is where Paul says in Philippians 3:7 that he doesn't want to righteousness of his own based on obedience to the law. But he wants a righteousness that comes from God in the basis of faith, that's what his life is about. Being good is a way to deal with your badness, takes so much energy. What a waste of a life. What a waste of a ministry. To work to be accepted when you're already accepted, but that's going to be a journey into the heart to experience the acceptance.

Third prayer of intention. God I no longer want to live the Christian life alone, the power of the self. God, I want to learn to depend upon you, I want to learn to abide in the vine. This is a prayer of intention. Just, God I don't even know what I'm talking about. This is what I want today as I go out. God, I want to learn this process. Take me on the long journey, that I don't live just in

the power of my good efforts. You know those of you who have good character that has served you well up to now. I'm going look at a little more deeply in the next weeks that can become the thing that you trust him. You trust in your good character to carry you through, where the Spirit now we want to call you to a God, may I trust in you. But we'll talk about that more

Our fourth prayer of intention I'll just to add at this point is this is to say, "God when I obey, let it be just a way of presenting myself to you. God let not my obedience think that that's transforming me, but let my obedience just be a way of watching for you. Opening to you." Obedience is supposed to be a given, but obedience is a presenting the body opening ourself to what he's doing.

Now, the last question. What will happen to me? I'm sorry we're coming near the end. I wanted some more time for questions. What will happen to me and my spiritual life if I cannot not resist the moral temptation? What will happen?

The first is pretty harsh, Christ will be of no benefit to you and the spiritual life. Christ will be of no benefit to the spiritual life of growth. Listen to this text in Galatians 5:1. It was for freedom that Christ set us free therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Don't go back to the law. Behold, I Paul say to you that if you do go back to the law, if you receive circumcision Christ will be of no benefit to you. What he means is if you go back to a life of this moralism there will be no power from Christ and your Christian life, you will be on your own. Because, you, well, it's just obvious, you're doing all the work. Christ will be of no benefit to you because you're doing it all.

In that case the Christian life will come to a place where it'll feel like just work, no power and no love. And you know when that occurs you know what you should be saying to yourself? [Swooshing sound effect] Because God wants to take me on another journey now. Now I'm

ready, I wasn't ready before, I was very satisfied with my life. God's ready take me on another journey.

The second is we will become more like a Martha than a Mary. Remember Martha, wonderful woman, a woman of faith. Remember in the Luke text. In the Luke text this is when Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus and Martha's out in the kitchen. This is what I would call a morally distracted woman. It's very interesting in the Greek here it says that Martha was distracted in her many preparations. You know the word preparations there? *diakonian* in her servings.

Now this is this is the book of Luke it's written post Pentecost by the time the people are reading the book of Luke when they read that work, she's distracted in her '*diakonian*'. '*diakonian*' by this time had become like a technical word for deaconessing. She was distracted in her deaconessing, her servings and now notice what Martha says. Lord, I want to be out there sitting at your feet. Would you get Mary in the kitchen? Is that what she says? No, she says, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone. Tell her to help me, what I'm doing is more important. Lord, tell her to come out here." Wow, and Jesus responses is Martha, Martha you're worried and bothered about so many things. Martha a few are necessary one, in the Greek it's just one. For Mary has chosen the good part, and that cannot be taken away from her. See at that point Martha, a very good woman of faith has slipped into her moralism and Jesus just wants to say you know, Marry has, she, she has relationally attached to me. She's sitting here, that's, that's what this Christian life's going to be about.

I'd just end by saying here that the life of hiding and of covering of using spirituality to avoid painful self-awareness, that's an awful burden to carry. You and I trying to do the Christian life is an incredible burden. I want to encourage us, don't be afraid of your sin. Don't be afraid of

sitting in your weeds with your Lord, opening to your need for the cross daily and on that ground, on that ground, in the openness of what I am God I love you. God I need you, here I am. And when I stumble and fall, yep, there it is again. God, that's so good to know. Here I am. I want to stay connected.

I want to pray for us and then I'll want to just give you some thoughts about some of the things that are in your binder and unfortunately I don't want to keep us longer, so I knew I was going to have time for question and answers, but I guess we'll know more sovereignty you will just stay with us. And but next time I'll be totally open to any questions about this. But, let's pray.

Our Lord we, we come and God we, we are from our parents little moralists. I don't like seeing my bad eye, I like just, I like others to see goodness. I like seeing goodness. But you know Lord that doesn't lead me to deeper dependence on you. Lord, sometimes I want to be perfect because it, then I can be self-sufficient. I just want you to ask in your own heart, Lord, is there a little moralist in me? Is there someone who when I hear conviction my abiding response is God I'll do better, I'll work harder. Just open to that a moment. Is that true, just open that to the Lord right now. Say, "God, I cannot do that apart from you. I want you to live within and through me, take me on that journey Lord. Father we need you so much much over our hearts and soul. We bless you in Jesus name our Savior amen.

If you would just look at the the next pages. I think on the next page is there the handout it says the temptation of moral formation. Oh thanks. Okay, yeah. If you ah. I'm a professor, I'm a nerd, so I was gonna have an assignment, but what I do at the institute is I just I can't tell my students will go go write a 15 page paper on this. That would be crazy. How am I going to say go pray about this? Just go open this to the Lord. And so I give them a prayer project and that's what are some of our classes are just riddled with. It's just, I want them to take this into prayer. And so

if this is something that might be good for us to do even with a partner and then you come to talk about it together or just doing it on your own. You might just do this and number one just take counseling your soul and with the Lord regarding the degree to which you're tempted by moral formation, to use obedience and Spirituality to cover.

Enter this deeply with the Lord to experience the truth of how this permeates your life, don't run from this stuff. Don't what I suggest you do don't confess things quickly. We'll talk about confession of sin. Be not afraid, he knows you. Just open this to him and as you do this again you are accepted in the beloved. This is an opportunity to come out of hiding. And if you're while you do this happens to me all the time when I'm convicted of sin, I often feel condemnation in that. You know why? Because that's my own internal stuff saying aha aha aha you're not so good Jonny, Jonny.

That's why I have to come back to the cross oh God. You know, I teach this all the time. Three days ago I was praying my office and I was thinking of something with Greta and I was just convicted and I started it. And I immediately started going and this place was like oh my God, just help me to come out. God, just show me more deeply in the next minutes of how that is true in my life. God you're, but lover right there I was just I was three or four minutes into the cranking condemning, taunt. My first response was taunt, God I really need to work on that with Greta because I'm not, that isn't good. Right there man, I'm right there.

You can read the rest of these, but just might think about of taking some time to take counsel in your soul and basically I just took our notes and worked it through a way that you could pray and think and take this into the heart and just open it to him. I really wanna encourage you to do it because you know something it's one thing to listen to me. It's another thing now to open it to prayer with God in your soul, it's all other kinds of stuff go on. By now, I want you just

say while you pray watch, because watch to see what happens in your soul of the little voices come up. You'll feel frustrated you feel. Oh I am I like this. The last thing is there's an article there where I took some of those ideas and I had written it for this is our Talbot journal and you can read that as well. If you would like for next week to kind of get ahead since we don't have anything to do in our lives of course, professors always think that.

On the next week I wrote an article for a theological society, it's called *The Hidden Heart* why we sin when we know so much. And you can go ahead read that too and, that's what I'll be speaking on for next week and next week I'll also have time for questions about what we did tonight as well as next time, ok. So God be with you, peace. And I'll stay around if you want to come and talk. Thank you.

[Applause]