

OpenTheo

Living by Faith (2019)



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In "Living by Faith," Steve Gregg delves into the biblical concept of living faith, emphasizing the importance of trusting in God's faithfulness and surrendering control of outcomes to Him. Gregg explains that living by faith involves actively working towards our goals while entrusting the ultimate outcome to God. He also addresses sensitive topics such as same-sex attraction, temptation, forgiveness, and justice, providing a balanced and biblical perspective on each issue. Overall, Gregg emphasizes the importance of a steadfast trust in God to provide and guide our lives.

Transcript

I was asked to speak about living by faith. Now, when I hear the term living by faith, I'm not really sure what I'm being asked about because the term living by faith is a biblical term, but it's used somewhat differently than we normally use it today. When Paul said the just shall live by faith, that's the main context of live by faith is found in scripture, that's really talking about being justified by faith.

I'll have eternal life. I will live as a result of my faith in Christ. But when we talk about living by faith, most of the time in modern times, we're talking about living a certain way with faith as the basis for it.

Now, certainly, although the term living by faith may not occur, that phrase in the Bible specifically with reference to that concept, it's obvious that the Bible teaches we're supposed to be trusting God day by day. In fact, our walk with God is one of faith. In Romans chapter 4, we talk about a few verses here, talking about Abraham in Romans 4 beginning verse 11, and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, and righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but those who also walk in the steps of the faith, which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

So those who walk in the steps of faith, certainly we could call that more the idea of

living by faith in the sense that I think I'm being asked to speak about it. Usually when people talk about this person lives by faith, they may have in mind a very specific thing about finances. Famously, a man named George Mueller, a missionary named Hudson Taylor, a man who started the Bible College of Wales named Rhys Howells, and many others lesser known in the 19th century became very famous for what many people would call living by faith.

And what that means is they trusted God entirely for their finances. And I think that many people when they hear the term living by faith, they're thinking in those terms. You don't have any guaranteed income, maybe you don't even have a job, but you're trusting God to provide for your needs.

And the stories of these men have inspired many, including myself. When I was young, I read the stories of George Mueller and Hudson Taylor and Rhys Howells, very much impacted my life so that when I left home and went in the ministry, I decided that's what I would do. And so that's how I've lived for the last 48 years.

Well, kind of. I should clarify that. The first 12 of those 48 years, I actually worked a little bit part-time and occasional jobs.

But that's not inconsistent with my idea of living by faith, because living by faith doesn't necessarily mean you don't have a job. It doesn't necessarily mean that you just kind of go out and pray for the money to come in. What living by faith means, as I understand the concept, is that you do whatever God tells you to do, and that's the only concern you have.

You're not concerned about how it'll be paid for. You're not concerned about how it'll work out. You just do what God tells you to do.

And you trust God with the outcomes. Now, outcomes in many cases does include finances, especially if he tells you to leave your job and go on the mission field or do something like that, and you don't have any visible means of support. Then, of course, trusting God for outcomes means literally trusting him for money to come from somewhere.

But not only that, you trust him for all outcomes. You do what he wants you to do. Let me show you what it says in Hebrews, which is probably one of the best places we can get information about living by faith and what it involves.

Hebrews is sometimes called the faith chapter, but there's some things about it I'd like to really point out to you. It says in verse 7, by faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he

would receive afterward as an inheritance.

And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he waited for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky and multitude innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. These all died in faith not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

Skipping down to verse 17, by faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said in Isaac your seed shall be called, concluding that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from which he also did receive him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and he saw concerning things to come. By faith Jacob blah blah.

By faith Joseph when he was dying made mention of his departure. Going on verse 23, by faith Moses when he was born was hidden three months by his parents because they saw that he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses when he became of age refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he looked for the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, Moses did, not fearing the wrath of the king for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and so forth. Verse 29, by faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry ground and so forth.

We're reading on further. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who didn't believe when she had received the spies in peace.

What more can I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Still others had trial of mockings and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword, they were wandered around in sheepskins and goatskins being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth.

These all having obtained a good testimony through faith did not receive the promise in their lifetime. Now what is this saying? He gives like a summary of the whole Old Testament. He actually, we read, started reading it Noah, but he goes, he starts earlier.

He talks about Abel, he talks about Enoch, they talk about Noah, they talk about Abram, Isaac and Jacob. Then we skip up to the time of Moses and Joshua and the judges. He named some of the judges and then David, Samuel and the prophets.

That pretty much means everything in the Old Testament so far. I mean that covers the whole Old Testament essentially. He doesn't name every name but he names all the categories.

And he says these people that we read about in the Old Testament, they all did what they did by faith. Now that means that they were living by something called faith. And now what is faith? Well he says in the opening verse, faith is the substance of things hoped for, it is the evidence of things that are not seen.

So through faith we understand that the worlds were made by the Word of God and the things that are seen were made from things that are not seen. Now what does what does living by faith involve? For one thing, it involves trusting God. That's what faith is.

It says in that chapter in verse 11, by faith Sarah received strength to conceive seed when she was past the age because she judged him faithful who had promised. Now this tells us what faith really is. It's judging God to be faithful.

What is lack of faith? It's judging God to be a liar. That's what it says in 1 John 5 10, he that believeth not has made him a liar. You see you believe people that you think are true and you don't believe people you think are liars.

It's just that easy. Some people say I wish I had your faith. Well get my God and you'll have a reason to have my faith because God, the God I serve is faithful.

It's easy to believe someone you know is faithful. Faith is simply making a judgment about somebody. I told you that that's my wife back there in the back.

Did you see us get married? Have you seen our marriage certificate? I doubt it. Maybe I'm not traveling with my wife. Maybe I'm traveling with somebody else who's not my wife.

How do you know? Well you don't know I assure you she is but you don't know that

unless you trust me. But why should you trust me? Well you might say well you seem like an honest guy. I think we know something about you seem like an honest guy.

Okay well then then if I seem like an honest guy you probably trust me by default. I might not be honest. I could lie but if you think I'm honest, if you judge me to be honest, then you believe what I say about things like that.

On the other hand, if you didn't know anything about me at all and say I don't know someone who looks like you, seems more like you wouldn't probably be married. You'd probably travel with a girlfriend or something you know. I mean if you didn't know who I was, didn't have any reason to trust me, if you judge I think you look like some kind of a homeless person, well then you probably wouldn't believe me.

Not because you have more or less reason to believe it because you judge me to be probably not telling the truth. That's how it is with people. If you know somebody has a reputation for being credible and honest, you tend to believe them.

It's effortless. If somebody's lied to you again and again, they've broken trust, you kind of doubt them effortlessly. It's just natural.

Now you trust God because you judge him to be faithful. If you don't judge him to be faithful, you're judging him to be a liar. That's really only two options.

If God said something, it's either true or it's not. If he's faithful, it's true and you can count on it. If he's not faithful, then all bets are off.

You can't count on it. Faith is judging him faithful who promised. That's what it says in Hebrews 11 11.

Now people who have faith have evidence of things that are not seen. It says in verse 1, faith is the substance of things hoped for. It's the evidence of things not seen.

A lot of people in that chapter believe things they hadn't seen, but it gave them as much assurance as if they did. By faith, Noah being warned of things that were not yet seen, built an ark. He believed it.

He'd never seen a flood before, but he believed it. Why? Because God told him. It says that Abraham went off to a land he had not yet seen, but he trusted God that it was going to be there.

It was going to be all right. It says Moses, when he left Egypt, he endured as one who sees him that is invisible. Did Moses see God? Well, eventually he actually did, but in the time period it's describing he hadn't seen God, but he endured as if he could see God because he believed God.

You see, we know there are two realms that we live in, a seen realm and an unseen

realm. In the unseen realm are things like God, angels, demons, that kind of stuff. In the seen realm are physical things.

We can pick them up through our five senses. How do I know you're here? Well, I know it because I can see you. I can hear you.

My senses tell you, so you belong to the seen realm. How do I know that angels are here? I don't see them. I've never seen them.

How do I know if there are angels? Well, the Bible says the angels are the Lord and camps around about them that fear him and delivers them. Well, why would I believe that? Because God said it. Well, then that's good.

You know what? God can't deceive because he can't lie. My eyes can deceive me. Anyone ever thought you saw something and it really wasn't what you thought? You thought you heard someone call your name and look back.

There's no one there. It's just your imagination. Your senses can fool you.

God will not. I have better reason to believe there are angels in this room than I have to believe you're in this room. The only way I know you're in the room is because my senses tell me that.

They've deceived me before and I might even be dreaming. I might wake up any minute and say, oh, I dreamed I was in Auburn talking to a group of people. It's so real.

But here I am in my bed in Temecula. What do you know? It's happened before. Not so much the Auburn thing, but the, you know, sometimes a dream just seems so real.

Oh, I'm so glad that wasn't true. Especially some really bad dreams. But it seemed real.

You never know. Now, of course, I'm not trying to say you should doubt everything you see. I'm just saying that anything you see might conceivably turn out to be not true.

But anything God says cannot conceivably turn out to be not true because God cannot lie. And therefore, I have as much confidence in things that are not seen, if God told me about them, as I have in things I can see. I it gives me access to realities I would not know if I didn't believe God.

See, this is why God wants us to trust him. There's so many things he wants us to know that we can't know without believing him about it. For example, his existence, the enemies we have in the spiritual realm.

We need to know about those. Can't see them. We need to know the security we have with angels around us.

Can't see those either. God wants us to know those things. Those are important things to know.

And if we don't believe him, we'll never know if it's true. There are important things with the unseen realm we can't see, but faith is the evidence of things that are not seen. When you're in a court of law, the best testimony is eyewitness evidence.

But that's about seeing things. What's the best testimony of things that aren't seen? Faith is the evidence of things that are not seen. If God said it, I believe it.

And for me, that settles it. That's what faith is. Now, we read there about people who saw miracles.

Women had their dead raised to life. You know, they crossed the Red Sea on dry land. Miracle stuff.

And sometimes you do see miracles. Maybe not always. Maybe you never see a bona fide miracle.

You can say, well, that defied the laws of nature. But you see God's intervention in things. Things that would happen that might not have happened if you hadn't prayed for them.

The Bible does indicate that if you pray in faith, God pays attention. It says in James, you know, ask in faith nothing wavering for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he'll receive anything from the Lord.

Prayers are answered if you trust God. Of course, there have to be other conditions that too, that be in his will. But the point is that God does intervene, maybe not with a demonstration of a, you know, a nature defying miracle, but with an intervention that's providential.

I've seen that many times in many things. Hitchhiking when I was younger. It's amazing how I had to be somewhere on time.

I didn't have a car. I knew from experience you could stand all night at an on-ramp and not get picked up. But I just, I just knew I had to get there.

I prayed God give me the ride and the rides came right when I needed them. Several in a row to get me just where I got to go where I had to be. I've had lots of experiences like that.

I've had other experiences, including provisions. Now see there's a, there's a thing, financial provision, that's not a miracle. God doesn't drop gold from the sky like manna.

That'd be a miracle. You know, but he provides his providence in response to need. When there's a need, if you're doing the will of God, he'll take care of the needs.

You don't have to worry about that. That's what living by faith is. Now, these guys didn't just stand around and do nothing.

Noah didn't just say, well, God's sending a flood right now. He's going to save my family. No, he worked.

He built an ark to save his family. Working is what God wants most people to do. And most people will earn their living that way in the will of God.

You see, God will provide for you as you do what he wants you to do. But he doesn't have the same plan for everyone. He doesn't want everyone to quit their job.

Occasionally there are people who called into full-time ministry and they just can't work anymore at another job. They don't have time. You only have one life unless you can clone yourself.

And I remember hearing a really good explanation. I think this might have even come from Greg Laurie when he was a teenager. I met Greg Laurie the day he got saved.

And I went to Calvary Chapel together when we were 16. And I remember him preaching a few years later in Calvary Chapel. Coach Mason.

No, it was not him. It was another person, but it could have been him. The person was saying, all you Jesus people, you want to live by faith.

You want to be in full-time ministry and let God pay the bills. A lot of times that just means you don't want to work. But he said, I'll tell you what, if you want to live by faith and go into full-time ministry, get a job.

Work full-time and minister on the side in your free time. And if your ministry expands so that you don't have time to work full-time and do the ministry, then work part-time and do the ministry in the If your ministry becomes so demanding that you can't work even part-time, then quit your job and trust God to supply. But see, most people God supplies through work, but not always.

Some people are thrown into unemployment through no fault of their own. You know, I mentioned that I've lived by faith since I was in my teens. I have never, well, I'm going to exclude the 12 years I sometimes held minimum wage jobs for short periods of time because I felt like that's God wanted me to do.

I wasn't doing full-time ministry. There wasn't full-time ministry available to me in those times. I was ministering part-time.

I didn't think I could trust God to provide me a full-time living when I'm only working part-time for him. I felt like I'll work for him all I can and I'll work for a living all I can. I did that until I was about 30.

And then when I started the school in Oregon, I couldn't do other work. It was a full-time thing. So I'm 65 now.

So for the past 35 years, I haven't been able to hold another job because I've been in full-time ministry. One thing led to another, travel arm for youth of the nation. I have a radio show.

I do this kind of thing. I'm just too busy to work at another job. And so, you know, when you get, when your ministry crowds out your job, or maybe it's not ministry, maybe you just got terminated, you have to realize if I'm doing what God wants me to do, he'll supply my needs.

Some of you know that I had a wife that walked out of me and left four kids with me about 15, no, 17 years ago now. Well, I was on the radio for four years before that doing the Narrow Path program and living by faith. I've been living by faith for quite a few years before that.

But when she walked out, I felt like, okay, I'm stepping out of the ministry for now until this gets sorted out. I thought she'd be coming back shortly, but I thought I'm not going to do the ministry while my marriage is out of order. But she never came back.

And I was out of the ministry for a whole year. I thought I might be out of the ministry forever when it became clear she wasn't coming back anytime soon. I didn't know if I'd be back in the ministry at all.

But the reason I bring this up is because God had been supplying for me for years up until the time she left. I was raising five children. Four were still at home when she left.

And all bills were paid month by month. All needs came in from totally unpredictable sources. But when I went off the air, the day she walked out, I went off the air.

I became invisible to the public because I stayed home in my log cabin in rural Idaho on a homestead with my four kids to take care of them. I thought, now what do I do? I didn't have much money. I had about a thousand bucks under the mattress.

But that's about all I had. I thought, well, I'll stay home with my kids, keep homeschooling them until the money runs out. When the money runs out, I'm going to have to go get a job.

I'm not very employable, by the way. I don't know anything. I never went to college.

Right out of high school, I went into ministry. And all the jobs I've done have been dumb,

thoughtless work besides ministry. That's taken a lot of thought.

But I just thought, well, when I run out of money, I'll go flip hamburgers. I mean, that's probably all I'm good for. Maybe I could sweep floors or something.

I can do something, be a night watchman somewhere. Something that doesn't require great skills because I don't have any. But you know what? I never ran out of money.

I was invisible to the public. I have no newsletter. I've never sent out a newsletter to anyone.

I've never let my needs be known to anyone, ever. I've sometimes let people know that the narrow path has a need for this, that. I don't get any money from the narrow path, not a penny.

My own income comes from totally unsolicited, unpredictable places. And I've never let a person know when I had a need, except God. And for 48 years, essentially, especially the last 35, that's been month by month.

Everything I need, usually not too much extra, sometimes not any extra at all. But the point is, I just thought, okay, I'm out of the ministry now. I'm off the air.

I'm not teaching anywhere. Nobody knows where I am, except I'm in my little log cabin in Idaho with my four kids. Certainly the money won't come in.

But I kept going to the post office and money kept coming in from people I didn't even know, as it had before. Now, I was not on the air. These people, I assume, were people who had formerly listened to me on the radio.

I'd never asked for money then. I'm not asking right there. Money kept coming in.

I'd go to the mailbox, it would be several hundred dollars for me, not for the narrow path, because there was no narrow path at the time for that year. And instead of running out of money, within a few months, I had far more money than I had before, and I never had to go get a regular job. Now, that seemed strange to me, because I didn't, since I always felt like God would support me in the ministry, because I'm doing work.

Ministry is work. And so, you know, the labor is worthy of his hire. So I figured if I'm doing God's work, he'll pay for his labors.

I thought, I'm not working now, I'm just staying home with my kids. That wasn't my preference, but that's what circumstances thrust upon me. I was laid off from the ministry.

But you know what I found that year? That I wasn't supported by the ministry, I'm supported by God. That God supplied for me even when I was not doing any public

ministry, when there wasn't a soul around who had any idea what I might need, except God. And that was a very important lesson, because having been in the ministry since I was a teenager, and always having had God provide for me, I always thought, well, of course, I minister, and the Lord gives me something back.

But he's not paying me for the work I'm doing. He's taking care of me, because I'm a helpless guy. And I, you know, I didn't have anything else I could do at the time.

Of course, I went back in the ministry about a year later, because that wasn't even my choice. Guess what? My grandmother died, left enough money to pay for two years off the narrow path to go back on the air. So she put, by her death, she put me back on the air a year later.

And that's why I'm on the air now. But the have to be in full-time ministry for God to support you. You just have to be where God wants you to be.

You have to be doing what God wants you to do. Now, if you work at a job, that's where God wants most people to be when they're young enough to be working, and able-bodied, and all that. But if you can't work, if something happens beyond your control, well, there's still a God.

He knows. The birds of the air, they don't work either, but God feeds them. The flowers don't work, but God clothes them.

So Jesus said, so don't worry about what you're going to eat and drink. Now, I will say this, though. If that's what we're thinking about as living by faith, to me it's just do whatever God has you do, and let Him worry about everything.

Let Him worry about outcomes. That includes health. I never had health insurance.

I have to now. It's required by law. But before Obama, I raised five children, never had health insurance, never needed a doctor for anything.

I raised five children, never needed a doctor. I never needed a doctor. My wife never needed a doctor.

We got sick sometimes. We could take care of it at home, herbally and stuff like that. I mean, nothing life-threatening.

We just didn't even know a doctor, except a friend of ours on the East Coast who I sometimes talked to on the phone. But we never, you know, for decades, I raised a family that didn't have a doctor. But when my youngest son was 16 and a half, and some of you heard this story because I told it a lot because it's so striking to me, my son broke his arm.

He was 16 and a half. The other kids were grown. I'd raised four of them to maturity, and

I had one left, a dependent, and he's 16 and a half, and he broke his arm badly.

So I took him to the hospital, and because I didn't have insurance, the hospital did what they usually do for people who don't have insurance, gave me a break. Only cost two grand to get his arm fixed. Well, that wasn't too bad, especially in view of the fact that the day before this happened, I'd gone to the post office and opened the box, and someone I didn't know, a lawyer from Texas who I'd never met, I'd met him since then, but I didn't know him then, he sent me a personal check for \$2,000.

That was Saturday. My son broke his arm Sunday. It cost two grand.

Now, I was driving my son back home with his new cast on from the hospital. He said, well, dad, don't you, pa, don't you wish now that you had health insurance? I said, are you kidding me? If I had had health insurance all the years I was raising kids, it would have cost me \$100,000 for this cast. As it is, it only cost \$2,000, and God sent the check in the mail yesterday.

So, that's a true story. I mean, you do what God wants you to do and trust him with the outcome. Now, I have insurance now because I'm not a lawbreaker.

You're supposed to have it. I'd be glad not to. I'd prefer not to.

But, you know, I'd rather, I always thought that when you're buying health insurance, you're betting against your good health, right? You're betting against yourself. If you don't get, if you don't get sick, you lose because you pour all that money away that was to take care of health care, and you never, you just gave it away to somebody who probably didn't need it. And if you do get sick, well, that's the only time health insurance is of any, any use.

And it can't guarantee you'll be well. It's not health insurance. It's medical expense insurance.

But medical expenses, to me, are no different than any other necessary expenses. If God provides my food expenses, why wouldn't he provide my medical expense? I just have no reason to want to waste the money paying premiums. I, of course, have no choice now.

I do follow the laws. But you become a steward. Here's what I want to say about this.

If you're going to live trusting God to provide, and I'm not recommending that you do this in the way I do it, unless that's what God calls you to do, but most people are called to support themselves various other ways, but if you're called to do it the way I do it, then this works, it'll work for you as much as for me. But the thing is, if you're going to let God provide everything, you have to be content with what he provides. Paul said, having food and clothing, we will with these things be content.

Or will we? If you had nothing but food and clothing, would you be content? Paul would. Jesus certainly would. I would.

Sometimes I've had not much more than that. I have usually had a roof over my head too, but it wasn't often my own. Jesus didn't.

He said, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. There's a good chance Jesus and his disciples didn't even own a change of clothing. Peasants usually didn't.

We've got so much, and we're addicted to it. You know, I'm not saying there's anything wrong with having a lot of stuff. I'm actually very comfortable right now.

My life is a comfortable life now. Most of my adult life it was not, but I'm living the dream. I've got a wonderful wife, I've got a comfortable home, things are good.

But they don't have to be. If we're going to let God meet our needs, we have to let him meet at the standard of living he chooses, not the one that we would actually prefer. And a lot of times we'd much rather get a job and work and support the lifestyle we like.

But the truth is, even if we do work and provide for ourselves more than we need, there's still that stewardship issue. You know, God's going to still say, okay, I gave you a lot more than you needed. What'd you do with it? And that's not for me to judge anyone.

I've never judged another person about how they used their surplus. I know what I do with mine. I don't know what you do with yours, and I don't even care.

And if I knew, I wouldn't judge you for it. But when you're going to live by faith, if you're going to trust God to provide, you're going to let him provide what he wants to provide. And you're going to be content with what he provides.

You're going to be a good steward with it. And those are important biblical principles. Anyway, those are thoughts.

I have not prepared a talk about living by faith ever. I probably should sometime, but those are the thoughts I wanted to give, and it's probably taking enough time for that. I should give you a chance to stand up and stretch, and we have not quite another hour before we have to vacate the premises.

So if you want to stretch, go to the bathroom. I don't know if there's anything else to do in here, but take five minutes. Come back.

We'll have Q&A, okay? All right. Some people have handed me some questions, and I also want to open up for questions from the floor, as they say. Okay.

A couple of questions that were handed to me. Courtship. What's biblically correct for

intimacy, if any, before marriage? Parentheses.

Kissing, hugging, eye gazing, etc. Eye gazing is probably going to be fairly safe. Maybe not.

I get mesmerized, but you know, I don't know that we have rules that are made, so much as we have principles that are made. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 5, it is at the beginning of chapter 5, do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters with all purity. Younger women, he told Timothy, treat like sisters with all purity.

Now, of course, this is not talking about a courtship situation, but clearly, if a man and woman are in a romantic relationship moving toward marriage, which is what I consider courtship to be by definition. Courtship is when you're seriously contemplating marriage. I think that you need to see as much as possible how much you can maintain a brother and sister respect for each other.

Now, that doesn't mean there won't be romantic elements that don't exist between a brother and a sister, but you know, when I was in junior high and my hormones started firing for the first time, I was a late bloomer. I remember, you know, there were girls in my class I was noticing, and I wasn't very advanced in my understanding of sex and things like that, because my parents raised me kind of sheltered, but I remember, you know, feeling an interest in some of the girls, and I remember thinking, this thought very consciously, I thought, well, how would I feel if my sister, who was just two years older than me, if there were, if there was a guy interested in my sister, how would I want him to act toward her? How would I want him to think toward her? And I remember, I mean, sort of a little bit like what Paul was saying, you know, treat women like sisters. Well, I didn't, it wasn't quite the same, but it's similar, you know, I mean, how would I want my sister to be treated by a man, even if it was a man that was courting her? Now, of course, I'm more inclined to think of my daughters, because I have adult daughters and stuff.

How would I want a man to treat my adult daughter? I heard a story about a young man who's going out on his first date in his late teens, and he's lived at home, he's a godly young man, and he said to his dad, you know, dad, I don't know, I've never been on a date, I don't know what to do, and his dad said, well, I thought you're going out to a movie, and he says, yeah, well, that's, yeah, I know that part, but I mean, what to do on a date? What do you do? And his father said, oh, I see what you mean. He said, well, do you think this girl's the girl you're going to marry? And his son said, well, I don't have any reason to have an opinion about that right now, so very possibly not. And he said, well, do you suppose the girl that you'll eventually marry may be going out tonight with someone else other than you? And his son said, well, there's a good chance of that, I suppose.

And his dad said, why don't you do with this girl what you want that guy to do with your future wife? That sounds like a good idea, as much as possible. There's no hard and fast rules about this, because the Bible doesn't describe that behavior. It has principles.

The main principle would be, as you would that men would do to you, do likewise to them. And so, what would you want someone to do with your future spouse if that doesn't happen to be the person you're courting right now? I mean, you never know until it happens that you get married. Some people say, well, we can have sex because we know we're getting married.

Oh, do you? You know that. Have you never heard of anyone who was left at the altar? Have you never heard of someone who was engaged and passionately interested in someone, and then it cooled down before the marriage, and the marriage never happened? You don't know what's going to happen. You can't really presume on the future.

The Bible says love is patient. Now, I'm not always patient, because I'm not always loving. And I have to say that not everything I've ever done in my life while dating was the most patient thing I could have done.

There's things I could like to run the tape back and reduce some of those things. So, I'm not arguing from what I have done. I'm not the standard.

I'm just saying there are principles. And if I was courting today, I would hope that I would, you know, fulfill those principles. That's about the most I can say about that.

The other question here is about gays leading a church. She says, I cannot support this. I love them, yes, but not take part in any of their church services.

Gives a lot of scripture with that. Well, I can understand that sentiment. I would have the same sentiment.

Actually, somebody on the East Coast messaged me on Facebook. I think it was yesterday, asking that very thing. She said, you know, there's a gay person who's leading worship at our church.

She says, I don't know really what to say about it, because we know that everyone's a sinner. And, you know, being gay isn't a worse sin than other sins. And so, what do you think? What I said is that if a gay person is living a celibate pure life, they're no different than anybody else.

To say they're gay simply tells you where their attraction is. Now, I've never been gay, but I've been single, and I could tell you where my attraction was. It was not toward men, it was toward women.

But as long as I was living a celibate life, you know, no one could disqualify me for ministry. And that would be true if I was gay also. Gay, straight, you know, nobody's allowed to fornicate.

A lot of people make gay out to be the special sin. It's not a special sin. Sex is something that the Bible says there's a certain place for it.

There's a certain thing that God defines as marriage. Jesus defined it for us. He wasn't the first.

It's defined in Genesis, but he affirmed it. In Matthew 19, he said, have you not heard that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said for this purpose shall a man leave his father and mother to leave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh? That's the definition of marriage. Now, anyone who's not in a marriage like that is not free to have sex.

It's really that easy. It doesn't matter if you're attracted to men, women, animals, whatever. You're not allowed to have sex outside of marriage.

Marriage is what God made sex for. So, you know, sometimes people say the Bible is homophobic or whatever. No, it's not homophobic anymore.

More than it's bestiality phobic. It's against bestiality too. It's also against adultery.

That's not a phobia. That's not making sex out to be a dirty thing. That's because sex is a sacred thing that God designed to be exercised in a relationship that's a picture of Christ in the church.

It's actually perhaps one of the most sacred things that God gave to Adam and Eve is their sexuality and their relationship with him. That'd be the more precious thing, but their sexuality was their whole mission. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

So sexuality, anyone who's not a virgin knows, sexuality is a powerful thing. Frankly, if you are a virgin, you know it's a powerful thing because you know the difficulty of resisting it. And when you actually have been involved sexually with a person, you know there's an emotional thing that's different than just eye gazing, you know.

And that's how it is. The two become one flesh. And it's not appropriate for two to become one flesh unless they're going to be one flesh for the rest of their lives.

And two men can't be one flesh and two women can't be one flesh because they can't do the thing. That makes a couple one flesh. And I mean that's not a prejudice against them, it's just it's just like a rock and a tree, you know.

They can't be a marriage, they just can't they can't become one flesh. It's just they're not designed to do that. It's nothing wrong with rocks or trees, but that's just not what

they do.

It's not what they're made for. And so people who are gay or straight shouldn't fornicate. If a person is gay, and that means they have same-sex attraction, but they're a committed Christian, they're living a celibate life.

Well, they wouldn't be the first. Paul lived a celibate life. Timothy lived a celibate life.

Jesus lived a celibate life. Millions of people have lived celibate lives, believe it or not. At least, I don't know the actual number, but certainly throughout history there's been a lot of Christians who weren't married.

I lived a celibate life for many years as a single person. So I know it's difficult, and I know that it's right, because the Bible says it's right. But if someone's fornicating, I don't care if they're gay or straight.

Fornication, Paul said, if anyone claims to be a brother and is a fornicator, this is in 1 Corinthians 5, don't keep company with them. Don't eat with them. In other words, the church isn't a haven for people who are unrepentant sinners.

Unrepentance is a big word. When people say, well, how can you throw the gays out if everyone's a sinner? Everyone ought to be thrown out. That's like the crazy statement that Gandhi made that, well, an eye for an eye and tooth for tooth will make a whole world full of blind and toothless people.

Really? Is that really what it means? If I take the code that if I knock your eye out, you can knock my eye out, are we all going to knock each other's eyes out? I have a feeling very few people would be knocking anyone's eyes out under those conditions. No. Some people do live an obedient life as best they know how, and when they fail, they repent.

I know gay people sometimes fail who are trying to live a holy life, and I know some straight guys who sometimes fail, because even though they're trying to live a holy life, their temptation is strong and people fall. But do they repent? If they repent, it means they're not going to make a lifestyle. They're not going to affirm it.

They're not going to say it's okay. Repenting is the opposite of saying it's okay. Repentance is saying it's not okay, it's evil.

Now, if you've got a gay person who says it would be evil for me to engage in fornication, then that's about the same as a straight person who says the same thing. And, you know, someone who's living a celibate life, who can blame them for where their attractions are. You don't usually choose who you're going to be attracted to.

That happens to you in most cases. But when people are living, affirming a sinful life behavior, not just an orientation, but a behavior, one that God forbids, well, then they

don't belong in the fellowship of the church. I don't care if they're straight or gay.

This is not an anti-gay thing. This is simply saying people who belong in the church are the people who have repented of their fleshly, sensual, worldly, sinful ways, and who are doing what they know to do as best they can to live a holy life. And when people are doing that for the glory of God, I don't care what their orientation is.

I feel sorry for them if they've got a same-sex orientation because it obviously is going to be harder for them. Getting married is not one of the options, unless they want to marry someone of the opposite sex. Now, some gay people do.

Some people do marry someone of the opposite sex. Nowadays, people would say, well, if you do that, you're betraying who you are. No, you're not.

You're just obeying God. How many people have you heard of? I know of many, including one of the first gay bishops of the Episcopal Church, who lived a life married to a woman and had children for many years, and then decided he was gay, so he divorced his wife and went off to live with this gay lover. Wait a minute.

You're gay, and you had children, and lived with a wife for years? Maybe we should say you're bi. And if you're bi, why don't you just do the thing that you're allowed to do, and say no to the other thing? You know, I have to say no to many things in my life. When someone says, well, you can't tell me who I can love.

Right, I wouldn't dare tell you who you can love, except, I think, if you're going to follow Jesus, you have to love everybody. But that's a different issue. Having sex is not the same thing as love.

Everybody knows that. Everybody knows somebody who's had sex with someone they don't love. So love and sex are not interchangeable ideas.

They are related in the right context, but outside that context, there's sin, and that people in the church, certainly people who are leading a church, are not supposed to be doing that kind of thing. Now, there's someone else gave me some written question here, and I'll take this, and I want to take them from anyone here who has questions. I've studied the Bible my whole life, and I have never been able to make any sense of all of the brutal treatment of the concubine in Judges 19.

She was gang raped all night long, then in the morning was cut into 12 pieces by her lord, that is her owner, because she was a slave, and sent to different parts of Israel. I can't see any part of this story that can be spiritually significant. Do you have an understanding or an explanation? I'm completely perplexed.

Well, it's a very disturbing story to be sure, and I don't know of anything that would be spiritually significant about it. This is not a spiritual story. This is a story of sin.

This is a story about evil, but there's lots of stories like that in the Bible, because the Bible is telling human history, and it'd be a real mistake to think that every time it tells a story, it's advocating the behavior of the people in it. For example, it tells what Adam and Eve sinning in the Garden of Eden by eating the forbidden fruit. It's not advocating that.

It's just telling it happened because it did. David, you know, slept with his neighbor's wife and then killed his neighbor to keep her. The Bible doesn't in any way advocate that kind of behavior.

It condemns it. So when you read about stories of people doing really awful things, you're simply reading a story about something that really did happen. Does it have spiritual significance? It doesn't need to have spiritual significance.

Perhaps there are lessons to learn from it, but that's not absolutely necessary. I think one thing that that story does teach us is that when Israel was not governing itself by the law of God, once you divorce yourself from the law of God, you can fall into all kinds of horrible behavior. And that's really, I think, the lesson of that story.

What happened was a man's concubine was gang-raped in a town where he had come to spend the night. And she was dead at the doorway when he went out the next morning. Now, this is the part that's really hard to understand.

Frankly, gang-rape is hard for me to understand too, but this part's really culturally strange to us. He cut her body into 12 pieces and sent pieces of it by UPS to all the 12 tribes of Israel. Now, we're not told what message he sent with it, but it got them all to show up at his door and say, what? What is this? Now, there's a similar story that happened a little later that might help us understand a little more of what was going on there.

Because when Saul was anointed king and he first heard about one of the things that was going to become his responsibility to deliver some people who were being attacked by foreigners for some of his own people, he took the oxen from his plow and he cut them up into pieces and sent pieces out to tribes of Israel and said, so shall the oxen of any man who does not show up for battle be treated. We'll cut your oxen to pieces like this. This was kind of an ancient Middle Eastern way of doing things.

When people would make a covenant, for example, they'd cut an animal in two and the two parties making a covenant would pass between the two parts and they'd say, so shall I be cut in two like this animal if I break this covenant. It's totally foreign. I mean, we shouldn't be surprised, reading things done 4,000 years ago in the Middle East, not the West, that they'd be culturally weird to us.

And that is weird. But I believe by doing this, people understood the tribes saying, well,

we're being summonsed here. We're being called upon to respond to something very gross, something very horrible.

So they came and said, what is this about? And he said, well, this happened to my concubine. You need to join me to help bring retribution on that city. So there was a war.

And that's what happened. Now, the Bible isn't saying that should have happened. It's not saying that that's something to copy or to imitate.

It's just saying that happened. But again, it illustrates very well as much in the book of Judges does. And frankly, in the subsequent history of Israel too, even under the kings, that when you depart from the law of God, there's not really much to keep you from going really, really far wrong.

And that's a story about some people who went really far wrong. Okay, any questions? Yes. Yeah.

So the question is, God in the Old Testament seems quite different than Jesus in the New Testament. And even Jesus seemed to modify some things in his own teaching from the Old Testament. So how can we explain that difference? Well, one very important difference is that Jesus did not come to establish a political nation with armies, criminal justice systems, that kind of thing.

He came to set up a spiritual kingdom. He said to Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom was of this world, my servants would have fought so that I would not have been captured by the Jews, but it is not from here.

Now, what he's saying to Pilate is, I do have a kingdom. I'm here to set up a kingdom, but it's not the regular kind of kingdom that has armies and that kind of stuff. It's a spiritual kingdom.

And we know from reading the New Testament, it's a spiritual warfare against principalities and powers and so forth. That wasn't true in the Old Testament. God was setting up a political kingdom made of an ethnic group that he had brought out of slavery.

He had made promises to their ancestors to take care of them. And so he vindicated them against oppressors like Pharaoh and other oppressors that came against him, like the Amalekites and the Philistines and others. But the main thing that was different is in the Old Testament, we see how God governs a political nation when his people are a political nation.

In the New Testament, Jesus does not establish a political nation. He didn't tell the Jews, he didn't tell his followers to overthrow Rome or even to try to modify Rome's rule. Jesus never, even though he talked to Pilate, he wouldn't even speak to Herod.

He had opportunities to tell these rulers how to change things up for the better. He didn't bother. He wasn't there to modify the way nations rule, worldly nations.

He was there to establish a spiritual kingdom that could survive under any political system. Now, that would require resisting spiritual powers. It would require that you walk in total integrity from the heart.

The Old Testament told people to love God with all their hearts, but basically they could get by just keeping the external commands because they were an external nation. They were a physical nation with physical boundaries. There was a criminal justice system, there were crimes to punish, and so forth.

There were enemies to defeat, or else the Israelites would be wiped out. So we can say that in the Old Testament, we see how God deals with his people when he's setting them up as a political entity in competition with the other political entities in the world. He said that they were going to be his nation, a kingdom of priests among the other nations.

Whereas in the New Testament, he's not setting the church up to be a political power. We don't have church armies, we don't have church police force, we don't have church prisons, we don't penalize people like that. But it was a different system.

I mean, yes, it was a different covenant, but the different covenants define different systems of God operating. He was operating through a political nation in the Old Testament. He's not in the New Testament.

He's reaching out to all the political nations, but his people are a spiritual fellowship, and they're to be dominated by spiritual principle that doesn't involve going out and killing enemies and things like that. But every political nation that is threatened by hostile enemies either has to kill them or surrender to them, and there's not really any other options. Well, except there's one other option.

You could pray and God could send an angel out and kill 185,000 of them outside your walls, but that didn't happen very often. So God gave them rules for war. He told them who to defeat, how to deal with them.

Jesus told his disciples, I want you to love your enemies now, turn the other cheek, and go two miles instead of one with the guy who makes you want to go one. So, I mean, that's the brief thing. Now, the fact that we see a lot more cases of severe judgments of God in the Old Testament than in the New is no doubt just a difference in proportion of time.

The Old Testament covers 4,000 years. The New Testament covers 40 years. That is, if we take it from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, about 40 or less.

So the Old Testament covers a hundred times as long a period of time as the New

Testament covers. Now, do we see the same kinds of things in the New as the Old? In some cases, yes. In the Old Testament, we see that fire comes out from the presence of the Lord and eats up Nadab and Abihu, burns them up.

We see Uzzah is struck dead when he touches the ark. We see those kinds of things in the Old Testament. We say, oh, that doesn't sound very much like Jesus, but when you come to the New Testament Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead by God.

And Herod blasphemes, so an angel of the Lord strikes him and he's eaten with worms and dies. And then you have the book of Revelation, where the Lamb, which is Jesus, is doing a lot of severe things to his enemies. What we have to say is we really have the same God, who acts pretty much the same way in the Old and the New Testament.

The difference is the Old Testament covers a hundred times as much history, and we might expect a hundred times as many more judgments in that period of time as the 40 years of the New Testament, but we don't really find it. Actually, per year or per decade, there's more of God's divine judgments in the New Testament than there are in the Old Testament recorded. But we sometimes, we can read through the Old Testament in a few weeks' time, and we sometimes forget that we just covered four millennia here.

And yeah, there's some pretty gnarly things in there, but they're kind of spread out, sort of like I was talking about the miracles. You know, you see a lot of miracles, but they're clustered around a few short periods of time. Most of the time is passed over without a special activity going on.

But because of the greater number of judgments you read in the Old Testament than the New, and because it's a different kind of a system that God's setting up in the Old Testament with Israel than He sets up with the Church, I think those two things, more than any others, probably explain the apparent differences in God's behavior in the Old and the New Testament. Yeah. When Jesus said, you have heard that it was said, you should not commit murder, whoever commits murder shall be in danger of the judgment.

But I say to you, whoever is angry at his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Jesus is not changing the Old Testament because He's not now, He doesn't say, you have heard that it was said you should not murder, but I say unto you, murder. You've heard that it was said you should not commit adultery, but I say, commit adultery.

Jesus did not abrogate the law, He expounded the law. He's saying, okay, you know that you're not supposed to murder. What you may not know is the same concerns that God has about murder He has about some other kinds of behaviors that He doesn't like either, that reflect the same kind of hostility that murder does.

It's just less so. Maybe calling your brother raka or fool isn't quite as harmful to him as

murdering him, but it's the same hostile, unloving attitude toward your neighbor. God doesn't like it.

And when He says, you've heard you shouldn't commit adultery, but I say, don't even think about it. See, He's not abrogating the law. He's not saying, okay, now you can commit adultery.

He's saying, no, God didn't want you to commit it because He doesn't even want you to think about it. And what Jesus does in the Sermon on the Mount there with the six illustrations He gives, He never abrogates any one thing that they say. He said, you've heard that it was said, an eye for a tooth for tooth, but I say to you, turn the other cheek.

You might say, well, that abrogated that. No, it did not. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

That was in the law for the magistrates to know how to penalize criminals. His disciples were not magistrates. If a judge had someone come to him, two people, and once said, this guy just knocked my tooth out and I wasn't even doing anything wrong.

The judges would say, okay, what penalty should it be? One tooth, you take one of his. That's how the judges were supposed to penalize criminal behavior. There's a good proportion of the law that's not directed to the average citizen among the Jews, but to the magistrates about how to adjudicate cases between people.

An eye for eye, tooth for tooth, stroke for stroke, burn for burn, life for life. That's repeated many times in the Old Testament as what the penalties are for the judges. That is for the rulers to dish out to people who committed a crime against somebody else.

It's like every courtroom has got to have some kind of code of criminal punishment. But when Jesus said, you've heard an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, you might think, therefore, that you should take it out on people who've hurt you. No, I say you can turn the other cheek.

You don't have to take them to court at all. Jesus didn't say, if a case like this comes to court, the judge should change it. No more eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

It's not up to the judges to let the criminals go when the victim is, when he's on trial. You know, if there's somebody, if somebody robs me and I take him to court, which I would not do, but if I did, it's mine if I wish to forgive the person for robbing me. It's not the judge's place to forgive the guy who robbed me.

The judge is there to administer justice. It's up to me to decide whether I take him to court or not. I can say, I suffered tremendous harm by what you did, but I'm going to forgive you.

You struck me and knocked out my tooth. I could take you to court and take one of your

teeth, but let's let it go. You see, Jesus is telling his disciples, even though you have heard correctly that the courts are to beat out this kind of penalty for this kind of crime.

He says, you don't have to, you don't have to take them to court. Just forgive them. Just turn the other cheek.

If someone wants to take you to court and take your coat, give them your cloak also. He's not changing the law. He's telling his disciples what the heart of God is for them to please God.

Now, if it comes to, if they're a magistrate, if you happen to be a Christian judge, and by the way, early Christians for the first 300 years didn't think that Christians should be judges, but I'm not sure I agree with them about that. But if you're a Christian judge and someone comes in here and says, this guy was driving drunk and he ran over my wife and killed her, I can't as just say, well, I'm just feeling like Jesus today. I'm feeling very generous, you know, go and sin no more.

Well, I'm not a just judge then. I'm not, I'm not being loving. I'm turning an unrepentant drunk driver out to kill more people.

That's not a loving thing to do. A judge has a unique role in the will of God. And Paul says that in Romans 13, God has appointed the government officials to punish evildoers.

They are the, they're, they're God's ministers to exercise wrath on those who do evil. That's what the government's there for. Not for me to do because I'm not in the government.

Two verses earlier, three verses earlier, Paul says, brethren, don't avenge yourselves, but the government is there to avenge. And so there's a different role for a magistrate or a judge on the one hand than for a common citizen. Jesus says, you guys have heard the judges were told to eye for eye for truth, truth.

And yeah, if someone knocks out your tooth and you take them to court, they, I guess they've got to give up a tooth, but why don't you just let them go? Why don't you just live without your tooth? And why, why do you have to hurt him? Why do you have to make an issue of this? Why don't you just forgive him? Why don't you be like me? And so I don't think Jesus changed anything in the law. Yeah. The last of the six examples, he said, you've heard that it was said, love your enemy, love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I say, love your enemies. Well, that's the only thing he contradicted. And the part he contradicted wasn't in the law.

The law did say, love your neighbor, but it doesn't anywhere say, hate your enemy. That was what the rabbis had taught them. He says, now don't do that.

Your enemy is your neighbor too. So you need to love your neighbor. And that could include your enemy who's your neighbor.

So this is how, um, that's how I understand those, those issues. Uh, yes, in the back. Well, are you saying that David didn't personally kill Uriah, but he put him in the position to be killed.

And so David was guilty. And if God doesn't personally tempt us, but he puts us in position to be tempted by the devil, how does that make God not guilty? Right? Yeah. Well, he's not the one tempting us, but he certainly is the one in charge of the situation.

Uh, he's the, the devil is called the tempter. That's what the devil's role is. Now being tempted is not a bad thing.

Jesus was tempted. He never sinned. Being tempted doesn't mean you sin.

Being tempted means you're being tested. Now, is it good to be tested? Well, it is if you're supposed to be learning something, you know, I mean, if we think that the whole purpose of our life here is just to get saved, to have a ticket to heaven and just cruise until Jesus comes back or till we die, then we're missing the whole point. We're here to learn something.

We're here to learn, to trust God, to love God, to know God, to obey God in the midst of tests, that temptations, which by the way, we're temptation and tests are the same in the Greek and in Hebrew. Um, we think of temptation mainly as seduction to do what's evil, but, but the word test and the same word. So, um, uh huh.

Well, I don't know that, I don't know that James is saying, um, that we shouldn't blame God for our temptations as if temptations are something that are blameworthy. I think he's just saying, God is not the one who's trying to get you to do the wrong thing. If you're tempted to do evil, that's James qualifies it.

It says God is not tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man. There's God's not trying to persuade you to do any evil. He doesn't want you to do evil.

Now you are being tempted, but he doesn't even mention the devil. James doesn't even mention the devil. What he says, everyone is tempted when he's drawn away by his own lusts and enticed.

And when lust is conceived, it brings forth sin and sin when it's finished brings forth death. So he doesn't even mention the devil in there, although he does elsewhere. He does say resist the devil and he'll flee from you in another passage in James.

But, but when he saw a temptation, he talks about, it's kind of on us. You know, we're drawn away. Of course, the devil's the one who tries to draw us away, but our own lusts

and our own flesh and the world and all that is working against us too.

But that's all part of the circumstance God put us in. But he's not saying it's bad for us to go through that. We shouldn't, we shouldn't succumb to it.

It's good for us to be tested. Um, how can we be trusted if we're not tested? You know, how can you be trusted to become an accountant if you haven't taken any tests in your math classes to know if you know how to do math or not? I mean, you got to learn something, you'd be tested to know if you learned it so you can be trusted to do it. Uh, because people are vulnerable to, to, you know, the things that you're given responsibility for.

And I believe that God has made us to rule with him and therefore he has to test us to see if we're the right stuff, you know, uh, you don't want to turn the universe over to somebody and give them the keys if they can't be trusted. And that's what this life is. This life is testing us to see if we can be trusted.

If we endure, we'll reign with him. The Bible says Adam and Eve were being tested that very same way. God made them to give them dominion.

It says, God said, let us make man in our image and let's get, let us give them dominion over everything. But they had to be tested. They didn't do well on the test.

So, so we get to be tested and some of us will reign with him and some won't. But, um, but the temptation is not a bad thing. But what James is saying is, if you're being tempted with evil and that with evil is, is the qualifier that James uses.

If you're being drawn to do what's evil, that's a temptation, that's a test. But God's not trying to draw you to do evil. That's your own heart, your own flesh drawing you to evil.

So, uh, it's not like he's trying to say, don't blame God. He's just trying to make you understand that if you feel drawn to evil, don't think that God's trying to get you to do it. He's not trying to get you to do it.

That's your own flesh and your lusts being drawn that way. Anyway, um, I don't know if that answer is adequate. You make a good parallel with David and so forth.

And obviously David was responsible for the crime of killing Uriah. But being tempted isn't, tempting isn't a crime. Being tested isn't a crime.

I mean, uh, your, your college professors will always give you tests and they're not committing a crime when they do that. They're just seeing if you know, if you, if you, if you can be trusted to pass the course and go on to the next level.