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Wintery Knight's Favorite Bible Passages

July 17, 2022



Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss 5 Bible passages that made WK the man he is today. WK introduces each passage by explaining the context in his life where the passage became meaningful to him. WK talks about his growth as a Christian. Desert Rose comments on each of the passages as well.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight and Rose Show where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is Wintery Knight's Favorite Bible Passages. I'm Wintery Knight.

And I'm Desert Rose. In today's episode, we are going to discuss some of Wintery Knight's favorite passages from the Bible. I'm very excited about this.

For each passage, we're going to start with how he discovered it and then talk about the meaning and the significance of this passage. So, WK, why don't you get us started with our first passage? WK Okay. So, the first passage is Psalm 27, verse 14, and we'll read it in context.

So, the time in my life when I discovered this was when I was in fifth grade. I was in public schools at that time, but even so, somehow we were handed out Gideon New Testament. So, I got a little read New Testament with a two-year schedule for reading the entire thing through, and I read it through in the two years.

KW Yeah, that's amazing to me that that happened, that you were in public school and that you were given Bibles. WK We even had the Lord's Prayer during announcements. KW Wow.

WK This is all gone now. It's completely gone. We had to stand for the Lord's Prayer.

So, two things I want to point out about what life was like for me at that time. So, you know, it's an immigrant family. We're very, very poor.

Both my parents are working. At one point, I remember my dad was actually working three jobs. And yeah, the point I want to emphasize is my mom was very stressed out by think by working.

So, there was a lot of yelling, curse words, you know, at all hours in the early morning, almost every day, there was some violence in the home. My dad really didn't put his foot down to stop any of this. The way that it affected me was there was no real plan for my life and no monitoring of me day to day, no building me up.

I think the best way for me to explain this is if you think about school, it's not just that they weren't looking at my homework, they didn't know who my teachers were or anything like that. It was that they completely ignored my education until report card day and then they would just yell at me, not knowing anything about what I was learning for a few days for anything less than a day. Wow.

Birthdays were just like ordinary days, no singing, no gifts, no decorations, no nothing. That's so sad. Yeah, this is real.

People are surprised to see this. My friend Dina once Skyped me during one of my birthdays and said, she said, "Where's the singing? Where's the birthday gifts? Where are the decorations? Where's the cake?" And I said, "That's never happened to me in my entire life and nothing for Christmas either." So, basically, there was nobody in charge of making me into anything. And then the schools were very similar.

These were public schools with a lot of very feminist teachers who are very bitter that they don't earn software engineer money with their English degrees. Nobody has a plan

to turn you into William Lane Craig. Nobody has a plan to turn you into Walter Bradley.

So, in addition to having to put up with that, you're putting up with these cliques of cool kids. So, basically, the feeling that I had was nobody has a plan for me. Everybody just yells at me when I fail.

I'm not even sure what I'm supposed to be doing. And I think I even had this desire. I was fascinated with knights and chivalry and I had a lot of books about knights.

And I was just thinking, "How will I be a hero? How will my life be significant if it's like this right now?" So, why don't you go ahead and just read us the whole context of that Psalm 27:14? Sure. Yeah, absolutely. Let me start at verse 11 and go down to 14.

Okay. "Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me in a level path because of my foes. Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me and such as breathe out violence.

I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord, be strong, and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord." Yeah, so that last verse is the one that has significance for me.

But I think if you look at verse 11, it says, "Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me in a level path." A lot of people are very resentful about God as leader, setting boundaries and giving them priorities that aren't about their happiness. But if you're coming from my background, having a teacher and a leader to replace the teachers and the leaders that you have is actually really desirable. Anytime I think about what my conversion to Christianity means to me, I can always just look at my brother who grew up in the same environment and with the same teachers as I did.

I remember I had a computer science professor in grade 10 and my brother got a 44% in that class and I won the award. So I kept going through the same teachers and classes and they were like, "Who are you and how are you so different than your older brother?" But that's because my older brother wasn't looking for a leader and a teacher from Christian theism and the Bible. This is a daily reminder, like my brother has completely failed to launch on every level, dropped out of university, minimum wage jobs.

There's no reason for this except that he was really resentful about seeing everything as a test that he would always fail and then get yelled at. And nobody taking responsibility on a day-to-day basis to monitor and build him up. I mean, my parents were just far too busy for that and they seem to like yelling at us.

They seem to enjoy it. So it just didn't seem to be a big priority. Yeah, I love this passage as well.

God's leadership completely changed my life for good as well. And like you, you kind of

implied, good is not the same thing as easy all the time or comfortable but certainly God changed my life for good for better. I come from a broken home.

My brother was not all that unlike your brother, but he actually stopped going to school in middle school. He officially dropped out in ninth grade. He was on drugs.

We never knew if he was alive until he went to prison. Then we were pretty sure he was alive because we would have been contacted if something happened to him in prison. But until that time we didn't know where he was.

He was living on the streets. And both of us, I think, believed that our entire value in self-worth was entirely dependent on our achievement. But my brother had decided that he was a failure, that he could never earn his way or live up to what was demanded of him or what would make him a worthwhile person.

For me, I also believed that my self-worth was totally dependent on my achievement, but I tended to achieve quite a bit in academics and in athletics. But it was so stressful. If I got 100% on every single test and I won every single tennis tournament at every single level of competition, then I thought maybe I was acceptable.

Maybe I was worth something. But if not, if I ever lost a match, if I ever got even a low A on a grade or an A- for sure, then I thought I was just a worthless failure. I didn't have a lot of friends because I was so consumed by tennis and academics in order to earn my worth.

This was just a ton of pressure. It was a very, very heavy burden to carry, especially as a child. And then I, on top of that, then I started having a bunch of health problems that nobody could figure out.

Very, very strange symptoms because I was in amazing shape and athletic strength and conditioning and all of that. I was going to the ER with severe muscle cramping. I would fall down on the court screaming and my coach would have to call 911 and all of that.

But after I saw nutritionists and family doctors and all kinds of different doctors, my coach sent me to a psychiatrist and the psychiatrist actually said it was all in my head, which was absolutely ridiculous. But I found out 15 years later that I have celiac disease and that everything I was eating, which was supposedly great for athletes, was poison to my body. Did the doctors not tell your parents that when you were born? Actually they did when I was an infant, like in my first year of life because I was having to go to the ER after every time I ate because I was really, really sick.

And my pediatrician told my mom that I was allergic to wheat. Yeah, she thought that maybe I would outgrow it, but that was never communicated to me. So when I started having health issues, I had no idea what was wrong.

I had never heard this before. So anyway, I began to despair a lot. My entire self-worth was on the line as far as I was concerned.

And then I actually met the Lord in kind of a Damascus road type experience and I started reading the Bible and everything changed at that point. I learned that my self-worth was found in what God says about me, whether or not I got all A's or won every single tennis match. I read and learned from the Apostle Paul that our worldly achievements, which I thought had defined me, are rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing the King of Kings.

I learned that I was adopted into the family of God when I made the commitment to follow Him, that I was declared righteous. I learned that I was made in the image of God Himself. And as I began to change my view of myself and my view of others and my view of what was important, my entire life changed.

I continued to study the Bible and was very intentionally disciplined by some amazing mature Christians. And I learned over the next few years, His ways, like verse 11 talks about. And my priorities were entirely turned upside down.

I became more concerned about my character being like Christ's character than about my worldly achievements. And my greatest joy was my new role as an ambassador for Christ on the earth. I mean, there's no greater honor or privilege.

And I just, I no longer carried the weight of the world. I wasn't trying to prove my value, but I suddenly had the most fulfilling and adventurous life imaginable. So kind of like you said, you know, God is exactly who I want as my, and need, who I need as my teacher, as my savior, as my boss.

Dr. Justin Marchegiani Yeah, similar for me. If you reach that point where you're thinking, I'm very poorly led, you know, by my parents and by these teachers and it seems like they just want me to affirm them and their concern for me is that I look good to others or that I validate their lifestyle. I see teachers doing that now, telling the kids you approve of my transforming or do you approve of my whatever and they expect the kids to say yes.

Like if you find yourself with poor leadership, you should definitely by all means read the Gospel of John, read Philipians, Philipians of first, yes, then the Gospel of John, my two favorite books, read those and cry out to God and say, I am in desperate need of a teacher and a leader. I do not trust the people around me to do this competently. And what will happen is you will find people coming to you with books and you will find, you know, things to read by experience and capable Christians.

For me, it was Walter Bradley whose book I'm reading a biography of him right now, pursue this as well, but you will find that you will be built up and be given new and better

priorities and that thinking less about yourself will actually in my case, get you to where you want to be in terms of meaning and honor and so on. Absolutely. Let's go on to the next one.

Sounds good. Yeah. So what's our next passage? This is one we've talked about before.

I got this I just mentioned Dr. Walter Bradley. When I first got to America in my early 20s, I was a Christian and I started, I had already heard about William Lane Craig from my undergraduate time and we had brought him out to debate on my campus. We, my friends at campus crusade, I knew about other famous apologists.

So I started ordering like dozens of lectures from many, many, many Christian professors and Christian scholars. One of them was Walter Bradley and he just stood out heads and tails over the others. He is a very successful professor of mechanical engineering.

He has enormous success in the private sector as well as in academia and he does lectures on science apologetics and he's, I would say his amazing quality is his discipleship. He is very brave about his faith in academia and he gathers people who are interested in spiritual things to him and his wife and then they lead those people to become Christians and grow as Christians. I love that.

Love that so much. Yeah. Yes.

Should I read the passage? Please. All right. So first Corinthians four starting in verse one, this is how one should regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself for I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted.

It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts. And then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Yes. He offers this passage in that lecture, Giants in the Land that I ordered and listened to. It's very hard to find now.

He's still doing these lectures and basically he's talking about how to be a Christian in academia. In the lecture he talks about the normal way of doing Christianity today is to basically cave on your principles the minute any non-Christian disagrees with you or makes you feel bad about it. Then this is literally true.

You know, compassion is everything and feeling good and being liked is so important to Christians today that they don't have any kind of idea or role model or example where they understand that they can be faithful Christians who defend or even state Christian positions on controversial issues and then people won't like them and that's normal. Okay. Right.

It's important for Christians to be familiar with stories like people like Walter Bradley or William Demsky or Richard Sternberg. These are Christians who are excellent in their jobs, but they face constant disapproval from their coworkers and they get into trouble with deans. They get into trouble with lawyers and they get into, you know, it's very challenging.

And so for me, you know, this passage really says you need to understand that being excellent at defending Christianity doesn't make everyone like you and it doesn't make you feel good. And that's actually the normal Christian life. Yep, exactly.

Yeah. Within the first, in the first year I became a Christian, I read a book by Watchman Nee called The Normal Christian Life. He quotes the book in the lecture.

So good. Yep. So good.

When I first read this passage, I realized, oh my goodness, why do I care at all what other people think of me? Why do I care what other people think of me? Sorry, I was laughing. I wanted to make sure everybody heard that. So yeah, I, you know, I was realizing, I had realized that I am a daughter of the King and not just the King of England or, you know, the King of some other world power, but the King of all the Kings on Earth.

For me to care about some human's judgment is about as senseless as, you know, a royal princess losing sleep because some drunk homeless person on the street, you know, didn't approve of her decision to be sober and pursue an education and pursue wisdom and truth and knowledge and goodness. The opinions and the judgments of godless people mean nothing to me. And this verse was really instrumental in my realizing that and realizing how important that was.

And then eventually I realized, you know, after a little bit of time in the church and around Christians that Christians can also be ignorant and wrong and faulty in their judgments. And so I just don't need to care about any human judgment. You can judge me all you want humans.

It's the Lord who judges me, whose judgment matters. You know, I don't need to pay attention even to my own self-criticism and self-judgment, which I, you know, I was my harshest critic, to be honest, and still am, I think. But really all that matters is what the King thinks.

And the King is my father who loves me unconditionally. I absolutely love this passage. It

has set me free in so many ways.

And now I can focus on God, I can focus on His purposes, I can focus on loving others well without caring what people think about me. Yeah, I think a lot of people go through Christianity kind of growing up in Christian homes and growing up in the church, and they never really understand the work that Christianity does to unlock amazing capabilities. And you're kind of looking at other people and going, "Well, I sing in the choir," or whatever.

And you're thinking, "I'm a Christian," and it just doesn't work like that. So, well, we're going to have an entire show on Walter Bradley if God allows, I guarantee it, because this guy absolutely changed my life. And I think he changed the life of a lot of really powerful Christians who people would recognize, like William Demsky, I think, was, he's, I think, an author or something in this book, and we'll definitely talk about that.

Excellent. Yeah, that would be great. So, tell us what our next passage is.

Okay, so this is Daniel 3 verse 18. When I was in college, I actually attended a very conservative Anglican church downtown. There was a conservative pastor whose name was George.

He liked apologetics a little. He was like a C.S. Lewis type, G.K. Chesterton type apologist, but for me, that was pretty good. He talked about this passage, Daniel 3 18, in a sermon, and I remember this sermon.

He said, "Look at this. You're going to read the passage, but look for the words, the phrase, 'But if not,' in the passage when you read it," I'm saying to our listeners. He says that at one point during the evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk in 1940, you remember the British troops crossed the channel, and they were trying to help the French fight against the Germans.

But the Germans were way too powerful at that time, and the French capitulated almost immediately. So, the British ended up being encircled the British Expeditionary Force, and they had to retreat. A British naval officer who was on shore in northern France, trapped up against the channel, he wired back a single three-letter message.

Three-word? Three-word message, thank you so much, to his British government and his superiors. The message was, "But if not," so when you're reading the passage, our listeners should pick that out and sort of see the context where somebody might send that message, "But if not," and what does it mean? So, go ahead and read the passage, please, please. Okay, great.

Yeah, so Daniel chapter 3, starting in verse 13, "Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and anger, gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then these men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, 'Is it true,

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?' Now, if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, sultry, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well.

But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire, and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O King. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O King, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.'" Yeah, so the key phrase is in the last verse there, but even if He does not.

So the reason I want to highlight this verse is because everywhere in Christianity, including as I was growing up, I would see people quit on Christianity anytime they face any kind of adversity that was so shocking to them, and people would say things like this to me, "I think that there's enough trouble in the world that God wouldn't want me to have to do whatever difficult thing." Yeah, one Christian woman who was my manager in a job I had told me that, she said, "I shouldn't have to learn apologetics because there's enough trouble in the world that God wouldn't want me to have to do this terrible, terrible thing, like pick up a book on apologetics and learn how to defend my faith." Wow. Yeah, so right now what I'm seeing is Christians are going, "Yeah, I'm going to be like those guys. I'm going to be reckless," and so on, and I'm going to bank on getting a bailout from God.

Rather than saying, "Even if God doesn't give me my bailout, I'm going to assume he's going to give it," because when you're faithful to God, God makes everything work out. He makes you happy. He makes people like you.

Well, heck, I hope people understand that that is not how Christianity works. Exactly. That people will not like you and there are no guarantees.

There's actually a, I shouldn't bring this up because then I'm going to admit that I do have some awareness of pop culture, which I want to deny, but there was a recent James Bond movie made and I think I sent you the theme song from it and there's a line in it that says, "Arm yourself because no one else here will save you." And I think if you tell that to modern Christians and say, "You should understand that this is mission impossible. If any of your agents are caught or killed, be aware that the secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions," that if you aren't willing to accept that, you're going to be really shocked by what happens to you as a Christian. Not everything will work out just because you have good intentions and you're being faithful.

In this life, yeah. Right. Exactly.

In this life. And frankly, that is awesome. Well, you know, this is more shocking.

To me, that is awesome. The idea that you're expendable and that, you know, you're like a secret agent and God doesn't come riding to the rescue with trumpets and angels and rainbows to save you from everything. It really puts the emphasis on you because these guys, these guys in the Bible passage, these guys were not losers.

They were very intelligent. They were very powerful. They were very capable and they didn't make it easy for the king to do this to them.

But the point is, is that if they were pinned down and there was no other alternative, they just said, "We don't bow the knee to you. We don't bow the knee to other worldviews on our own." Exactly. If it comes down to our life versus keeping faithful to our worldview, we're going to keep faithful.

We're going to lose our lives. But these guys were not crazy guys, you know? Right. It's not typical church Christianity.

I was just thinking about how this prosperity gospel has infiltrated the church in America in which people think that God is always looking out for your comfort, for your ease, for your selfish ambition, for whatever desires of your heart you may have, regardless of whether it's incompatible with his greater purposes, and that he's always going to rescue you from every trial. If you don't seek an education, then God will somehow just make you rich and provide for all of your selfish desires anyway. If you get in a bind, he's going to rescue you out of that bind.

If you marry someone who is terrible in character because they're really hot, he's just going to make everything work out wonderfully for you. You can always just change your boyfriend later after you're married kind of an attitude, or God will definitely just change him. But yeah, change him into this wonderful, devoted Christian person after the fact.

The thing is that we actually do have to, I mean, sometimes he does rescue us, and he did rescue these three men from the fiery furnace, but they were prepared to endure it even if he didn't. And the same is true today. I mean, sometimes things do actually work out in ways that we absolutely don't deserve here and now that are better than what we deserve.

But other times, we do have to live out the consequences of our actions. God has allowed Christians to suffer from the very beginning. That is the normal Christian life as we said before, and even today.

I mean, just a few years ago, we saw many, many images of ISIS setting Christians on fire and watching them burn to death in Iraq. Centuries ago, God allowed Muslims to cut open the stomachs of Christians and wrap their intestines around a pole and whip them as the Christians ran around the pole until their organs fell out and they dropped dead.

Christians really do suffer around the world.

Most of the time, their faith is significantly deeper than ours here in America. We really, in a lot of ways, live in fantasy land here in America. It's changing very quickly, and so we need to be prepared as Christians because I do think that more persecution is coming.

So we need to be reading about the lives of the martyrs. We need to be praying for God to strengthen us for every trial, not to just remove every trial or make us never have to endure anything difficult but to strengthen us to walk through the trial with Him. We need to soak ourselves in the Word of God that is utterly contrary to the prosperity heresy, and we need the Holy Spirit for that.

I've been praying for these things for years and I've seen God faithful in those, strengthening me as I seek Him and pray and seek to be made stronger. But as Christians, we must be able to say, "But even if," whatever, whatever, "we will not worship another." So I would say make yourself as strong as possible. Definitely be practical, be wise as serpents.

Make yourself a hard target. But at the same time, if you're in the office and everybody is talking bad about you because you have something that came out about you, just understand that that's normal and praiseworthy. I want people to take the initiative to make themselves a hard target.

Grow, save money, don't drink alcohol, all of these character decisions that make yourself very strong and hard to break. But at the same time, understand the persecution, the shaming, the unpopularity, the professional consequences, being dragged into court by LGBT activists. This is part of the normal Christian life.

And so just be ready for it and don't see that as you're less of a Christian than somebody who is happy and liked because they never say anything controversial. Exactly. I don't want anybody feeling bad because they think the real Christian life is being happy and popular.

That's not the real Christian life. The real Christian life is what you see in the verse. Yep, exactly.

And that's actually a really good segue, I think, into the next passage, which is related. Why don't you tell us about that? I will. And I think I just want to say about the previous one, like I had these experiences in the workplace being disliked for being conservative on certain issues.

So that's why I'm offering this to people. So the next passage is Matthew 5.13. I found this passage during college when I was an undergraduate and a graduate, and even more so when I was a graduate student. But basically, I was trying to get married in

college.

And so I would go to IVCF and Campus Crusade and not navigators. There were a lot of Christian women there, and I didn't know enough to know that theology and apologetics were bad. So I was presenting to them accuracy in theological beliefs and ability in apologetics.

I wasn't politically conservative yet. I wasn't anything political yet. So I didn't know Thomas Sowell or whatever.

But I was definitely like, there was one girl I liked, and she denied the existence of hell because she didn't think that God would be mean. She thought that just sincere belief would be enough for God. And I would maintain hell and argue with her.

And it just ends the attempt of getting a relationship. Other women thought that Christianity would make them feel good and be liked. So you would present to them apologetics, and they'd say, "Reading and learning doesn't make me feel good."

And why would I want to be bored by books and be divisive with non-Christians who I want to like me?" So I don't want to learn how to defend anything controversial. So basically, I completely flopped with Christian women during college. And in graduate school, it was a little easier because I was already getting my strength and making money interning with IT companies as part of my master's degree in undergraduate.

I was thinking, "Oh, you know what? Maybe this kind of rejection is nothing for me to be concerned about because they're just impractical." Yeah. And those women have no idea, I think, I would venture to say what they're missing out on. My favorite conversations are in theology and apologetics.

That's the most adventurous and exciting and fulfilling and meaningful conversation that we can have. Once they get married, they start to say, "Oh my goodness, I want meaning in life. Where is my spiritual leader?" I hear that a lot from a lot of married Christian women.

I've made a terrible mistake. And what is going to... I need to teach my husband to start caring about Christianity. It's a little too late to do the right thing now.

But the point is that at the time where I discovered this verse, the context for me was I was really being faced with a choice. And as soon as I came to America and went into the churches, it just got worse. The choice was, "Am I going to study the things that are important to God or am I going to be accepted and desired by Christian women?" Go ahead and read the passage please and then we'll talk about it.

Yeah. So this is Matthew chapter 5 from verse 10 to 15. "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house." Yeah. I think people might be wondering, "Why does he keep making Rose read these passages?" Because I'll cry if I read them.

That's why. I don't know how anybody who's a real Christian who has some experience at this could read 13 through 15 and not feel... Moved. Yeah.

Yeah. Like when I read verse 13 and 14, you know, thinking to the losses that I've had, thinking back to the losses I've had, you know, I remember there was one girl I worked with in an IT company and she was an intern as well. She was very beautiful.

And I let out that I had read the Arthurian legends and she said, "Well, which one is your favorite?" And I said, "Galahad, because he's Chase and he actually completes the quest for the Holy Grail." And after that, she would walk past me in the hallway and she would look up at the ceiling while walking past me. So... Wow. You know, like... Because she felt... Wow.

Yeah. I found out later she was living with her boyfriend and that's the response you get when you're talking about sobriety and chastity and frugality. These things are not good.

They are not good. In the eyes of the world. Yes.

And so, yeah, when I read that verse 13, I just think I feel this strong sense of resignation about being faithful to God and just accepting that there are going to be losses in my life and things that are closed off to me that I'll never have. Yeah. I love the Sermon on the Mount, of course.

I think it's one of the most worthwhile passages in Scripture for Christians to memorize. I did that several years back and it was well worth the time and effort. But I just want to add to what you've said.

Again, if we expect to be affirmed or approved of for calling ourselves Christians, we live in fantasy land. Right. Rejection and persecution are normal and it has been since the beginning.

Like I said, those who expect otherwise, who expect to be praised and approved of for being Christians, I'm guessing, you know, are not likely to persevere for the long haul. Christianity is all about delayed gratification. And if we need gratification from others'

approval and touch now, then, you know, as the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 1, if that were a description of him, then he would not be a servant of God.

It's that serious. Another thing I love about this passage is that, as is typical throughout the whole New Testament, Jesus and Paul and the other writers are pointing us to the next life for our reward, for our gratification, for our endless joys. This is the time in this life right now when we are going to be challenged, when we're going to suffer, when we need to persevere.

This is not our home. We're not home yet, but that day is coming. And I think, you know, it'll be here before we know it.

It seems like, you know, just recently that I was 10 years old and now I'm in my 40s. And when that day comes, we will be with our Lord and Savior, the one who loves us more than we can possibly comprehend. Eventually, He will give us a renewed body.

He will give us a new earth. He will give us perfect fellowship with sinless brothers and sisters in Christ. He has promised us in the Psalms endless joys for all eternity.

It is not going to be boring. It is going to be beyond anything we can imagine. And that has to be where our hope resides.

I love that section of Scripture. Definitely. All right.

So I think we're on to the very, very last one now, which is 2 Timothy 2.4, 1-5. This particular one is about the concerns that I have about Christians being overly influenced by the popular culture and really being unable to resist being entertained by the things that are popular. They just keep going out, watching mainstream movies, and listening to popular music without being discerning about what the lyrics are.

And it seems like it just breaks down their ability to have integrity about their Christian life. Go ahead and read us the passage. So 2 Timothy 2, starting in verse 1, "You, therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also, suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules." So that is just for a little bit of context.

That's the Apostle Paul writing to Timothy at the very end of Paul's life. And Timothy is like his successor. Right.

Yeah. Yeah. So he cares a lot about passing on his knowledge and values.

So yeah, for me, like I'm running into, I run into a lot of people in the office who know a lot about Minecraft and Disney and Star Wars. They go to Disneyland on their vacations, despite all the news that comes out about them. They watch Star Wars movie.

And I recently had an article, I think your name is Chris Evans, and he was making fun of people who disagreed with his very progressive views on sexuality. He said Christians are dinosaurs who are going to die off. So I'm very serious about this.

I grew up with a TV in the house, but as soon as I came to America, there was one in my home for the first few years, but it was never watched. And then I just, it was like a 14 inch TV. And then I just left it.

I left it at home with my parents. So I do have one now, but I just watched like competitive Starcraft and classical movies on DVD on it while I work out. So I don't like music with words.

I just listen to video game music and classical music and video game music is like movie music. It's just suspenseful and like our theme song, you know, very moving. So in terms of theater movies, I don't go to the theaters.

It's usually like one movie, like once a year. And the last two movies I saw were in 2018 or 2019. I saw a movie called the cold blue, which was a documentary about P 17 pilots and crews who flew long range bombers in World War II.

And then a movie called infidel, which was a movie with Jim Caviezel about a Christian man detained in a majority Muslim country. In terms of books, I don't read fiction. I mean, I do, but like once every decade, I'll read one like the Hobbit, you know, the Hobbit, you know, I'll read the Hobbit.

But I read military history, economics and Christian apologetics. I just don't let anybody get into my head because I cannot be distracted by civilian affairs. I have to focus on the soldier lifestyle.

Yeah, that's excellent. So I'll just add to that my experience of competing as an athlete and how that relates because Paul mentioned that in this passage. So in order to be competitive in my sport, which was tennis, you really have to devote your life to it from a very, very young age, at least by eight or nine years old.

I started at age eight. I had to sacrifice basically my childhood. I had to skip school dances, never hung out with friends after school, no extracurricular activities, no hobbies, no fun, no rest, no vacation, no eating junk food.

Basically all the things of childhood had to be sacrificed for my goals as an athlete. Training was very challenging. You know, it involved private and group lessons all the time.

I think I had private lessons like three days a week in group lessons, three days a week. It involved on court drills to develop my quickness and long distance running a few days a week to develop endurance, weightlifting, three days a week for strength, watching video footage of myself to improve my own technique and of my opponents to improve strategy. Wow.

Yeah. Eating foods that I hated, receiving constant constructive criticism from coaches telling me how I needed to be better, practicing against the wall when I couldn't find someone to play against for practice, spending all my weekends at tennis tournaments. In addition to the training, which was challenging in and of itself, my experience, which I know now was all related to celiac disease, involved things like full body cramping, getting rushed to the ER, asthma like attacks, muscle cramping in my legs at night, occasional painful injuries where, and then I had to go sit in these baths of ice, like full body ice baths.

Yeah. And not all of that was related to celiacs. I think most athletes would say, oh yeah, full body ice baths.

Yeah. I remember those were nightmare. Yeah.

Yeah. Right. Right.

Right. Exactly. So yeah.

I mean, you get the picture. It was hard work. There was no time to care about gossip or television or my own comfort or my own personal happiness.

There were goals to accomplish and it demanded a certain lifestyle. Right. Some of it was a little crazy, but I think there are a lot of parallels here to the Christian life.

And that's why Paul mentions it, the single-minded focus, the indifference toward what non-athletes were doing with their time, getting drunk in college and sleeping around and all the other nonsense that goes on at universities and in high school as well. I think this is what most people were doing while I was training. The studying and learning how to defend our faith is very much a parallel.

The perseverance when things are difficult, when people reject us, when we don't see the results that we want right away. I mean, all of these are very similar to what it takes to be an excellent ambassador for Christ, an excellent apologist and a faithful and effective Christian in this world. Yeah.

And you certainly produce amazing results in that area. Thank you. All right.

Well, I'm looking at the clock and I think it's time for us to end. So if you enjoy the show, please like, comment, share, and subscribe. You can find the references for this episode

on winterynight.com. That's W-I-N-T-E-R-Y-K-N-I-G-H-T.com. We appreciate you taking the time to listen and we'll see you again in the next one.

Bye.