

# OpenTheo

## Desert Rose's Favorite Bible Passages

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### **Knight & Rose Show** - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

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

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## **Transcript**

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

And I'm Desert Rose. Welcome Rose. So in today's episode we're going to be discussing

some of your favorite Bible passages.

Why don't you go ahead and tell us the first one. Okay, great. Well, the first one that I chose is from the Book of Romans, one of my very favorite books of the Bible, Chapter 8, which is possibly my favorite chapter in the whole Bible.

And I want to focus on verses 32 through 39. So would you mind reading those for us? I will. It starts with, "He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

How will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who is raised? Who is at the right hand of God? Who indeed is interceding for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." Oh, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Yeah, thank you. So before I knew Christ and even for some years after I made the decision to follow Christ, I had a lot of fear.

I was afraid of pain. I was afraid of suffering. I was afraid of shame.

I was terrified of failure. And most of all, I was really scared of death. Even as a Christian, I was still really scared of death for a while.

But I was also scared of Satan, of demons, of the people who could harm me because more people disliked me after I became a Christian because that's not a popular viewpoint, at least in my circles it wasn't. But then I was also scared of disappointing God. I was terrified of falling away from God because of some of the things that I had learned about what happens when we are separated from God.

But I read this passage and studied this passage and this was a huge comfort to me. And what I saw was that the sovereign God of the universe didn't even spare his own son. And so I could trust that he wouldn't spare anything else that was of ultimate good for me.

And I realized that he who had adopted me into his family, who had paid the penalty for my sins, he wasn't going to let go of me. He wasn't going to let my mess ups get me kicked out of his family. He wasn't going to withdraw the Holy Spirit from me altogether because I wasn't good enough.

He had paid the penalty for my sins and he was going to keep me as his own. And so I

just I love this passage. I you know, I fall short of God's standard of perfection all the time.

The enemy comes after me now more than in the very early days of my becoming a Christian because I've been doing impactful ministry work that makes difference. And non-Christians come after me more than ever when I speak the truth. And the world, you know, with all its depravity can really kind of beat me down.

But, you know, even though as a Christian, we are regarded by others as sheep to be slaughtered and I've experienced so many hard times that threaten to undo me. I've also seen in this passage and in many, many others that nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And so that gives me boldness to continue doing what I'm doing, to not be fearful that I'm going to say something wrong that's maybe theologically incorrect and get booted out of the family of God or have my life threatened and, you know, out of fear, make a poor decision and be rejected by Christ.

I'm his and he's not going to let go of me. Yeah, yeah, I think that's important. I put a lot of emphasis on our last podcast and maybe another podcast on Jesus as leader and Lord because that's the one that often gets neglected.

But it's really important to me, even as someone who sees his Christian walk as being competent and strong, that if I make a mistake, that I don't suddenly get punished by losing my uniform, you know. So it's really important to Christians who are aiming to be effective that they appreciate that they can't lose their identity in Christ by screwing up or even doing bad things because of the forgiveness that's available to you and because of that commitment that God has made to partner with you and work with you and bring about your salvation. You really can't let disappointments or mistakes let that challenge the thing that's for sure.

So I think it's an important passage and it's practical because I make mistakes. I make a lot of mistakes and I'm thankful that I'm following a leader who understands that and has provided a mechanism for me to continue to be on the team, even when I make mistakes. Exactly.

Yeah, well put. What's your second passage? Well, I chose Philippians chapter four, verses six and seven. Yes, we both love Philippians and also Romans 12, one and two.

I know that one. Yeah. So I think it may sound a little strange that I'm putting these two together.

But the reason I want to discuss these two passages together is because I studied these both in depth shortly after becoming a Christian at the same time. And when I'm anxious or when I'm discontent or when I'm facing challenging circumstances, these two passages together inform my response. I tend to think of them kind of simultaneously, I

think, because of how I studied them when I first became a believer.

Okay, let me read them for you. I love everything in Philippians. This is my favorite book of the Bible.

So Philippians four, six to seven, I'll start reading from verse four. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice.

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

Let your request be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. And here is Romans twelve, one to two. This reminds me of R.C. Sproul's table talk.

So I used to listen to that a lot. I like him. Nice.

Here it is. It goes, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Yeah, great. Thank you. So in the first year that I became a Christian, I found out that I had to have a pretty big significant surgery and I was really scared.

I was only twenty one years old and I remember waiting to go in for surgery and I was just terrified. And I started praying that God wouldn't let me die, that he would help me. He would be with me.

And as I began to pray, both of these two passages came to mind. So as I had learned from Philippians four, I thanked God for paying the penalty for my sin. I rejoiced in what awaits me when I die and I made my requests known to God.

I told him that I didn't want to die yet because I had just become a Christian and I wanted to make him known to others. I wanted to be his ambassador. I wanted to glorify him with my life.

I wanted to demonstrate his worth to an unbelieving world. And I said to God, you know, I haven't I haven't had time to do these things yet and I wanted to be all about you, but I just met you. And so I'm again prayed with thanksgiving and rejoicing and made my request known to him.

And then in accordance with Romans twelve, one and two, I told God that either way, whatever happens, my life belongs to him. And that I was right then and there making the decision to climb on the altar. You know, it's the metaphor of living sacrifices that's

given by Paul in Romans twelve here.

And that my life was his to do with it, whatever he wanted. And then I meditated on his perfect character, on his power, his goodness, his love, his trustworthiness, his sovereignty. I entrusted my life to him, whatever the outcome.

And when I did that, the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, completely filled me. It drove out all of the fear and anxiety and I wasn't scared anymore. The circumstances hadn't changed.

I was still sitting in the waiting room about to be operated on, but I was thankful and I was at peace. And I trusted God completely no matter what happened. It's amazing how talking to God, it changes the way you feel about things and you think of other people and looking after them.

And it's something I really recommend to everybody wherever you are on your spiritual walk seems obvious. But just whenever you have a minute, it's a good idea. Do it exactly like Philippians four says.

First, say everything that you're thankful for, you know, and then explain to God why something that is vexing you or is challenging you is important to your collaboration with him. You know, say, I love how you said, listen, I am about ready to begin my quest to look after your interests. So you can't let me die right now.

I haven't even started yet. People pray for stuff like I want a new car. You know, it's not like that.

You're supposed to be concerned about God's stuff and he's concerned about your stuff. That's great. I love it.

Yeah. So beyond just my experiences personally, I, you know, with Philippians four, I also think about how thanksgiving. Or, you know, gratefulness is really in a lot of ways an antidote to many of our problems in our culture today.

We live in a time where there is so much greed and people being obsessed with having what everyone else has and wanting everybody to have the exact same amount of money and material belongings and whatever they have. I need to have to. And this is playing a significant role in destroying our culture.

It's pitting people against one another because nobody really ever has the exact same thing unless of course in a fallen world, unless of course, you know, everybody has next to nothing. Yeah, we talked about like these topics in our previous podcast, like in the Black Lives Matter one, what we saw is the whole thing. Well, not the whole thing, but a lot of it was, oh, my neighbor has more money than me.

I should have the same amount as them. We got into it a bit, but what Christianity has to say to this, coveting my neighbor's goods and wanting to steal, having the government steal from my neighbor and give it to me. Also, we talked about the lack of thankfulness and gratefulness as well.

But these things are really practical and Christianity has answers that has recommendations about how Christians should understand these problems. Exactly. And all of that greed and divisiveness is currently being celebrated in the name of compassion.

It's a total disaster. One of the reasons I'm so thankful for the opportunities I've had to travel all over the world is because some of the happiest, most content people I've ever met are people who have nothing. Material, materially speaking.

They have strong families. They have strong relationships. But there's this woman who comes to mind who I met in Uganda.

She was living in this tiny little mud hut. I'm probably about seven feet wide by maybe 10 feet long. And she was living with her three grandchildren because their parents had died.

The floor was all just water puddles of mud when I was there because it had just been raining. She really had nothing but the clothes on her back, which were tattered and torn. And yet she had this huge smile on her face.

And as we were talking to her and sharing our lives with her and she was sharing with us, she exclaimed, God is so good. Praise God. He is so good to me.

And we had a translator. I didn't, you know, because she didn't speak English, but I was just, that really impacted me. And I was thinking as I was reading this verse again in preparation for talking today, that, you know, I imagine how different our culture would be if everyone had just a little fraction of her gratefulness.

I've thought about how different my life, maybe my attitude would be in a lot of different circumstances if I had a fraction of her gratefulness. But that's what the Lord calls us to. Yeah, for me to fix this, because my character, you know, especially, I'd like to think it's getting better.

The way that I fix this kind of narcissism temptation that humans have and not being grateful, not being thankful, is I try to read a lot of military history. And that's one of the things that I get out of it. So one of the wars I study the most is the Korean War.

And this took place in January 1950. I want to say 1950. It might be 1951.

I should know this. But basically, it was really cold. It was like a record cold.

And they were fighting between South and North Korea, the Marines were. And so they would go outside and they would try to go to the bathroom and it would be like freezing cold and snipers would be shooting at them. And then they would try to eat their food and the food would freeze before they could even poke it with a spoon.

So, you know, you had to eat it right away or warm it up on the top of a Jeep, like the hood of a running Jeep. So, you know, I think of things like that. And it just helps me to be like thankful whenever it's going to be so gross and funny.

But like when one of the Marines was going to the bathroom and he got shot at by a sniper every time I go into the bathroom, I always think of that. I go, oh, thank goodness I'm not being shot at by snipers and it's not 40 below. But yeah, exactly.

That's such a good point. And you, Romans 12 goes together with that really closely because it talks about focusing on renewing our minds. By filling them with truth.

And that makes a huge difference. You are grateful when you read military history and you see the experiences that other people have had and what their lives have been like and what they've sacrificed for our freedoms. When I read about Christian martyrs, I have that same gratefulness.

And when I meditate on the character of God, you know, not only in that hospital right before my surgery, but in all of life that makes a huge difference in how I think and how I feel. The feelings need to follow the facts. The facts of God's character are, you know, what we talk about all the time.

And our feelings follow when we make the decision to meditate on that. But that's an intentional decision. The natural course of things is to just go along, you know, as the wind blows us, as the culture blows us and be conformed to this world's priorities and values.

And if we're not active and intentional to fill our minds with truth, we will passively become like the world, which today I would describe that some of the words I was thinking of as I thought about, you know, what does it look like to be conformed to the world today? And I thought of anger. I thought of sexual depravity, of selfishness and greed. And that's not who I want to be at all.

I think coveting your neighbor's wealth is another one. Yes, right, right, exactly. So the Bible tells us a lot about what we are to think about, what we are to dwell on.

I mean, some of our favorite passages that I think we've talked about before, Philippians 4-8, it says to think about whatever is honorable and just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and praiseworthy. Yeah. Colossians 3-2 says to set your mind on things above.

We're not to get all wrapped up in and focused on the things that are temporary, that

are passing by, but, you know, what is eternal? Second Corinthians 4 says to set our minds on what is unseen, not on what is seen. And again, you know, as I've mentioned, many, many passages tell us to know and to remember the character of God. So our lives are to be living sacrifices.

Like this passage says, it's not about what makes us feel good right now. Our lives are to be all about what furthers the boss's purposes. And in the next life, that's when we will receive our reward.

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I'm actually reading a book right now about my hero and role model, Dr. Walter Bradley. I think the book is called For a Greater Purpose.

I definitely recommend people who are looking for a picture of the Christian life that is, on the one hand, extremely important. On the one hand, extremely strong. Great strength and great effect in this.

But on the other hand, experiencing kickback, consequences, disapproval, shaming. Right, pushback. Yeah, from the peep from your co-workers.

Right. You know, and the people around you. So if you're looking to join those two kind of apparently conflicting experiences of Christianity, you should definitely pick up that book and take a look.

But I wanted to say about this Romans 12.1.2 verse. So I like philosopher J.P. Moreland a lot. And he actually does the foreword for that book that I was just talking about.

He had a huge influence on me along with Bradley. He talks about this problem of Christians not reading enough nonfiction, serious nonfiction material so that they can grow their knowledge of theology and apologetics and learn about Christianity as what he calls a knowledge tradition, not a faith tradition. Yep.

Nice. I've met a lot of Christians in different workplaces that I've worked in. And it seemed like there was just, I mean, you can just look at the bestseller list of Christian books.

It's a lot of self help, a lot of prosperity gospel, prosperity gospel, a lot of fiction, Christian romance novels. And it kind of subjugates Christianity to this desire to feel good and be happy. So what is important to me about the Romans 12.1.2 with respect to J.P. Moreland is he has a lecture and a book about this called Love Your God With All Your Mind.

The book is in the second edition. I think you can get an audio version of the first one. And this, I remember reading this in a telecom company I was interning with and leaving it out on my desk, the first edition.



So this book goes way back with me. My friends call it Ligwim, just off of the first character of each word in the title. And the book basically says that if you're trying to change your Christian walk, you can't change it as a result of changing it by your will.

Like I'm going to get up at 6am and I'm going to spend quiet time with God. You can't change it by saying I'm going to turn over a new leaf. He says the only way to change your beliefs is by studying.

He says you can't will to change your beliefs, but you can will to study. And when you study, your view of what is true changes. And then your beliefs change.

And then your actions follow your beliefs. So that's why he puts the emphasis on renewing your mind. And actually you're about, I know you're going to go to Philippians 1 in your next verse.

And I just want to point out quickly that with respect to Romans 12.1.2, there's a verse in Philippians 1 which you're going to, which says, "And this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." And it goes on from there. But the point is, is that he's saying, I want your love to abound more and more and you will be more loving if you increase your knowledge and depth of insight. Like what makes your love effective is knowledge and depth of insight and being able to discern what's best.

So just something to think about. Yeah, no, that's great. I love, I just want to say that passage that you just read from Philippians 1 was one of the first verses I memorized as well when I became a Christian.

And that has made a huge difference. Like you said, I mean, I have tried to will myself to love people better just by saying, you need to love people better. That doesn't work.

But to study and read about Christ, about His love, about the way others have loved well and represented Christ well, that is a much better approach to choose to study the truth. So, yeah, the next passage that I wanted to look at is Philippians 1 verses 3 and 4. And this is a passage that I have not been the best at, but it has serious consequences for family and for culture and for our relationship with the boss. So it's really important and something that I read regularly and strive towards.

So, yeah, if you would read that, that'd be great. People get nothing out of this episode at all. Go and read Philippians.

Philippians is a lot of gold for not a lot of time to read it. So this is very short. Yeah, it's very short, but it's a goldmine.

Excellent. Exactly. So Philippians 1, pay attention to verses 3 to 4. I'm going to read a

little bit of 2 and all the way to 11.

So here it goes. Paul is writing and he says to the church of Philippi, "Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Excellent. Yeah, thank you so much. I want to talk about verse 3 and selfish ambition.

This is one of the things that is on my mind and has been quite a bit lately. So in the family as one arena, one area of life, selfish ambition causes parents to neglect their responsibilities to raise up the next generation. According to the truth, parents who are driven by selfish ambition tend to turn their kids over to the public school system to indoctrinate them into LGBTQ nonsense, into socialism, global warming, sex education, hatred of America, anger about everything and nothing at all.

It's really having a huge impact on the future of our country. We know from studies that when the mother is away or when she's really busy or too exhausted for her children in the first few years of her child's life, that child is not likely to develop compassion as he or she should. When the parents are not involved in their children's lives, the children isn't likely to be fed as well.

Children are more likely, far more likely to develop a variety of mental as well as physical illnesses later in life. We're seeing such a huge increase in mental illnesses. This doesn't make sense from a purely evolutionary standpoint that people would just go from healthy to unhealthy through evolutionary biology.

For example, you know, there's there's obviously something a lot more going on than that. Definitely. We're seeing the fruit today of, you know, among adult children who were born to baby boomer feminists who are not well mentally, often sometimes not well physically, kind of somewhat sociopathic, narcissistic.

The father as well. Yeah. I mean, when the father isn't available, children are far more likely to get involved with criminal behavior, to have less education, poorer education, go

to prison, get divorced, have health problems.

You know, females are more likely to sleep around, to get pregnant, to be abused because they choose bad men, men and women who didn't have a father around and involved in their lives are more likely to have unstable relationships. It causes all kinds of problems, not just for the selfishly ambitious person, but for their children and for the culture who has to deal with all these problems and then, you know, fund these, the help to these problems. But it's not just selfish ambition in corporate America.

In ministry as well, selfish ambition causes Christians to compete with one another rather than to cooperate. It causes Christians to put their own interests above the boss's interests. It causes us to misrepresent Christ as well as to neglect our children and our spouse.

And again, Christians are not immune to the problems that I listed above when we neglect our children. I've seen that. Yeah, exactly.

I mean, just because we're selfishly ambitious to make a name for ourselves in ministry does not mean we won't have the same consequences. So I actually have several friends who refer to one another as widows for Christ, not because their husbands have died, but because their husbands are absent, either physically absent or just emotionally absent. But the consequences are similar.

And this is because these Christians are so focused on achieving a name for themselves through ministry. Their children are being raised without a dad. And the family that they committed to is just an afterthought for them.

So again, we're seeing the consequences of children raised by absent fathers, and it's absolutely disastrous. So I love, you know, I think this this passage is really important. I mean, you know, I'm not exempting myself from as I'm talking, you know, I'm also kind of talking to myself.

I don't I don't have children. I don't have family, but I have been kind of tempted into focusing on selfish ambition at times, you know, wanting to be thought of as important and known and wonderful in in various circles and in ministry. But for the Christian, Paul reminds us here that the status and the honors, the achievements of this world, whether they come from ministry or from climbing the corporate ladder, they're rubbish.

And the Apostle Paul had the most exceptional achievements. He was very, very impressive. Prior to becoming a Christian, he had amazing resume and amazing education.

Right. Just high up in the heart. Amazing birth into, you know, the tribe of Benjamin and into the right kind of family and all of that.

Yeah. In every area, he was just exceptional. He was smart.

He was mentored by the famous rabbi Gamaliel. I mean, he was exceptional. So but then there's Jesus, right? Who who is God himself? Who, you know, God came as God incarnate, but he didn't strive after making a name for himself.

He humbled himself, even though he is God by nature, he didn't grasp at being recognized as such. And we are to imitate his example, as we read here in Philippians, to devote ourselves fully to ministry for God's glory. If we're single or as husbands and wives and parents, if we've committed to that, to humble ourselves and and serve in that capacity again for God's glory.

That doesn't mean we don't do ministry, but sometimes we have to say no to, you know, church opportunities or other types of ministry if we are parents or if we are a spouse, because that is a significant way in which we do ministry. And so, you know, we humble ourselves now and we allow the Father to exalt us later. That's the Christian life.

Yeah, I think a lot of people sometimes are thinking I'm going to act like a Christian by going on a short term misintroop and I'm going to take photos of myself with, you know, the natives and post them on Instagram. And I think why I'm so excited about Philippians is it's such a practical book. The stuff they're saying about the humility of Jesus, you can do that.

You can do that right now. You just have to think about some relationship that you're in and put yourself second in that relationship. But think about what the other person's needs are and what they're trying to achieve.

Suppose they're in between jobs right now or I have a friend who is a philosophy guy and he's kind of short of work right now. And one of the things I thought of is that it might be a good opportunity to show him our scripts and sort of get some feedback from him and give him a small fee to do that. So just looking around and looking at other people's interests and see if you can help them deal with the challenges that they're facing.

That's a way to follow Jesus and imitate him right now. This guy is the best. And the more that you can read about him and learn about his character and let his priorities and his way of doing things influence how you operate, the better it is.

It's not difficult. Anybody can do this. Remember the praise for the widow who goes into the church and gives this tiny amount of money and this is like, oh, this is amazing.

Well, anybody, no matter how low their social status or how little money they have or whatever, you can behave like Jesus right now. You just have to understand who he is, take it seriously and look for opportunities to say, I'm going to follow Jesus in this decision right now. Yeah, I love that you mentioned that about looking around to other people and thinking about how you can build them up.

You are probably the best at that of anyone I know. Certainly of anyone I can think of right now. I just absolutely love that about you.

You're always looking around at other people and saying, how can I build them up more? What do they need? You wouldn't be able to do that if you were thinking first and foremost of how can I make a name for myself? How can I exalt myself? What do I need? What do I need to get from others? You're primarily thinking, what can I give to others? What do they need? Because they're on Team Christian. And so we need to build up our team members. We need everybody to be all hands on deck.

You do that so well. And so thank you. Yeah, I just I think it's important that we all keep that in mind and strive toward that.

Have you got another one for us or are we done? I have another one. Yeah. Oh, good.

Yes. Let's see. I think this is the last passage that I have in the outline for today.

And that is 2 Corinthians 4 verses 7 to 18. Yes. Yes.

Second Corinthians 4, 7 through 18. So this is a passage that really resonates with me. Because I am very aware of my fragility.

I am well acquainted with some of the afflictions that come with making a difference as a Christian. And I know the critical importance of making sure my hope is found in Christ. And so would you go ahead and read that passage for us? But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed and so I spoke." We also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light, momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. Yeah,

thank you so much.

Let me start with verse 7. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. From a young age, I have been well acquainted with the fragility of my jar of clay. I have had allergies.

I've had a lot of sickness. I have celiac disease, which was undiagnosed until I was in my 30s. And so I was having all kinds of strange symptoms and nobody could figure out what was wrong with me.

I was accused of making it up, of it all being in my head, all sorts of issues. I had full body muscle cramping and ER visits. And when I would see the doctor, he would say, you have no nutrients in your body.

If you're going to compete in tennis at this level, you have got to be eating more. And I was eating like six meals a day, maybe seven at times. My coach would throw me sandwiches onto the tennis court.

I mean, I was eating constantly. That's hilarious. So because of the celiac disease, this wasn't effective for you.

My body was not able to absorb the nutrients and utilize them. And so it appeared that I had no nutrients in my body that I had no nutrients, but it appeared it was because I wasn't eating anything. And that's not the case.

My coach knew I ate six or seven times a day. So he thought maybe I had bulimia. Yeah, I was accused of all sorts of things as a result of these health problems.

But in my thirties, I was diagnosed with celiac disease and it just made everything make sense. So yeah, that's my my jar of clay. But in verses eight and nine, we read, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

Again, I've experienced afflictions and persecution to some degree for being a Christian. From day one that I became a Christian while in the university, I started experiencing some persecution. I had only gotten all A's on anything I had ever written in school prior to that on essays, on papers, et cetera.

And I was given a D. Wow. Yeah, the first semester after becoming a Christian. A D because the professor disagreed with you.

Yeah, and he admitted it. He told me and he wrote on my paper that the reason I was given a D was because no thinking human being in this day and age could possibly believe this nonsense because I had defended a historic Christian doctrine. And this was

in the Divinity School of that.

This was not in a gender studies or LGBTQ class. This was in the Divinity School of a very prestigious, originally Methodist university. Wow.

And then again, this happened again in graduate school, but I was more mature, a little wiser and more bolder. And I knew more of the reasons why Christianity was true, more of the evidence. And so I challenged the professor first who gave me a D for a different paper on a different topic.

And he was unresponsive or unhelpful, unwavering. And so I took it to the dean of the department and he read my paper and changed my grade to an A. So, you know, from professors, from students, because the students also did not want anyone around them believing in objective truth. Yeah.

And so, you know, I think, I experienced some affliction from what I believe was, you know, the spiritual enemy of Christ. And so, again, this is just this is meaningful to me. You know, I'm thinking as I'm reading this about what I've experienced.

And verse four then says, for we who live are also being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. So Paul is saying, you know, death, I'm ministering to you all.

Life is at work in me and my companions, but life is at work in you, those who we are ministering to. So this is just a great reminder that the afflictions, the hardship, the persecution we experience is not for nothing. Death is at work in our bodies, but we share truth and see new life in others as they hear the truth and they respond.

This is a great reminder as well that death is not the end. Death doesn't win. It's the final enemy we face in this world.

But for us as Christians, it's the beginning of our best life, which never ends. The Father raised Jesus and He will raise us as well. And so verse 16 says, so we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. And as I mentioned last week, I am in my forties now and anticipating that my body will probably soon begin showing more signs of aging. But as my outer self has been aging, my inner self has been renewed day by day.

I have far greater wisdom now than I did when I was young. I have more hope, more joy. I have more humility, more love, more contentment, more Christ like this because of what God has been doing as I've made the decision to fill my mind with truth and avoid garbage going into my mind over the last 20 something years.

And then my favorite verses here are 17 and 18, which say, for this light momentary

affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient. The things that are unseen are eternal.

I think that this passage seems to indicate that there's a correlation between the afflictions we experience now and the eternal weight of glory that awaits us so we can rejoice when we experience persecution. It's hard, of course, now for this very brief moment in time, but our afflictions are preparing something glorious for us that will last for all eternity. I'm just thinking about Paula's writing this.

This is a guy who gets whipped, shipwrecked, imprisoned, and all dragged out of synagogue. Yeah, he's not talking about like these light momentary afflictions in which my neighbor didn't approve of me or my friend, you know, judged me. Yeah, he's talking about being stoned and left for dead and beaten and imprisoned, not in the American 21st century prison system where you watch TV and get to work out and get free food and minister to and all of this, but Roman first century imprisonment.

So you and I have a Bible study where we study different books of the Bible and we were studying Acts and we were talking about how Paul is always getting into trouble going into synagogues and places like that and everybody gets mad at him. It's a lot more higher stakes than, you know, what we face even now for most most Christians in this society. Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah. And so Paul says to look not to what is seen, but to what is unseen, to the things that are eternal. We are to think about and dream about and imagine life with the Lord on the new earth in all its glory.

And my favorite book that helped me think bigger about God and about heaven and the new earth is called Heaven by Randy Alcorn. The first half or so of this pretty thick book is about what we can know because of Scripture. And then the second half or so is quite a bit of speculation about what we are likely to experience given what we do know from Scripture.

And some people take issue with this because sure, we can't know for sure exactly what heaven is going to be like, what the new earth is going to be like. There are things we can know, but Randy Alcorn does speculate some. My response to that is no matter how big you dream, you will not outdream God.

And so dream away. This has been huge to me. Whatever the new earth is like, it will be better than whatever our little minds can conceive.

God has something amazing planned for us. And by meditating on how great it could be that I can imagine and knowing that God is far more creative, far better, far holier, far greater in every way than I am or than my mind is, that has actually been a huge



comfort and motivator, a transformative aspect of my character again, because that's what I'm filling my mind with. And our feelings follow what we put into our minds.

Excellent thoughts. All right. I think that's a good place for us to end.

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[Music]