

Growing In Godliness

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Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

So, it's been a couple of years. We were hanging out with some friends one night and sort of catching up, like you do when you hang out. "What have y'all been up to?" They're talking about different things, and this one couple said they'd gone out to dinner the other night.

We said, "Well, how was it?"

The husband looked really, really proud about what he was about to say, while at the same time the wife's face got really, really red. You could tell she was about to be really embarrassed by what was said. So we leaned in, and we're like, "Tell us more."

They had gone to the Macaroni Grill. If you've never been there before, I don't know if they're still around, honestly, but they used to put these big loaves of bread on the table in front of you. A normal couple would eat one loaf between the two of them, maybe one and a half if they're really hungry before the meal.

Well, the wife didn't eat any, and her husband, my buddy, ate not one, not two, not three, not four - he was just going through them. He'd eaten six, seven, or eight or something at this point.

They're still waiting for their food, and the waiter comes over with another loaf and is setting it down in front of them. A little bit of self-control kicks in - too late, but it kicked in - and he said, "You know what? I'm sort of full. I'm going to wait for my food."

The waiter set it down anyway and said, "Hey, I need you to eat this, and I need you to eat one more. If you do, I'll pay for your dinner, and I'll throw in dessert for free, on the house."

Now, that's weird, right? If a waiter said that to you, you'd say, "Okay, tell me more. Why? What's going on?" My buddy asked no questions. He said, "Set it down," and he got to work. He ate the next two, and the waiter seemed pleased.

His wife said, "What is going on here?"

He said, "Well, the waitstaff is blown away by the amount of bread one man could eat. They didn't think it was possible, so much so that they're taking bets back amongst themselves over how much bread your husband's going to eat. If he eats these last two loaves, I'm going to win the whole pot, your dinner's going to be free, and we're all going to have a great night."

So he ate it, and that's sort of how it went.

But since then, I'm happy to report, there's been a radical transformation in his life. I'm telling you, if I put a picture of him then and a picture of him now up on the screen - I won't, because he wouldn't like that. Some of you might know him. I don't know. I'm not going to do that - but you wouldn't recognize him. He is a completely different person.

He takes his health and fitness very seriously - his nutrition, working with doctors, working out, and his weight. He is a completely different person. He's focusing on his physical health and physical fitness, and that is a good thing.

He's not the only one. That's become a large focus in today's world, and, like I said, that's good. Our bodies and our physical health are important. God gave us these bodies. We're called to take care of them and to steward them in a way that brings glory and honor to Him.

But here's the reality: while physical health is important, spiritual health and spiritual growth are infinitely more important. I don't think people give them the same kind of focus and attention, even though they deserve all the attention and more that we give our physical bodies and health.

We're going to see that in the Bible in 1 Timothy chapter 4. If you've got your Bible, go ahead and join me there. First Timothy chapter 4. We're going to start in verse 7 here in just a minute.

As a reminder, for the month of July we're in a series called Life Lessons. This morning, we're focusing on the life lesson that we need to have forever: spiritual growth in our lives. If you're taking notes, the title is "Growing in Godliness."

Starting in verse 7, here's what the Bible says:

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.

— 1 Timothy 4:7-9

Train yourself for godliness. Physical training, yes, has value. Godliness, however, has value in every way. Godliness impacts every second of our lives. It matters for eternity. A godly life matters for every single one of us, young or old, no matter how long we've been walking with Jesus.

Steer Clear of Chaos

Look with me again at verse 7:

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

I want to make sure we understand what Paul, our writer, is talking about here. When he says "irreverent, silly myths," he's talking about false teaching. He's talking about ungodly ideas that will pull people away from the truth of Jesus. Young Timothy is told, "Have nothing to do with that stuff."

Ungodly ideas, ungodly teaching, and ungodly conversation never lead to anything good, godly, or helpful. In fact, the opposite is true. Irreverent, silly myths and ungodly teaching lead only in one direction, and that is toward chaos.

As we break down this section of Scripture, our first observation is a much-needed command in the ancient world, and it's a much-needed command in this world as well: steer clear of chaos. If you're taking notes, that's number one. Steer clear of chaos.

Don't have anything to do with the ungodly pursuits of this world. Steer clear of them. Stay away from them, because if you don't, you will get caught up in them, and your spiritual growth will be slowed down. It will be affected.

Not too long ago, we were on a road trip coming home with the family, and we were stuck in traffic. Everybody loves that on the tail end of a trip. Looking out the window, we couldn't see what was going on ahead of us. We were wondering why everything was slowed down.

When we finally got to a point where we were moving again, we'd seen nothing. There had been no wreck. There had been no stalled car. There had been no construction at all in our lane. But on the other side of the highway, on the other side of the median, there was a fender bender, and everybody in our lane was looking. They were distracted by it. They were looking over at it. Their attention was on it, and it had dramatically slowed them down. Not only had it slowed them down, but it had slowed down everyone around them.

In your life, steer clear of the chaos. Do not let worldly concerns slow down your spiritual growth. Do not let worldly concerns slow down your spiritual growth.

In the first century, among the early church and the people getting this letter, there was plenty that we would look back on and classify as ungodly or chaotic that would threaten their spiritual growth. As you zoom out a little bit and look at the context, if you look at 1 Timothy as a whole, you see that false teachers had come in and begun to distort the truth of Jesus.

They would say, "Yes, Jesus taught this, but Jesus also taught this and this, and maybe this is okay too." They brought in a lot of things that Jesus did not actually say.

The unfortunate reality is that a lot of people in the church family, among brothers and sisters like us, entertained some of these ungodly ideas. They were led away from the truth of Christ and into a season of chaos.

That same thing happens today as well. Sometimes the ungodly teaching that's presented to us is very easy to spot. It is blatantly promoting sin. It's blatantly promoting things that are not in line with the Word of God. When we see that and it's obvious, we've got a choice to make. We're either going to do what God has told us to do - avoid that stuff and turn to Him - or we're going to embrace that stuff. It is a very, very clear line.

Sometimes, though, people try to pass off teaching as Scripture, as biblical, or as right when it is absolutely not. There are those who would paint a false picture of the gospel, and sometimes these ideas, teachings, or concepts might even sound good. They might even sound right or appealing.

But I want to be very clear: any teaching that goes against the truth of the Word of God is ungodly, and it is to be avoided.

Here's an example. You've seen it on a T-shirt. You've seen it on a bumper sticker. I'm sure you've heard somebody say a phrase like, "Follow your truth."

You've heard that, right? Some of you have. It sounds good. It's personal: "your." You can put an anchor down on that. "I can make this about me." It's got the word "truth" in it, so truth is in the phrase itself. It must be good. It must be right. The word "truth" is right there in the middle of it.

Well, here's the problem. That statement implies that truth can change from person to person. That statement implies that truth can change from situation to situation, scenario to scenario, feeling to feeling, and mood to mood.

We know that goes against what the Word of God says. There is only one truth, and we find it right here.

Jesus knew that this would be a problem for His followers. He's actually praying in John 17 to the Father. Look at what He prays for His followers then and His followers now:

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

— John 17:17

He wants the Word of God capturing our hearts because the Word of God is the truth.

Psalms 119:160 says:

*The sum of your word is truth,
and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.*

— Psalm 119:160

We have to pay attention. We have to pay attention. Our culture is full of ideas like the one I just shared that might sound good but will ultimately lead to chaos.

We've got to pay attention to what we're listening to, who we're listening to, and who our kids and family are ultimately listening to. We have to ensure that the messages we're allowing in, which will no doubt shape our hearts and minds, are coming from and are in line with the Word of God. Because when we stray from it, where do we go? We slow down that spiritual growth, and we head straight for chaos.

So let's do what the Bible says: avoid ungodly pursuits and false teaching. Got it. But what does that mean? What does it look like in my life?

Look back at verse 7. It's not complicated:

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

Have nothing to do with things that are not in line with the Word of God.

I remember years ago, we were on a little vacation, and the place we were staying had a pond out in the backyard. At the time, my kids loved to wake up early on vacation, and that's just what every dad wants, right? You're finally on vacation, and at 5:00 a.m. you've got your kid waking you up, saying, "Dad, Dad, can we play now?"

I'm like, "You can play now. I'm not going to play yet."

There was a lake out in the back, and they said, "Well, can we go out there? We want to catch fish."

I had no problem with that, but I had one rule for them. You probably know what it is: you can't get in the water without an adult. That's simple, isn't it? Does everybody here understand the rule? Does anybody have a question about the rule? Does anybody need further clarification about the rule? Of course not.

I didn't do this in the first service because that kid, my son, was sitting right here. I didn't want to embarrass him. But do you know what he said? "How close can I get?" How close can I get to doing what you have told me not to do and still not get in trouble?

We laugh at that because kids are like that, but so are we, aren't we?

There are a lot of things in our lives that we see on a daily basis, and God has said, "Avoid them. Avoid those ungodly pursuits. Avoid those things that are going to slow you down spiritually or steer you away from Me."

Rather than avoiding them, there are many believers who entertain them, who try to manage sinful habits or patterns in their lives, who try to get as close as they can to the fire without getting burned.

Is that what verse 7 says? No. Verse 7 says, "Avoid it. Have nothing to do with it."

One of the things I prayed for this morning, as we were talking about this section right here, was that the Lord would bring to your mind things in your life that need to be avoided but that you're not avoiding - things you're trying to manage and things you're trying to hide away from other people in your life.

I prayed that the Holy Spirit would bring those to light in your mind and that you would be obedient to what God's calling you to do. I prayed that you would avoid and turn from these things, that you would repent, and that you would do something else instead - not something random. I prayed that you would do what the second half of the verse actually says: focus on godly pursuits.

Train Yourself for Godliness

Look at the second half of verse 7:

Rather train yourself for godliness.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

That's our second observation today: train yourself to be godly.

God's Word is calling us as believers to avoid the chaos of this world and instead live a godly life. Don't overthink this part either. A godly life is simply a life that honors God, that's in line with His Word. It shows a

love for Him. It shows a love for other people. It's a life that's based on what He's told us right here.

Is a godly life going to be a perfect life? Absolutely not. Not even close. But is it going to be a life where the pattern is consistently a pattern of desiring the Word and the love of God above all things? Absolutely.

Now, is a life like that going to just magically happen on its own? Absolutely not. Look at what the verse says:

Train yourself for godliness.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

That's what He's called us to do.

When we think about training something, I think about training our dog. You put a treat out there, and you train the dog to do tricks. That's not what this is.

The training that you are called to - and I want you to make this personal - is individual to each one of us. The training I am called to, the training you are called to, and the training we as believers are called to is the kind of training that requires discipline. It's the kind of training that requires focus. It means moving past distractions - and there are plenty of distractions - to achieve desired results.

The intentional imagery the Bible is giving here is meant to tie our minds to some kind of physical training. Look at verse 8:

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

— 1 Timothy 4:8

Our minds are taken to physical training here because we're people, and we can absolutely relate to that. Paul wrote this letter to a culture where people spent a lot of money, time, and energy on their bodies. Many of them wanted to look a certain way for festivals and parties. Many of them wanted to feel and perform a certain way in athletic contests as well. Physical training was a big deal in their culture, and I think we'd all agree that it's a big deal in our culture right now too.

This will blow you away. In the U.S., if you include fitness, surgeries, weight-loss products, and makeup products, Americans spend over \$100 billion a year. Americans spend more on looking and feeling good every year than the entire country of Tanzania is able to produce. That's around 70 million people. Everything they grow, build, manufacture, and sell, we outspend them on haircuts, makeup, and gym memberships that a lot of us don't actually use.

Think about the effort people put in physically and the desire to look, feel, and be a certain way. For a lot of people, physical training, appearance, and health are always front of mind.

What does the verse say? That has value. That's not a bad thing. Physical training is of some value. Do not neglect it. God gave you the body. He's only given you one, and you've got to live in it. You've got to be a good steward of it. You've got to honor Him with it. Absolutely.

But look back at verse 8. Physical training is only of some value. Godliness is of value in every way.

Listen, one day our bodies are going to be dust, and I worry that a lot of us invest heavily in our bodies while investing little to nothing in our souls.

A recent consumer survey says the average American spends 30 minutes per day on their appearance. I thought that stat was low. But even if you go with 30 minutes a day, that's 182 hours per year. I can promise you, 30 minutes a day spent in your Bible, filling your heart and soul with the truth, is going to change your life significantly more than any time you spend in front of a mirror.

This verse helps us understand there's value in physical training. It's temporary. Godliness, godly training, and the Word of God are forever.

So just push back a minute and think about this objectively. Objectively speaking, what is the wise thing to do here? Where should the bulk of our focus and the bulk of our investment be - on the temporary or on the eternal?

Again, make the effort. Take care of your body. That's right. It's important. Be healthy. Be strong. Glorify God with how you steward your body. But the effort you put forth physically should not even begin to compare to the effort you give to be godly.

Look at verse 7:

Train yourself for godliness.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

Why? Verse 8 says:

Godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

— 1 Timothy 4:8

Look at that word "promise." It's found in the middle of verse 8. That word "promise" is found only one other time in this section of the Bible, in these letters. It's found in 2 Timothy chapter 1, and the promise is that we have life in Christ.

Put this together. Avoid the chaos, the sin, and the ungodliness of this world, and instead find life in Christ. That's the message for us here. We've got two options: embrace the chaos of the world, or train ourselves to be godly and find life in Christ now that we're going to enjoy literally forever with Him in heaven.

I get it. When you get to verses like this in Scripture about training yourself to be godly, there are some people, because of prior experiences, who think it's drifting into a legalistic set of rules that we've got to flesh out.

But hear me: the goal isn't rules. The goal isn't a checklist. The goal is Jesus.

Look at how the passage ends. Look at verse 10:

For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

— 1 Timothy 4:10

The toil and striving - that's the discipline, the effort, and the work that we're putting into training ourselves to be godly day in and day out. Why? Because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people. We're not saving ourselves. He saves us, especially those who believe.

A godly life is possible because we have a Savior who loves us and invites us into a relationship with Him, and our lives flow from there.

In verse 7, we've got a command. In verse 8, we've got a promise. Avoid the chaos. Train yourself, focus your life, and focus your attention on godly pursuits, and you will have life in Christ now as you navigate a crazy world. You'll have life with Christ forever. It's a massive promise in Scripture.

I've heard big promises. You've heard big promises from people in your life. Some people come through; others do not. Listen, I'm telling you that the Lord comes through on His.

If you're a believer in Christ, you can count on the promise that you see here: life with Christ now and in eternity.

But I want you to think about the "now" for just a minute. We focus on eternity a lot. Think about the "now," your life now, or, as verse 8 puts it, think about the promise in this present life.

Every day you walk through this life, especially as you're growing in godliness, you're walking through it with Jesus, aware of His presence in your life. You're able to count on the promises that He has given you for your life here and now.

Here's a list. They're going to put it on the screen. This is a snapshot. It is the tip of the iceberg. There is so, so, so much more, but I want you to see how this godliness has an impact on your present life.

God's promise in Romans 8 is to be with you. Nothing is going to separate you from His love for you. He's promised you a full and abundant life in John 10, answers to worry, answers to our fear, hope in our struggles, and comfort in our grief. He's promised to provide abundantly and richly everything that we need in Him, and He's promised to give us wisdom as we navigate the challenges that we will have to navigate in this world.

This is just a taste of the promises for those in Christ.

I want you to see that training yourself for godliness has so much value to us in our everyday lives. Physical training, yes, has value, but it fades. There's an expiration point. At some date, at some point in time, time and gravity are going to win.

But godliness - the abundant life that's available as you walk with Jesus - gets even more and more exciting. As you walk with Jesus and live this godly life, the people around you are going to be pointed to Jesus as well. The benefits of living a godly life are going to impact everyone in your world.

Your family is going to be better off as you walk with Jesus. Your marriage is going to be better. Your kids are going to be better. Your coworkers, your neighbors, and everyone you meet will be better as you walk with Christ.

Life is better here, and eternity is promised because of our relationship with Christ. There is nothing better, nothing sweeter, than walking closely with Jesus.

A Training Plan

So how do we do it? He tells us to avoid the worldly stuff and instead train ourselves to be godly. So how?

Go back to the illustration that's already in verses 7 and 8. He has our minds thinking about physical training. We know what that takes. How would you physically train for something?

If you were going to run a marathon, would you just get up off the couch and go? Probably not. You'd probably have some kind of plan laid out for you. If you wanted to get stronger, would you just go to the gym and mess around? Probably not. You'd have some kind of plan or trainer helping you with it. You'd figure out what you need to do, and then you would work that plan.

When it comes to training in godliness, it's the same kind of thing. This morning, if the goal is to avoid chaos and train ourselves to be godly, we need to make sure that we have a plan. If you're unsure - if you don't have a plan to grow spiritually in your life - I'm going to share one in a minute that literally anyone can follow.

But before I share it, I want you to look at verse 7 one more time:

Rather train yourself for godliness.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

The language ties us to physical training to help us understand that discipline is required here.

I want to encourage you with this: if you're not growing spiritually right now, if your focus has not been on the Lord and on His promises in your life, and if He's working in your heart right now and you're thinking, "Oh, that's me. I haven't been, but I want to be," I want to encourage you.

As you begin to make these changes in your life, there are moments when it's going to feel challenging for you. There are moments when it might feel hard to really develop this routine on a regular basis. There might even be moments when you feel like, "Oh my gosh, it's too much time and too much work. I'm going to give up."

If you ever feel that way, let me encourage you: keep going.

I'm not sure who coined the phrase, but I wrote it down. I've never forgotten it, and I encourage you to write it down too. Just remember: keep going until your discipline becomes a delight.

There's going to be a moment, as you are daily employing these disciplines in your life, when you're going to begin to crave what we are talking about here. Keep going.

With that, I'm going to share a training plan. As I begin to share it, I'll say a couple of things about it.

After the first service, two guys caught me in the lobby. They didn't know each other. Both were relatively new to our church. It's funny, the angle they were coming from.

One said, "Hey man, that was great, what you said today. This week, I'm actually going to do that."

I thought, "What about all the other weeks?" I don't know if that's what he meant or not, but he said, "This week, I'm actually going to do it."

Then the other guy who had walked up said - it's funny how God brought them together - "Dude, you totally have to. The Lord put that on my heart a month ago, and I started doing it. I'm telling you, my life is dramatically different from spending time with the Lord every single day."

The way God brought the two of them together was really, really neat, for one of them to hear the testimony of the other one.

I want to encourage you, if this is not your daily discipline or habit, to get into the Word and begin moving with what God has called you to do: train yourself for godliness.

1. Trust Jesus

It seems elementary. A lot of us in the room might even be past that step. This is all about knowing Him. It's about knowing and growing in your relationship with Him.

If you don't have a relationship with Jesus, then it's really hard to grow in your relationship with Christ. It starts by trusting in Him as your Lord and Savior, becoming a new creation in Christ, and becoming a child of God. You look to Jesus and Jesus alone for the forgiveness of your sins and a right relationship with God.

At camp this past week, we saw 76 students trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. As these verses say, they're going to enjoy life with Him now and forever.

It starts by trusting in Christ.

2. Talk to Jesus

Once you've trusted Jesus, you've got to talk to Jesus. Pray. Very basic. Spend time in prayer.

As prayer becomes a constant discipline in your life, your heart, more and more, as you face these moments, is going to turn to Jesus and away from the chaos of the world. The more we pray, the more it naturally begins to flow. You're going to find yourself having conversations with the Lord throughout the day as you're walking through what He's placed in front of you.

Don't reserve prayer for bedtime and dinnertime. It is an ongoing process throughout the day.

Here's an easy example: you're in the grocery store, and you see a couple. Ask God to bless their marriage. You're in the grocery store, and you see a little kid running around. Say, "God, get a hold of that kid's heart, and let that kid walk with You all the days of their life."

As God puts things in front of you, just pray about them, whatever they are. The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians that we are to pray without ceasing. If we're going to grow in godliness, we've got to talk to God. So talk to Him.

3. Read Your Bible

There are a lot of people who say, "I'm just not a reader." I think that's sort of a cop-out. Most people read more social media in a day than Bible in a month. Think about that. Most people read more on social media in a day than Bible in a month. It should not be.

The Bible tells us to train ourselves for godliness. That's discipline. That's focus. We know what it is. Open up the Bible and start reading. Let the truth of the Word of God shape your heart and shape your life.

A lot of Bibles have a Bible reading plan in the back or in the front. Pick one and jump in. A lot of you have the YouVersion Bible app on your phone. There's a tab at the bottom that says "Bible Reading Plans." A quick Google search will give you some. You could pick a book of the Bible and get going.

The whole point is just get going. If Bible reading is not a part of your life, get going.

Second Timothy 3:16 says:

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

— 2 Timothy 3:16

If the command is to train yourself in godliness, I'm telling you, I promise you, you cannot train yourself to be godly apart from the Word of God. Get in the Word and get started.

4. Get a Training Buddy

Get a spiritual workout partner.

A lot of people who go to the gym have workout partners. There's accountability when it comes to their physical health. Why? Because it works. We are better together. We encourage one another.

Let me just ask: do you have a spiritual training buddy? Do you have somebody in your life who cares whether you grow or not? Someone who's pushing you to grow? Do you have that person in your life?

If not, I encourage you to find them. Get in a life group and find that person.

If you are growing spiritually, do not neglect this step. There are people in your life who aren't. You need to be their spiritual workout buddy.

Second Timothy 2:2 talks about how we're supposed to pass on what God has entrusted to us. If you're not bringing other people along, you're missing a very critical part of your spiritual growth as well.

Our students grew so much last week. It has been amazing to hear the stories. We have been loving it, absolutely loving it.

Guess what? Whether they realized it or not, they had spiritual workout partners. They had accountability partners all week long. They had leaders every step of the way, through all their activities all day long, taking them back to Christ. They had pastors there. They had worship leaders there pouring into them. They were pouring into one another all week long.

That's the way the camp is designed: to get them talking to and encouraging one another as well.

I challenged the parents in that first service because many of the parents of the students were there. What kind of buddies do they have when they get home? Moms and dads, what kind of spiritual training buddies are you with your kids? Are you encouraging them? Are you pushing them? Are you carving out that space and time in your home where they know these disciplines matter?

Listen, if you've got kids in your house, be that for them. Encourage them. Push them. Spur them on. Care about whether or not they grow.

Men, connect with other men. Women, connect with other women. Couples, I'm telling you, your marriage will be radically transformed if you surround yourself with other couples who care about your walk with Jesus.

If you don't have that in your life, get in a life group here. Find it. Find people who will invest in you. Like every other discipline, we are more successful in community. That's the picture we get in God's Word.

5. Love People

Finally, as you're doing all this, don't forget to love people. As we grow in our love for the Lord, we know that He said the second most important thing, behind loving Him, is to love other people. So do that.

Serve people well. Invest in people well. Share what God's doing in your heart and life with those around you. I'm telling you, spiritual growth comes in leaps and bounds when we begin to serve other people, loving them like Jesus.

Back to verse 7:

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

Your body is going to last a few years. Your soul is going to last forever. Many of us in here have a plan for our bodies. Make sure that you have a plan for your soul.

I'm telling you, you will enjoy life walking with Jesus more than you ever could have imagined.

Prayer

Would you pray with me this morning?

As we bow, I just want to encourage everybody, no matter where you are in your walk with Christ this morning, to offer up a simple prayer in this direction.

Thank God that He wants to be in a relationship with you. Thank God that He loves you enough that He sent His Son, Jesus, to make a way for you to know Him. Thank Him for that. That's true for every single one of us.

As you thank Him for that, begin to get specific about where God's Word was working in your heart this morning.

Maybe you're in here and, like I said earlier, God was bringing to your mind certain things that you have been entertaining that you really should be avoiding. If that was you, I pray that you'd go before the Lord right now in a spirit of prayer and ask God for forgiveness. Ask Him to help you turn from that and instead focus on training yourself for godliness.

Maybe you're in here, and if you were honest, you'd say, "There's been little to no thought or effort toward spiritual growth in my life in quite a while."

Maybe you'd say you're more interested in the physical or the temporary, and you know that God's calling you. You see it in His Word, that God's calling you to focus on your relationship with Him.

If that's you, get real before God this morning and say, "God, I'm leaning in. I'm leaning in. I'm going to do what You have said."

Ask Him for the strength, the boldness, and the discipline. Ask Him to capture your heart fresh and new as you begin to walk with Him like you never have before.

In just a minute, we're going to stand and sing one last song. As we do, we'll have pastors down here at the front, and we'd love to pray with you.

Maybe you need to do step one. You've got to trust in Christ. Maybe you want to come and ask for prayer over something that's going on in your life, something you need to avoid. Maybe you want to ask for prayer for the strength and discipline to do what God's calling you to do. Or maybe you've got a scenario or circumstance going on in your life that's altogether different this morning.

Whatever it is, I just want you to know that when we stand and sing, our pastors will be here. That's your invitation to come and pray with one of us.

Father, we love You. We thank You for Your Word. God, we pray that You would capture our hearts and minds, and that everything would be for You and about You, for Your glory in our lives.

God, again, we are so, so thankful, Lord, that You love us and care enough to invite us into that relationship with You, Father.

It's in Your name we pray. Amen.