



***EVERYTHING BELONGS TO JESUS***  
*A WORLDVIEW CURRICULUM*

*FLATIRONS COMMUNITY CHURCH / SCOTT NICKELL*



# ***EVERYTHING BELONGS TO JESUS***

## *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>THE BIBLE BELONGS TO JESUS</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>SEX BELONGS TO JESUS</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>MONEY BELONGS TO JESUS</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>FRIENDSHIP BELONGS TO JESUS</i>	<i>20</i>



## **EVERYTHING BELONGS TO JESUS** *An Introduction*

Psalm 24:1-2 says,

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers.*

Later in the New Testament letter to the Corinthians Paul quoted this,

*"For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."*

*1 Corinthians 10:26*

Then in Colossians chapter 1 we see this,

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."*

*Colossians 1:15-19*

The Bible makes some really astounding claims about Jesus. This means we have a choice. We can choose to believe what the Bible says is true, that everything belongs to Jesus, or not. If everything belongs to Jesus, then Jesus knows what is best in everything. If everything doesn't belong to Jesus, then really nothing belongs to Jesus and we are left to figure things out on our own, or find someone else to help us.

What we cannot do is choose to listen to Jesus on some things, but not on other things. Unfortunately, that's what we tend to do most often. We listen to Jesus in areas of our life that we find less challenging, less intrusive and less impactful. If we are honest, this really doesn't make any sense. If we can't trust Jesus with the most important areas of our lives, we should not trust him with any part of our lives. It really is an all or nothing decision.

CS Lewis put it really well many years ago in his famous book, *Mere Christianity*, when he said "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or

something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Since then, this has been referred to as the trilemma, meaning we have to choose one of three options. Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic or He is Lord. If He is a liar, then we shouldn't believe Him about anything. If He is a lunatic, He should not be taken seriously about anything. If He is LORD then, He should be both believed and taken seriously about *everything*.

This could be a really scary reality. If all we knew is that Jesus is in charge of everything, that doesn't tell us anything about His intentions for us. After all, someone can be in charge and be really cruel. Fortunately, the Bible doesn't stop at saying Jesus is in charge and you better get in line. The Bible actually tells us that Jesus is in fact *for* us. The way I like to put it is that Jesus wants good for us.

The Bible talks about God as being whole, unified, and one yet three persons. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This is about as complex as it gets, yet very simple. God the Son, Jesus reveals to us the heart, the love and the intentions of God the Father to His people. The Holy Spirit points people to God the Son Jesus. So there is this beautiful relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The reason God the Father sent His Son into the world was for our benefit. If God was out to get us He would have never sent Jesus. One of the most, if not the most famous verse in the Bible makes this clear.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*  
John 3:16

So what does God want for us? Life! Not Just any kind of life, but eternal, never-ending, forever, without stopping, never failing life. The next verse, although less known, is equally as important to know and believe.

*“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”*  
John 3:17

---

***If He is LORD then,  
He should be both  
believed and taken  
seriously about  
everything.***

---

This tells us what God does not want. Although He has the right to condemn the world because of our sin, that is not what He's after. He wants to save the world through Jesus. What you believe about God's intentions has a huge impact on your life. Think about it this way, what if you believe that

someone important in your life, who has authority over you, your parents, a coach, a teacher, is out to get you? How will that impact the way you live your life? Will you look for opportunities to be with them or will you do the best you can to avoid them? Will you trust them or will you be suspicious of them? Will you be inclined to obey them or disobey them?

If I don't believe someone wants good things for me, then I won't have a good relationship with them. The same is true in our relationship with God. If we don't think He wants good for us, then we won't have a good relationship with Him.

Jesus went one step further when talking about what He wants for us. Not only does Jesus want to give us life, eternal, never-ending life. He speaks to the quality of that life.

*“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*  
John 10:10

That word “abundantly” in another translation says, “to the full”. Jesus wants us to have a full, overflowing, abundant, more than enough life. He didn't come so that you and I could just trudge through life like some kind of slow march to the grave. He came so that we could really live. Jesus came first and foremost to save us from the

condemnation that we deserve. That is already more than enough, but on top of that He seeks to give us the kind of life that you and I can look at and say, this is real life. Isn't that what you want? A life that's real, a life that matters, a life that's significant? Don't you want to make your life count? That doesn't mean that you will be the president or some world famous athlete, you might be, but you don't have to be in order for your life to count. You don't have to be a celebrity to live a full life. In fact it may be more challenging to live a full life if you become a celebrity. Jesus provides the opportunity for each person that believes in Him to experience the fullness of life that He offers.

So everything belongs to Jesus. That's important but not only that, Jesus wants good for us. He's not only in charge of everything, but He is good. He is not a tyrant seeking to harm His people. He is a good king, and when we decide that we want to be a part of His kingdom we are making a decision that says, I want to experience all the benefits of being in a relationship with the King and living in His Kingdom. So everything that belongs to Jesus, also belongs to His people.

*"For all things are yours....all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."*  
1 Corinthians 3:21,22

If we belong to Jesus, everything belongs to us. Think about that. Far too often followers of Jesus start to think and act as if they are living in some kind of small little Christian bubble. We start to think in terms of things we cannot do, things we shouldn't participate in and things we cannot be a part of. Yet what Jesus tells us is that He didn't come so that we could have a small life lived in hiding, but rather He is King, everything belongs to Him and He has good things for us. This means that the way we live should be through the filter of what our good King Jesus says is best. After all He wouldn't lead us astray, He wants good for us.

---

***If we belong to  
Jesus, everything  
belongs to us.***

---

Romans 8:32 says it so well,

*"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?"*

I have three sons. Some days they really drive me crazy, they frustrate me and I get angry. However even on their very worst day there is absolutely positively no way I would give one of them up, for you. I don't love you that much. I love them infinitely more than I love you. On their worst day, I wouldn't give them up for you on your best day. What does this verse tell us about God the Father though? Again, think about His intentions for you.

Romans 5:6-8 says it this way,

*"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

God gave up His Son for us on our worst day. Jesus is perfect, He never disobeyed, frustrated or angered His Father, yet God showed His perfect love for us through Jesus dying for us.

So if God is willing to do that, back to the question Romans 8:32 asks *"will he not also with Him graciously give us all things?"*

If God the Father didn't hold back giving His own Son, He isn't holding anything else back from you.

It may very well feel like God is holding out on you sometimes. (My own children often think I'm doing just that, but they have no idea that what I'm really doing is either protecting them from something they want, but its not good for them.) Think about a small child who wants to ride a skateboard in a busy road. They want to do this, but its not good for them. God is a good Father and often the way we see the world is through

the view of a small child who doesn't understand. Sometimes I will pick up my kids from school and they will tell me what they want for dinner, or what they want to do that night and they don't realize that I have something planned that's even better than what they are asking for. It's the same way with God. We ask Him for things, not realizing that we are asking for too little, not too much. He has even more planned for us.

Everything belongs to Jesus. Everything belongs to us. If we see life through those lenses, things change. The world gets bigger not smaller. We have freedom, not slavery.

*"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."*

*Galatians 5:1*

It makes sense on paper. If Jesus came to set us free, He didn't do that so that we could live like slaves. That makes sense. The reality is that a lot of us don't know how to live like free people. That is what we want to spend some more time on. How would a free person live, act, behave in all areas of life? How would someone who is free from the power of sin and shame live? How would a person who is free from the fear of punishment live? How would someone live who really understands that God is good and that He wants good things for His children? What would that look like at school? What would that look like in sports, friendships, family, work, dating, entertainment, social media? What does an abundant life look like and how do we pursue that kind of life? That's what we want, how do we experience it?

Romans 12:2 tells us how.

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

I hesitate to say any one verse is my favorite verse in the whole Bible, but this one is towards the top of the list. Let's spend some time really breaking

this verse down, because this is so important.

It begins with "do not". This is pretty clear, it doesn't say "try your best to avoid," it just simply says "do not".

"Be conformed". This is an interesting word because it means don't let any outside force shape you, mold you or influence you to look like, or act like something else.

Do not be conformed to what?

*This world*

In other words, this world has a pattern. The word for world means "system, or way of operating," and the operating system of this world involves conformity. The way this world influences people and shapes them is to push people toward "sameness".

If you have ever made sugar cookies around Christmas you may have used cookie cutters. They are molds so that you can take something and make many things that all look alike, over and over. It's a pattern that is easily replicable. What God is teaching us here is that the world apart from Him is moving us toward more of the same. So the challenge for followers of Jesus is to not give into these influences. The world is like constant wind, or water, eroding who we are. If we simply give in to these influences, we will be shaped by the world, to conform to what the world says is best. It will be boring, it will be unimaginative, uncreative and ultimately not good for us. Have you ever noticed that when people are a part of a group they tend to all look the same, act the same, dress the same. Even if the group was created to be different from the norm, they all conform to the same image.

Instead of giving into this we are challenged to "be transformed". Now again, this involves an outward force doing something to us, but this time it's not the world. Ultimately, God the Father is the only one who can transform who we are. The word "transformed" is where we get the word "metamorphosis" from. Think about a caterpillar being transformed into a beautiful butterfly. So

only God can change who we are fundamentally. The most profound way the Bible describes this is that God brings us from death to life.

Ephesians 2:1 says,

*“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.”*

With only our sin to identify us we were dead and without hope. That is who we were.

Ephesians 2:4-7 says,

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

With Jesus, we are alive and not only that, we experience the *“immeasurable riches of his grace”*. Translation: really great gifts come from a really great Father.

So, this kind of transformation only happens through what Jesus has accomplished for us. Romans 12:2 though tells us of another kind of transformation that we get to participate in and it's referred to as the *“renewal of your mind”*.

The word “renewal” is similar to the word “renovation”. Think of the renovation of a house. When a house is renovated two things have to happen.

- The demolition and removal of the old
- The installation of something new

Old cabinets, gutters, walls and floors get demolished and removed to make way for the new. So when we consider the renewal or renovation of

our minds both things take place.

Old thoughts, old patterns, old ways of looking at the world have to be demolished and removed. Yet that's not enough if we are pursuing transformation, something new. We have to see those old things as what they are, falling apart. They don't hold up. Then we have to take on a whole new way of thinking. This way of thinking begins with *everything belongs to Jesus*.

---

**Right thought leads to right actions, wrong thoughts lead to wrong actions.**

---

Like all thoughts, that thought has consequences. If everything belongs to Jesus that means when you walk through the halls of your school you are walking through a school that belongs to Jesus, talking to people who belong to

Jesus and studying subjects that belong to Jesus. That changes the way we go to school.

When you play a sport, you are playing a sport that belongs to Jesus, against people that belong to Jesus, and with people who belong to Jesus, in front of fans who belong to Jesus. That changes the way we play sports.

When you make music, you are playing an instrument that belongs to Jesus, making noises that belong to Jesus, singing words that belong to Jesus. That changes the way we make music.

If everything belongs to Jesus and through Jesus everything belongs to us, when we participate in something we have the opportunity to demonstrate the way Jesus would participate in that thing. This all involves thinking. Thoughts lead to actions. Right thoughts lead to right actions, wrong thoughts lead to wrong actions. This is renewal of the mind. The way that plays out is through testing everything.

*“That by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

*Romans 12:2*

The word testing means to “put to the fire”, to see what something is made of. Gold gets tested by being put in a fire. The impure metals that surround it get melted away and what is left behind is the pure gold. The same is true with every idea, every thought, every way of living. A follower of Jesus can take that, test it and see what holds up. The question is, what is the fire? Its God’s word. Does this idea hold up based on what God says is good, right, best, true, beautiful. Knowing that God’s intentions are good and that God isn’t holding out on us, how does this line up with what He says?

What will we discover if we do this? God’s will. In other words, what He says is best. If we believe that there is an Almighty God who created everything, then its not a stretch to believe He just might understand how things work best. So any rule, guideline or boundary He gives us is because he knows how things work best. The way we go about doing this is by putting things through a filter. The filter involves three questions.

- Can this be received? In other words can this, whatever it may be, simply be received? Can I participate in it, do it, watch it, taste it, experience it as it is, without change and be obedient to God?
- Should this be rejected? In other words is this something sinful? Would I be disobedient to God if I participated in this in any way?
- Can this be redeemed? The word “redeem” is rich with meaning. In its most simple form it means to take something bad and use it for good. God is in the redemption business, which means so are we. So, is this something that cannot be simply received, does not have to be altogether rejected, but in order for me to participate in it, it must be redeemed?

Instead of me just giving you examples it will be more helpful for you to try this in your life.

What we are going to do is this; we are going to take some different areas of our lives and put

them to the test. We are going to think the way God thinks about those things. We are going to see them through the lenses of the Bible.

If we trust that God is for us, not against us, we are now free to live life in abundance, to the full. We can live well in a world that is dead set on conforming us to its patterns.

With each of these areas take at least one week to answer the questions. You may want to apply each area several different times to gain practice at this. If your parents are doing this with you, either show them your answers or better yet, discuss your answers with them.

### Music

Music is and always has been extremely powerful. Music is a gift of God, and like any of God’s good gifts it can be used well, or poorly. Gifts are intended to reflect the goodness of the giver.

What is your favorite song right now?

Who is your favorite band, or singer?

Do you know the lyrics to your favorite song? Either write them out, or print them off and then read them out loud.

What is the primary message of this song?

Does this song make any statements about God? If so what are they?

Does this song make any statements about people? If so what are they?

Based on what you know to be true about God and about people are these statements true? Are there any lyrics that are partially true, or almost true? What is missing?

Are there any lies in this song?

What scripture can you find to help think about your answers?

How does listening to this song, or this band make you feel? Does it direct you to things that are true? Does it make you think about things that are good? Does it point you to things that are beautiful?

So what do you think? Should this song be received? Rejected? Or Redeemed? Explain your thinking.

### Movies

Movies are very powerful because they tell stories and stories stick in our minds. When someone tells a good story it sticks in our minds, when you add pictures it sticks even more clearly and then when you add movement to those pictures story takes on a whole new level of being memorable. So one of the questions we need to ask when we watch a movie is “do I want this stuck in my mind?”

What is your favorite movie? If you know it well enough to answer the following questions go ahead and do so. It might be helpful to watch it again and answer these questions while you are watching or right after. (Make sure this is a movie that you have your parents permission to view.)

What is the primary message of this movie? What story is it telling?

Does this movie make any statements about God? About people?

What are those messages about God and people? Based on what you know to be true about God and people are these messages true?

What scriptures back up what you are saying? Is this movie helpful in any way for a follower of Jesus? Explain your answer.

Is this a movie that can simply be viewed (received)? Is this a movie that should not be viewed (rejected)? Is this a movie that can be viewed but needs to be redeemed? How would that occur?

### School

Pick a class that you take at school. It doesn't matter what it is, science, English, P.E.

What is the primary message of this class?

How does that message relate to God?

If all things belong to Jesus, how does the content of this class belong to Jesus?

Is there anything in this class that, based on God's word, is not true? What is that?

Is there anything in this class that, based on God's word, is true? What is that?

What scripture would you point to in order to explain your answers?

Is what you are being taught in this class something that you can simply receive? (Example would be  $2+2=4$ .)

Is what you are being taught in this class something that you must reject? If so, how can you go about doing that in a way that is respectful to your teacher?

Is what you are being taught in this class something that needs to be redeemed? How would that look?

Now that you have done this a few times, pick any or all of the following areas of life and answer the following questions:

What is the primary message the world gives us about this area of life?

Does that look anything like what God says about that area of life?

What is different, or missing or wrong about what the world says?

What scriptures can you find that explain your answer?

What does God want for us in these areas of life?

- Sex
- Marriage

- Family/relationship with your parents
- Work
- Friendship
- Dating

Now that you have spent the last several weeks exploring these areas of life, what has been the most important thing you've discovered?

Is there anything that you are still really struggling to understand? What is that and what is difficult about it?

Romans 12:2 talks about renewing or renovating our mind which involves both:

- The demolition and removal of the old
- The installation of something new

What are the old things that need to be demolished and removed from your life? What's your plan or strategy for doing that?

What are the new thoughts and actions that need to be a regular part of your life? What's your plan or strategy for doing that?

Who in your life can you ask for help to make these changes?

Hopefully you realize that this is not something you only do once and now that you are finished you are fully transformed. This is an ongoing process of transformation that occurs over the course of our whole lives. If we can think this way about everything, we will find that not only is God's Word true, but it's effective. It doesn't point us toward an easier kind of life, but it does point us to a better life.

Remember, this is all about Jesus. Everything belongs to Him. He wants us to have life and He wants us to live as the free children we are. To end this time, memorize Romans 12:2 and challenge yourself to apply it every day and everywhere you go knowing that Jesus is in you, and through Him you have the power to obey Him. When you mess up, there is more than enough Grace and forgiveness for you. He is for you, He wants good for you and He has done good for you.



## THE BIBLE BELONGS TO JESUS

If I'm going to pursue having what we call a Biblical worldview, then I must be willing to trust that the Bible is accurate, inspired by God and authoritative for my life. To put it more simply I need to know if the Bible is for real or not. If I don't believe any of those things, it would be foolish to orient my entire life around something I don't trust.

One of the things that's important to understand is that no book has ever been scrutinized as much as the Bible. The Bible has constantly been attacked and challenged for thousands of years. All you have to do is flip through cable television to see a handful of programs that specifically attack the Bible. Yet the Bible remains the best selling book in the world year after year. Why is that? Do we have good reasons to trust the Bible or do we trust the Bible because that's what good Christians do? Should we question the Bible, or is that wrong?

There is nothing wrong with questioning the Bible, but if we are going to question the Bible we should pursue the answers to those questions. Unfortunately, we often have doubts yet never pursue the answers to our doubts. If we do, we will find lots of very smart people who have asked great questions and found great answers.

There are a lot of great books that explore, in depth, the questions we will briefly explore here. If you would like to read more, check these out:

- *"When Skeptics Ask"*, Norman Geisler
- *"Can I Trust The Bible"*, RC Sproul

- *"Scripture Alone"*, RC Sproul
- *"Doctrine"*, Mark Driscoll
- *"The Case for Christ"*, Lee Strobel
- *"The Case for the Real Jesus"*, Lee Strobel

The first value of Flatirons Community Church is "the Bible is our authority for life". Its not "we really like the Bible", or "The Bible has some good stuff we should pay attention to". What we are saying here is that when we disagree with what the Bible says, the Bible wins, and we submit ourselves to its authority. To be under authority is a good place to be. It doesn't always seem that way but one of the reasons we put ourselves under authority is for protection. Since the Bible is all about Jesus and Jesus is our savior who literally protects us from the condemnation and punishment we deserve, the Bible is pointing us toward ultimate protection. Also, in directing us to a better way to live our lives, the Bible points us to the kind of life that will avoid all kinds of mistakes and pitfalls. So, when we put ourselves under the authority of the Bible we are saying we believe this is the best way to live. If you are really going to live that way, it should be for good reasons.

So, what are the reasons to trust the Bible, not just as a good book but as an the authoritative Word of God?

To answer this question we can't use what's called "circular reasoning". I can't say I trust the Bible because the Bible says I should. I can't even say "because Jesus said so." The only reason I know

what Jesus said is because of the Bible. So, how do I get to a place where I can reasonably believe that the Bible is what it claims to be.

So, what does the Bible claim to be?

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word for “book”, so Holy Bible means, Holy book. It was written in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek by over 40 authors, over 1500 years. There are 66 books in the Bible. 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

The Bible claims to be “inspired.” 2 Timothy 3:16 says all scripture is “*God breathed.*” In other words, it comes from God.

By definition that means the Bible is claiming to be without error or “inerrant” as well as “infallible”.

*Inspired* means God controlled the process in which the scriptures were written. *Inerrant* means free from all falsehood and mistakes. *Infallible* means not misleading. In other words, you can trust it.

Those are HUGE claims. This is why so many people have challenged these claims. Most of those challenges fall in one of three categories that Greg Koukl outlines.

- How do you know its inspired?
- What changes in the Bible due to translation?
- The Bible was written by people, and people are fallible, therefore the Bible is fallible.

So lets take a look at each of those challenges.

### Inspiration

The claim is that there is a God and He has spoken. So the question about the Bible is:

- Is this a book written by people about God?
- Is this a book written by God for people?

There are several things that point to this being

a book written by God for people, or simply put “inspired”.

There are incredibly detailed **prophecies** in the Bible. In other words there are events that are predicted in the Bible that have come true. There are over 60 in the life of Jesus alone. One of my favorite examples is Isaiah 53, which was written about Jesus hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Take a look at just a few lines from that famous passage:

---

***There seems to be a supernatural unity in the Bible.***

---

*“Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought  
us peace, and with his wounds we are  
healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own  
way;  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of  
us all.”*

*Isaiah 53:4-6*

If you read the entire chapter you will be surprised at how accurately this passage describes the events surrounding Jesus’ life and death.

There seems to be a supernatural **unity** in the Bible. If you asked 40 authors to write about God today all from the same country, time period and culture you would get major differences in the story line. You would see significant disagreement and major inconsistency. What we have in the Bible is amazing. 40 authors over the course of 1500 years, several continents, various situations and contexts and no disagreement, inconsistency or discrepancy. How is this possible outside of a supernatural influence? In other words, “inspiration.”

The Bible **addresses our deepest questions.** The Bible resonates with reality. The Bible does not

tell us to deny the existence of pain and suffering, the Bible tells us that it does exist, and what its purposes are. The questions we find ourselves asking late at night when we can't sleep are exactly the questions the Bible addresses. One example would be, why is it that when humans read Jesus' sermon on the mount found in Matthew 5-7 there is something deep within us that resonates with that, even though it goes against our grain? The Bible resonates with what we know to be true. We believe that human life is valuable, more valuable than any other creature on this planet and there is nothing outside of God's Word that confirms that belief. Based on science, there is absolutely no reason to believe that human life is any more valuable than that of a mosquito.

The Bible is historically accurate. The past 100 years of archaeology have been a tremendous step forward in this.

John Elder says "It is not too much to say that it was the rise of the science of archaeology that broke the deadlock between historians and the orthodox Christian. Little by little, one city after another, one civilization after another, one culture after another, whose memories were enshrined only in the Bible, were restored to their proper places in ancient history by the studies of archaeologists... contemporary records of Biblical events have been unearthed and the uniqueness of Biblical revelation has been emphasized by contrast and comparison to newly discovered religions of ancient peoples. Nowhere has archaeological discovery refuted the Bible as history."

It is undeniable that the Bible has **changed lives**. What I find significant is how the Bible has changed lives in places that are so different and diverse. We live in a western technological, postmodern age and yet one of the the most consistent comments I hear is that the Bible is relevant and addresses the most important issues of life.

At the same time you could go to the most primitive cultures around the world and find that the Bible is changing lives there as well.

The Bible has **survived**. It would actually be impossible to destroy the Bible now. Even if every

Bible was destroyed we could easily reconstruct the whole thing just from other authors quoting the Bible. The Bible has sustained major attacks over the past centuries and yet here we are and it's the number one selling book every year.

This is just some of the evidence for the inspiration of the Bible, but what about all those errors and things that have crept in as the Bible has been translated. What about those shows on television that say there are over 200,000 errors in the Bible?

I'll quote RC Sproul here to give us some context, "God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of transmission."

In other words the claim is that the Bible is inerrant in its original form. Not that the translation you hold in your hand is without any mistakes. Now that sounds scary, but we have to dig a little to understand what we are really dealing with here.

I think the picture that gets painted here is that the Bible has been translated in some "telephone game" style. Did you ever play that game? One person whispers a statement into someone's ear and then that person does the same and so on. As the message gets repeated, the message changes until the person at the end of the line says something totally different than what was originally spoken?

That is not what happened with the Bible! When the Bible was translated it wasn't translated like that.

it was not 1-2-3-4...

it was 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4 ....

Each copy was copied from an original.

In regards to the copying of the Old Testament, it was such a rigorous process it would boggle our minds. There were laws on how it was to be done. Everything from the kind of material that was to be

used, to how many columns and lines were to be used on each page. Nothing was to be written from memory. If a copy had one mistake it had to be destroyed. This was not the telephone game!

We have 5,366 manuscripts to compare and draw information from, many of which were made within one generation of the originals. Comparatively we have 643 copies of the *“Iliad”* written by Homer. We have 10 copies of Julius Caesar’s *“Gallic Wars,”* the earliest of which was made 1,000 years after the events described in it.

Mark Driscoll says, “Its amazing that people try to argue that we cannot trust the Bible because we do not have the original copies. But it would never occur to them to question the writings of Plato, Sophocles, Homer, or Caesar Augustus when we have fewer than ten copies of each book, and those copies were made at least 1,000 years after the author wrote the original.”

But what about all those errors that have made their way into the translations we now have?

Norman Geisler in his book called *“When Skeptics Ask?”* says this, “It is easy for someone to leave the wrong impression by saying that there are 200,000 errors that have crept into the Bible when the word should be “variants”. A variant is counted any time one copy is different from any other copy and it is counted again in every copy where it appears. So when a single word is spelled differently in 3,000 copies, that is counted as 3,000 variants. In fact, there are only 10,000 places where variants occur and most of those are matters of spelling and word order. There are less than 40 places in the New Testament where we are really not certain which reading is original, but not one of these has any effect on a central doctrine of faith.”

He goes on to say, “We have 100 percent of the New Testament and we are sure about 99.5 percent of it.” (pg. 160)

What we have covered here barely scratches the surface of all the reasons why the Bible is worthy

of our trust. If you still have questions, keep pursuing answers! Read some of the books I’ve recommended here.

Most of all I would challenge you to put the Bible to the test. Read it, follow it and see if the Bible doesn’t direct you to the ultimate reality, answer your deepest questions and strengthen your heart, soul and mind. Read small portions of the Bible each day, find an app or set your phone to have a different verse as your wallpaper or homescreen each day and see if the Bible does or does not change you.

The Bible says this about itself in Hebrews 4:12 *“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*



## **SEX BELONGS TO JESUS**

Everything belongs to Jesus.

This includes sex.

Sex is not something humans invented and God was somehow taken by surprise. We are pretty obviously sexual by design. Male and female fit together biologically, emotionally and spiritually. God as the creator of all things, including sex is for sex not against it.

Unfortunately this truth is often never discovered by followers of Jesus because the predominant message churches and pastors have given to young people regarding sex is simply, “don’t do it until you are married”. This puts a pretty negative spin on sex and in many ways makes it a lot more intriguing. Being repeatedly told not to do something without being told why only makes us more curious about what the big deal is. It also can create suspicion that God is holding out on us.

If we remember that God is not only in charge of all things, but He is also good this will help shape a positive view of sex. If God has good intentions for His people, then this must be true about sex. Then it becomes clear that any rule, boundary or specific guideline God gives us about sex is for our benefit, If God created sex then God knows how sex works best.

Sex is a good thing. If we look around our culture, art, movies, music, the internet, it doesn’t take long to figure out that we’ve made sex into an ultimate thing. A very important truth for us to remember is that when good things become ultimate things, ultimately good things become destructive things. Humans are inclined to attempt to gain fulfillment, joy and satisfaction in places that cannot ultimately provide those things. If we try to get from anyone or anything what we can only get from God, we will wind up unsatisfied.

---

***If God has good intentions for His people, then this must be true about sex.***

---

When following Jesus is the ultimate pursuit of our life, all other things fall into place. The good gifts that our Creator gives us can be enjoyed in their rightful place. Its when we get things out of order that life starts to fall apart.

Maybe you’ve seen someone in your life make a good thing an ultimate thing. There is nothing wrong with money, or a job but if someone makes their pursuit of money or their career ultimate, what happens? The abundant, full life that Jesus has in mind for us starts to fall apart. Families fall apart, kids lose out on having a parent who is present in their lives, marriage suffers. The bank account may swell, the house may be big, but at what cost?

Doing well academically, or in sports is important but not ultimate. Likewise sex is not ultimate, it was never meant to be. Sex is a good gift given by a good Father God to His people. So lets talk about just how good of a gift this is. With Romans 12:2 in

mind lets renew our minds about sex by looking at the primary messages the world gives us about sex and then comparing them to what God says about sex. Then, we will be able to see clearly that God really does have what's best for us in mind.

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

*Romans 12:2*

So we need to begin with the patterns of this world, the things that we are told are right and true and see if they really are.

**“Sex is no big deal and sex is everything.”**

This is just one of the places that our world sends us not only mixed messages but entirely contradictory ones. On one hand as we observe what's going on in our world it seems that sex has become very casual. Its not uncommon for people to pursue sex apart from any kind of romantic relationship. Having a “friend with benefits” or random “hook ups” is a typical way of pursuing sex outside of the context of not only marriage, but any real interest in one another. So the message is, “sex is no big deal and there is no reason that having sex with someone has to have any lasting impact on you or them”. Yet, at the same time, it seems that our culture is obsessed with sex. Internet porn is a billion dollar industry. Apps that enable anonymous sexual encounters are utilized by millions of people. Sex is used in advertising in blatant ways. New television shows on cable networks launch the show knowing that if they have an abundance of sexually explicit scenes in the first season they are more likely to secure viewers for every season the show is on. So which is it? Is sex “no big deal” or is it “sex is everything”?

The Bible makes clear that sex is neither “no big deal” nor is it “everything”.

Genesis 2:24-25 says *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”*

This is both descriptive of the first marriage between

a man and a woman and prescriptive for all other marriages between men and women. What that means is that this is the example, the model, the ideal for all marriages. The primary way that this relationship is described focuses on the fact that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. Marriage creates a space where a man and a woman can be literally naked and unashamed. This means a lot more than simply taking their clothes off though. This means being emotionally, spiritually, mentally and physically open and vulnerable to one another. This involves trusting one another with your bodies, thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes and dreams. Would it be wise to open yourself up to that level of vulnerability to just anyone? Would it be wise to open yourself up to that level of vulnerability to someone who has not committed themselves to you? Ask yourself this question, what would be the best place for a man and a woman to pursue that kind of relationship? The answer is clear. Marriage. In the context of marriage a man and a woman are promising to God and one another to remain married “until death do us part”. While this promises is far too often broken, its very clear that if its not, and two people really pursue Jesus first they have the best opportunity to experience the joys of sex in the way God intended.

Did you know that Christian husbands and wives have sex more often than anyone else and they are most pleased with their sex lives? Why do you think that is? Could it be that when you follow the guidelines God gives us about sex, we have better sex?

The world tries to pretend that sex can be experienced apart from any of those other things. In this way the world is settling for too little. In other words sex is so much more than a simple physical act. To say its not big deal is a lie.

At the same time when the world is obsessed with sex, its making too much of sex. A husband and a wife don't have to be preoccupied with sex, because they have the opportunity to have a lot of it whenever they want to enjoy it. There is no need to obsess over it. Sex takes its rightful place as one of God's good gifts.

**“If you wait to have sex until you are married you won’t know if you are sexually compatible. It would be better to “practice” first.”**

This is another way in which the world both oversimplifies sex and overcomplicates sex at the same time. On one hand, sex is not that simple that you can just “practice” with people with no cost. Having sex with people you are not married to will cost you something. Your emotions, your heart, your soul will get involved with that person whether you want them to or not. When that relationship comes to an end, it will be painful and the effects will be lasting.

On the other hand, sex is not that complicated. The idea of being sexually compatible is silly. If you have a male and a female involved, God has built in the compatibility. Man and woman fit together quite nicely. Its not rocket science. Also, while “practicing” with multiple people prior to marriage doesn’t bring any real benefit to a sexual relationship later on but rather brings sexual baggage into a marriage. Practice in marriage brings a lot of benefit to marriage. If your expectation is that you will be “great” at sex as soon as you get married, you may be disappointed. This is where “practice makes perfect” comes in. In marriage you have the opportunity over the course of many years to grow together sexually. Sex can become a fun, enjoyable experience that two people get really good at with one another.

So again we must ask based on what we’ve looked at does God have what is best in mind for us? Or does the prevailing message of our culture have what is best in mind? Which path sounds more rewarding and satisfying to you?

**“If it makes you happy do it. If it doesn’t, don’t.”**

Don’t misunderstand, I am not saying that sex outside of marriage doesn’t feel good or can’t make someone temporarily happy. It does and it can. The issue though is we often pursue temporary happiness at the expense of long term fulfillment.

In the New Testament Paul wrote a couple letters

to a struggling church in a city called Corinth. The culture there was one of unbridled sexual expression. Corinth was a big city, a port city with a lot of people traveling through. In many ways it was the ancient equivalent of Las Vegas. They worshipped the Greek gods there and had a temple in Corinth to Aphrodite that employed over 1000 temple prostitute. Sex was big business in Corinth. It was what Corinth was primarily known for. There was a word used in the Greek world, “Corinthianize” was used to describe being sexually immoral.

So imagine growing up in a town where it was normal to watch your dad and all the men you knew regularly go to the temple to have sex with prostitutes. Imagine growing up in a city where the “normal” way of dealing with other people was to take advantage of them, cheat, lie and steal to get ahead, imagine growing up in a town where the primary message was “take care of yourself at all costs... do what you want to do”. I was at a coffee shop one day and I looked up and on the wall was a picture that said “if it makes you happy do it, if it doesn’t don’t. Its that simple”.

So when Paul wrote letters back to this group of Christians who were struggling to reconcile the way they’ve always lived and viewed sex with their new found faith, its no surprise Paul wrote a lot about sex. I love the way the Message paraphrases some of Paul’s words to this struggling church in 1 Corinthians 7.

*Now, getting down to the questions you asked in your letter to me. First, Is it a good thing to have sexual relations?*

*Certainly—but only within a certain context. It’s good for a man to have a wife, and for a woman to have a husband. Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling sexual life in a world of sexual disorder. The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to “stand up for your rights.” Marriage is a decision to*

*serve the other, whether in bed or out.*

Did you catch that? “Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them”. Its been used a million times but the metaphor is effective, fire in a fireplace can keep you warm, fire in the living room will burn your house down. Sex is the same way in the right context of marriage these strong desires can be expressed, strongly. When we take those desires and express them outside of marriage its like walking around a house with matches and gasoline. We are asking for disaster.

Finally we need to come full circle with this. If everything belongs to Jesus, this includes our bodies. What we do with our bodies says something about Jesus. Again its Paul who wrote to that dysfunctional church these words.

*Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

*1 Corinthians 6:18-20*

Some sins we are told to fight, to take our stand against. When it comes to sexual immorality which literally means any sexual contact with someone you are not married to, we are told to run! The Bible tells us to stay as far away from it as possible. This is why the question “how far is too far” is the wrong question. We ask that question not because we are trying to obey the God’s command to run from sexual immorality but because we are trying to get as close to the line as possible without stepping across it. Its impossible to get close to the line without stepping over.

Have you ever been on a roller coaster? Sex is a lot like a roller coaster, its operates on momentum. When you get on a roller coaster and you start heading up to the top of the first hill you are doing that so you have the proper momentum to get over the next one. When you crest that first hill there is literally no turning back, its too late. Far too often we find ourselves in situations we

never intended to be in, doing things we never intended to do because we got caught up in the momentum of the moment.

Again in the proper context of marriage this is lots of fun. Outside of marriage it leads to a lot of regret.

Your body belongs to Jesus and your body is a good gift to you. You and I have the opportunity to honor God with our bodies. Sex is just one of the ways we get to do that. We also have the potential to dishonor God and ourselves with our bodies. Your body is not your own. When Jesus died on the cross for you and rose from the grave He bought your body with the price of His own body.

Finally I want to leave you with hope. If you have messed up and sinned sexually there is more than enough grace to cover your sin and shame. You will experience consequences for your actions, but if you are honest about your sin and follow after Jesus He still has so many good gifts for you. There is no need to try to trick yourself into some sort of “secondary virginity” or any other gimmick. Acknowledge before God and other trusted Christians what you’ve done. Ask for help as you move forward and don’t allow your past sin to define who you are.

When Jesus had a woman caught in the act of adultery thrown at His feet He showed her grace and truth. He didn’t condemn her or throw stones at her, and He told her to leave her life of sin. He tells us the same. He neither condemns or punishes those who put their faith and trust in Him, He gives us grace. He also points us to a better

way, He commands us to follow His truth and obey Him. By His grace and living in His truth, you can find ultimate fulfillment in Jesus and enjoy His good gifts.

This week spend some time making a list of the messages our culture sends in regards to sex then make a list of scriptures that address sex.

Compare those messages and ask which message leads you to a better life.

---

***Your body belongs to  
Jesus and your body is  
a good gift to you.***

---



## **MONEY BELONGS TO JESUS**

Everything belongs to Jesus.

This includes money.

For some reason amongst Christians opinions on money vary. Have you ever been flipping the channels and stopped to watch a television preacher for a few minutes? If you watched for very long you may easily have concluded that Jesus came to make people rich and have very nice teeth. At the same time in the Christian world there are lots of people who have taken vows of poverty and been deemed saints for doing so. These are two distortions of the Gospel (good news) Jesus came to bring. On one hand there is the “prosperity gospel” which preaches that Jesus’ main purpose is to make us prosperous only in the physical and measurable categories of health and wealth. This gospel demonizes the idea of being poor and measures people’s faith by their bank accounts. If you have enough faith in Jesus He will give you nice things. This totally ignores the fact that when Jesus came and lived on this earth He was poor. So if I believe in the prosperity gospel and my health goes bad or my bank account runs dry I’m left to conclude that either I don’t have enough faith, and I should try harder or God is a liar and doesn’t deliver on His promises. On the other hand the “poverty gospel” does exactly the same thing. It measures people’s faith by their bank account. This time however if you have too much money, you must have very little faith. This

gospel presents a version of God being some sort of mean creator who would never want His creation to enjoy good things.

Jesus taught neither a prosperity or a poverty gospel. Jesus came and announced the “Kingdom of God”. You don’t have to be a genius to figure out that announcing a kingdom as good news doesn’t conjure up mental pictures of a slum. So Jesus didn’t come announcing that in His kingdom there would be no physical blessings. He also didn’t announce that His kingdom would be only physical blessings. It is far more than that, but make no mistake, it is both physical and spiritual. In God’s kingdom the physical and the spiritual come under His rule and experience His blessing.

---

***When a good thing becomes an ultimate thing, ultimately that good thing becomes a destructive thing.***

---

Jesus also understood that while money is not evil, it has great potential to lure our hearts into all kinds of evil. The Bible never teaches that money is the root of all evil as people often misquote it. The Bible says *“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils.” Timothy 6:10*

Jesus taught about money all the time, specifically because it has such a high potential to own our hearts. Money is a good thing that can go bad very quickly.

When a good thing becomes an ultimate thing, ultimately that good thing becomes a destructive

thing. Jesus wants to be ultimate in our hearts because when we make Him the ultimate thing not only do all good gifts fall into their proper place in our lives but we have the opportunity to experience that full, abundant life He has in mind for us. So Jesus gives us a very simple principle when it comes to money.

**Money makes a great slave, but it's a horrible master.**

In Jesus' most famous sermon He said this, *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."* Matthew 6:24

We were meant to serve God and money was meant to serve us.

If you have ever spent any time watching reality television the truth is pretty clear that more money does not equal a fuller life. In fact you can do a few simple google searches to find out that the wealthy are statistically more likely to be depressed, suicidal, addicted and unhappy. Why is that? Money makes a horrible master. Living your life in constant pursuit of more money is a miserable way to live. How many families have been destroyed by a father's relentless pursuit of money at the expense of a relationship with his wife and children? How many friendships have been torn apart because money got between them? How many people's lives have been defined by a pursuit of money?

One of the saddest case studies of this simple principle is given in Matthew 19:16-26. Stop right now and go read the story.

You might notice that this conversation gets started on the wrong foundation. The rich man's perspective is that through accumulating or accomplishing good things, he will be able to have eternal life. His worldview is that if you work hard enough you will be rewarded. That kind of worldview is effective for accumulating wealth, power, fame and a number of things. The problem with that worldview is that it is completely wrong as it pertains to the most important thing, our relationship with God. Our standing, our identity as God's children fortunately has nothing to do with our performance or our

ability to do good things. It has everything to do with what Jesus has done for us, and what God gives us. This is called Grace. Grace is the exact opposite of doing work for a wage. When you work you are owed a paycheck. God doesn't owe us anything, yet He gives us everything. That's Grace.

This man doesn't have a category for Grace so He wants to know what good thing He can do to earn what can only be given. Yet Jesus plays along and the man reveals the arrogance of his heart. He actually thinks he has kept all of God's commands perfectly His entire life. Would you ever say that you've perfectly honored your father and mother your whole life? This man did. He actually thought he was perfect. Or (I think more likely) he thought he had to give the appearance of perfection because after all, his worldview didn't allow for failure.

So Jesus continues to play the game this man started. "Okay you want to be perfect here's your next step, you ready for this? Sell all your stuff and give everything you have to the poor then you will really know what wealth is as you follow me".

This man thought he had it all together, had everything working for him, but he was in fact in a slave and master relationship with money. He was the slave, money was the master. Jesus was offering Him a new master, a kind and loving one, not a brutal one like money can become. The most heartbreaking part of this story is that the man hangs his head in sadness and instead of following Jesus, walks away from Him.

This is what I think Paul had in mind when he wrote to Timothy, *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."* 1 Timothy 6:10

This man had a heart that was a slave to his money. Jesus uses these moments as an opportunity to teach his young friends. He gives a now famous analogy when He says, *"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God."* Matthew 19:24

A lot of people have tried to make Jesus words sound less offensive than they are. When Jesus

talks about a camel squeezing through the eye of a needle He is simply telling us to imagine something impossible. The impossibility is the point of the metaphor. A camel cannot fit through the eye of a needle. That's why his disciples freaked out and that's why Jesus said, "with man this is impossible".

Yet what is the next thing Jesus says? *"With God all things are possible"*. That's the point, in order for a rich person, or anyone else to enter into the kingdom of God it will take a miracle. God has to do something for us, we can't make it happen on for ourselves.

It is important to notice though that Jesus is making clear that money is a major competitor for our hearts. Its tempting to put our faith and our trust in money. Have you ever wondered why our money says "in God we trust" on it? Someone thought it would be a good reminder for us every time we spend it, or receive it that money makes a horrible master. If we trust and depend on money, it will fail us.

We have to be very cautious with money because its so tempting to make it an ultimate thing. Yet if we can use money instead of being used by it, we can do a lot of good.

Make a list of the good things money can be used for.

Make a list of the ways money can become a destructive thing:.

How do you currently use money?

Do you tend to waste it and overspend?

Do you find yourself constantly in debt to someone?

Do you save all your money for yourself?

Are you giving to your church?

How are you using money to serve God?

Take one month and track every penny you spend. Write it down and add it all up at the end of the

month. At the end of the month ask yourself one simple question: Am I really serving God with my money?

Money and time reveal what we really care about and who we really serve. If our money and time are not aimed at the most important things, we need to repent, rethink our strategy in that area of our life and take intentional steps toward changing.

What are some simple things you can do to change your habits with money? A very simple way of living is the 10/10/80 strategy. Give 10% to your church. Save 10% and live off of 80% of your income.

If you can start to live that way now, regardless of the amount of money you make in life you will find that your stress level regarding money will always be very, very low.

Write a couple sentences that reflect the way you want to view money throughout your life. Put those sentences somewhere you can see them as a daily reminder of your new strategy.

---

**Money is a major competitor for our hearts.**

---



## **FRIENDSHIP BELONGS TO JESUS**

Everything belongs to Jesus.

This includes our friendships.

When you look around what kind of friendships do you see? When you consider your friendships what are your thoughts? What does it mean to be someone's friend? What does it look like to be a friend to someone else?

Think about the first real friendship you had, maybe your first "best friend". What made that friendship so good? Why did that person become your best friend?

My first best friend was Michael. He lived across a cornfield from my grandparents farm in southwestern Ohio. Michael's family rented a little house on about an acre carved out between fields belonging to farmers. Every summer I would spend multiple weeks at my grandparents farm, and throughout the year when I would go visit my dad we would often spend the weekends there. So over the years Michael and I became really good friends even though we didn't see each other every day. We played baseball, football and basketball. We camped out, ran around the farm, shot guns and never went inside unless it was time to eat, in which case we would eat as quickly as possible so we could go back outside. There was nothing complicated about our friendship at all. The reality is, had Michael and

I gone to the same school and seen each other every day, I'm not sure we would have become friends. We were very different. Michael was pretty shy, overweight and lived in the country. I was pretty bold, skinny and lived in the city. Yet we were best friends.

On one hand God brings certain people into our lives at a certain time for a purpose. For me as a kid who bounced back and forth between visiting my dad on weekends and being with my mom, Michael was a stabilizing force in my life. I knew that when my dad drove down that long gravel drive to my grandparents old farm house, that just across the cornfield my friend Michael would be there. I look back now and see God's provision in that.

On the other hand, we get to choose our friends. Unlike our biological family our friends really are the family we choose. We are deciding to have a close relationship with someone that we aren't in any way obligated to have. Those relationships have a huge influence in our lives. This means we should choose our friends wisely. The Bible says this:

*"Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise,  
but the companion of fools will suffer harm"*

*Proverbs 13:20*

Wisdom is not the same as knowledge. A person can be very knowledgeable and at the same time

be very unwise. You can know a lot of things, even true things but if you don't put those things into practice you are not wise.

We like to think that we are resilient and no one and nothing will influence us or shape us. What this proverb is teaching us is that we are influenced by our friends. If you walk with the wise, you will become wise. If you are the companion of fools you will suffer harm.

A significant amount of the pain and suffering I went through in middle school and high school was directly connected to the friends I hung out with. I was the companion of fools and I did a lot of foolish things.

Think about your current friendships. Who are you spending the majority of your time with? Are they wise or foolish?

There is a great example of this in the Bible. In 1 Kings chapter 12 we find this interesting description. Solomon had been the King of Israel and brought more prosperity to the kingdom than they had ever known. Solomon was famous for being incredibly wise and incredibly wealthy. During his reign he oversaw the construction of his palace which took 13 years to build and the Jewish temple which took 7 years to build. Both structures are described as being incredibly elaborate. On top of those two major projects were all kinds of smaller ones. He built houses for his wives. He built entire cities. He even built a fleet of ships. None of this was without cost or without labor. Solomon forced his own people to work for him on these projects, which means by the end of Solomon's reign the people were exhausted. They had been driven into the ground by all his projects. So when Solomon died and his son Rehoboam took the throne the people had a request of the new young king.

---

**Wisdom is not the same as knowledge. A person can be very knowledgeable and at the same time very unwise.**

---

*"Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you."*

1 Kings 12:4

This seems like a reasonable request, doesn't it? Your father drove us into the ground, give us some rest. Now Rehoboam does something that seems wise. He doesn't give an immediate answer.

1 Kings 12:5-6 He said to them:

*"Go away for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away.*

*Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?"*

Now look, older doesn't always mean wiser. Some men age like wine, other men age like milk. But at face value this seems like a good idea for Rehoboam.

Not only does he not give an immediate answer...he seeks counsel. He seeks the counsel of old men who've been around the block. They witnessed what Solomon had done to the people.

This seems like a wise and humble thing to do. You are a new king, with a very important decision in front of you, seek the counsel of those who are older than you. Look at what they say.

1 Kings 12:7 And they said to him, *"If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever."*

Pretty simple advice isn't it? View yourself as the servant of your people, give them good words, give them rest. And if you do, they will be loyal to you.

*"But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him."*

1 Kings 12:8

In other words the old men didn't tell Rehoboam what he wanted to hear. He doesn't want to be a servant, he wants to be a king. He wants people to serve him not the other way around. So instead of listening to what the old men say, Rehoboam brings some other men to the table. He invites his buddies to the table and asks them to speak into the first and most important decision that he will make as a young king. So he goes and wakes them all up. They are all probably passed out from partying the night before amongst pizza boxes and beer bottles. He tells them to quit playing video games for a few minutes because he needs some advice.

1 Kings 12:9 And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us?'"

What do you guys think?

*"And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'"*

1 Kings 12:10-11

Can you sense the degree of uninhibited blind testosterone on display here? You tell them that your little finger is thicker than your father's "thighs"! It literally translates "loins" which in Hebrew referred to the center of a man's masculinity, manhood and strength.

Basically instead of humbly serving the people like the old men advised. The young men, advise their buddy to strut around like a proud rooster in front of the people. Flex your muscles and intimidate them. Show them who's boss.

And the son of the man who wrote the words "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm"

---

**Someone who only tells you what you want to hear is not helpful to you.**

---

Does this....

*"So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king said, "Come to me again the third day." And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."*

1 Kings 12:12-14

And would anyone care to guess how this turns out for Rehoboam? NOT WELL! The people revolt, the kingdom is divided, civil war breaks out and his decision set the tone for how Israel would be ruled by bad kings for generations.

Now here is something worth taking note of. Rehoboam was not 18 years old when he became king.....he was 41. Age does not necessarily make someone wise. Rehoboam invited a bunch of "yes" men to the table but they were not his friends. Again it was Rehoboam's father, Solomon who wrote:

*"Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses."*

Proverbs 27:6 NIV84

"Yes Men" are actually your enemy. Someone who only tells you what you want to hear is not helpful to you. We all have blind spots. We all have areas of our life where we are unaware of our effect on people and we need real friends to help us see them.

Can you think of one moment where someone told you something you didn't want to hear but you know it was something you needed to hear?

Think about that for a second. Why can "wounds from a friend be trusted"?

A real friend wants good for you. With a real friend you can trust their intentions toward you. Just like we can trust God's intentions toward us knowing that He wants good for us, a good friend, wants good for you.

How can you know that? That is only proven over time... you learn you can trust someone because over the course of time it becomes clear they want good for you. This is hard to figure out for a lot of us... because in order to figure that out... we have to trust... we have to trust people with a little in order to see if they can be trusted with a lot.

This is difficult for a lot of us... there are those who just naturally trust everyone, tell everyone everything, meet someone and immediately start sharing all of their thoughts and feelings, problems etc.... There are those who love to overshare with everyone they can. That's not most of us. Most of us are the other way...we are guarded, we hold back, we don't open up... because when you trust someone like that, you are giving them the opportunity to hurt you... that's called being vulnerable... and most of us are not fans of being vulnerable... and me too.

We get our word "vulnerable" from the latin "Vulnerare" which means, "capable of being wounded, open to risk or damage."

For some of us... we've got good reasons to be guarded. Good reasons to never be vulnerable again... for a lot of us, we can point to people who we trusted, and the wounds they delivered were not the wounds of a friend, they were the wounds of an enemy who we thought was a friend, who we thought we could trust. So we've made a vow....NO MORE. Never again.

We close ourselves off... we protect our heart. And that makes sense. The problem is that that comes with consequences. Unintended ones.

CS Lewis described the consequences in his book "The Four Loves," by saying that "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be

wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."

In other words... there is risk here... you may get burned. People are not perfect and you may get hurt... but the alternative is living a life cold dark life... one where we live under the illusion that we can be bullet proof...

Brene' Brown says it this way, "Perfect and bulletproof are seductive, but they don't exist in the human experience".

Here is the thing that's really interesting. I would say that the primary reason we avoid being real and vulnerable with others is our desire for safety. Safety is a good thing, but its not an ultimate thing.

if safety becomes the ultimate pursuit of your life, it will become a destructive thing. Here is what I mean.

So the reason I don't show you who I really am, the reason I don't open up and trust you with what's really going on in my life, or what I'm really struggling with is I'm afraid you will hurt me. You will take that information and use it against me.

So what we are trying to gain is SAFETY..... but is that what we really find? Isolation. Which is not safe. Think about this in animal terms....

I saw a movie recently and there was a scene in the movie where wolves were hunting a buffalo. The way they hunted was to pick one buffalo and separate it from the herd. Why? Because its easier to take down even a large buffalo if it's by itself. When we isolate ourselves we are doing half of the

---

***Out of our desire for safety we do things that make us less safe. A lot of us can look at our life and say without a doubt, some of the worst decisions we've ever made, were made in isolation.***

---

enemies work for him.  
Think about that.

So out of our desire for safety we do things that make us less safe. A lot of us can look at our life and say without a doubt, some of the worst decisions we've ever made, were made in isolation. Some of the most destructive choices we've made, we made alone. So not only do we isolate ourselves but what else do we do? We hide. Because if someone sees us for what we really are, what we've really done they will recoil, run away and abandon us or worse they might attack us. So even amongst a crowd we figure out ways to hide.

Now there are people who see that kind of vulnerability and it makes them want to attack people, those people are called wolves. Those are usually the kind of people who've been so deeply wounded that they follow the adage, "hurt people hurt people". Most of the time though, that kind of transparency makes someone more attractive not less.

When someone is willing to be vulnerable, and be honest and they are met with "me too", it brings people together not apart. Which gives us real safety.

So in our efforts to gain safety we often do two things that don't provide us with safety. We isolate ourselves and we hide.

I heard a man say once that he had decided that in his relationships you either "get all of me or none of me". He was basically saying I'm done isolating, I'm done hiding. Here is who I am, faults and all, take me or leave me. That's a good way to live. You want to be my friend, then here I am but I'm not hiding.

Again it was Solomon who said this:

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm*

*alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken."*

*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

If you've ever watched one of those survival shows you know that people who are by themselves have a much more difficult time surviving than those who are together.

The way I like to think about it is, if my life is represented as a table and I sit at my table I need to choose wisely who has a seat at my table. Who am I listening to? Who has the right to speak into my life? I get to decide. And so do you. Now its time to consider your friendships. Make a list of those you are closest to. Spend some time this week reflecting on that person.

Do they love Jesus?

Are they wise?

How do they influence you?

Do you make wise or unwise decisions when you are with them?

Who on that list should you give more influence to?

Who on that list should have less influence on you?

Now as a follower of Jesus we are called to love people who don't know Jesus. This means we are called to influence them not the other way around. This doesn't mean you shouldn't be friends with people who aren't Christians, but it does mean you should consider who is having more of an influence on who.

If everything belongs to Jesus, then our friendships belong to Him. Jesus knows how friendship works best.



**355 W South Boulder Rd, Lafayette CO, 80026**  
*[www.flatironschurch.com](http://www.flatironschurch.com)*