

**Scripture Reference: Genesis 3:2-5 (AMPC)**

Hello. How good was that praise and worship this morning? Was that good or what? Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Praise the Lord.

I need to do some praying. I guess I'll do it at the end of the service. I see my son, Garth, is temporarily out of the service – some things I have to take care of as we are preparing to go to the US of A today. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

I'm quite amazed at the ability of God, quite amazed at the power of God to get things done regardless of whether man actually chooses to obey Him, or connect with Him, or follow Him. He still gets things done, because it's His plan and no one can withstand or resist His plan. It's just the way it is. And so I'm going to minister again this morning because of the way the Lord has put this whole set of messages in my heart. You know, search and switch. Search and switch. And I want to just show you what happens in each of us as we live through life. And I'm going to read from Genesis chapter 3. And Satan comes to speak to Eve in the form of a serpent, and he asks her the question about what are you allowed to eat, and what are you not allowed to eat? **<sup>2</sup>And the woman said to the serpent, in verse 2, We may eat of the fruit from the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup>except the fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it lest you die. <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die (Genesis 3:2-4 AMPC).**

This is, this is something that happens to you and me every single day. Every single day. Not just once a day, this happens many times a day. Frequently. This happens to us when you focus on wanting to do God's Word and there is an alternative thought process that comes to you and that alternate thought process is; but why do you want to do it God's way? Just do it your way. Why do you want to do it God's way? Just do it your way. And she chooses to cross a line here. So God had said to her, well Adam had said to her on behalf of God, "You must not eat of that tree," and he goes on to say, **<sup>5</sup>For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil and blessing and calamity (Genesis 3:5 AMPC).** I ask you; why would she want to know what evil was? Why would she want to know that? The reason she would want to know it, is because instinctively God has put in our hearts to search for more of Him. So the way he presents himself to Eve was; you'll get to know more about God if you choose this way. If you will choose to go against God, you will find out more about God, if you choose to go against God.

I mean, when you and I talk about that like this, it doesn't really make sense, but God has placed in each one of us a desire to search. And we search for Him. We don't always think we are searching for Him, because we fill our lives with many things that we search for, and they've become substitutes for searching for Him. And last week I was telling you about, you don't have to tell a teenager that they must go after and try

and find their identity and pursue things that they feel they want to pursue, because inside of them there is a desire to search for something in life that is going to prove their uniqueness. It's going to prove their identity. It's going to prove what they are.

I mean yesterday afternoon, we had our children and our grandchildren around at the house and they came to spend some time with us just to say goodbye to us before we go to America. And the grandchildren were running around and, you know, it wasn't very long and they were doing something mommy and daddy said, no, too. And so they know what the consequences are if they do something that's, no; they get disciplined. And so when they got disciplined, you kind of think but they already knew they were going to get it. Why do it? I mean, it's like; can't you learn? No, there is that instinct inside of them that wants to push the boundaries. Yes, you're searching for something, and so you push the boundaries.

Now, I learned many years ago, when I was a teenager, I learned that I could choose at a certain time in my life, I could choose to hear the words of God and I could hear the words of my parents' teaching. So this is not a secret, and my mother has gone home to be with God, and she died many years ago. She died an alcoholic, and she died because of alcoholism. Her bodily functions just couldn't exist with the amount of alcohol she was putting in it and it just quit. And so she died in her sleep. So I remember coming to and facing this barrier in my life. So I want you to understand that this was all happening; I became aware of a problem in my house and I became aware of a problem in my parents when I was about 11, 12 years old. I became aware something wasn't good in the house and I couldn't, I didn't understand what it was. And as I grew older, and I began to see some things, I began to put some things together and as my mom's problem got worse and worse, so the evidence of it became more clear to me.

So, you know, when you're in high school, you find yourself in the company of people, and my parents had said, "Don't drink alcohol, it's bad for you. Don't do it." And yet, here was my mother, an alcoholic. I had a choice for myself. What was my choice? My choice; they can preach all they like, nobody will actually say, "You shouldn't drink alcohol, because your parents say so." When their 'say so' was actually being undermined in my very home, it's in my face. Hello. So I would have been within my rights that when the rugby team, the soccer team, the cricket team all started to get to the age as teenagers where they started having beers and started to do stuff, I would have been within my rights to say, "I don't have to do what they tell me, because I can do what they do." Right? So, I was aware that there was a line that I'm, that there was an existing line that wasn't a line based on what they said, it was based on something that was deep inside of me that even though they had crossed a line, there was still something that God wanted to protect me from. And if I crossed this line, I would open myself up to a behaviour pattern that God wanted to protect me from. It's not something that was out of bounds, it was what God wanted to protect me from. You know. And so it goes with our lives. If you had to spend your whole life in the presence of God and all of your life, if God had to show up in this Church today, in His, in Himself, I mean He couldn't, because we couldn't understand it, you know. His glory would be too bright and His power would be too strong and our physical bodies probably wouldn't be able to

handle it if He showed up that way. But if God had to show up here today in all of His majesty and His glory, you would become immediately aware of so many things that are going on in your life, so many things that actually God has been wanting to show you, "Don't go there, it's not good for you".

So when Eve crossed the line and said, "I'll eat the fruit," she was looking for something to happen and nothing happened. When she ate the fruit, she now disobeyed God and nothing happened. So what was that all about that God said, "You'll die" or "Don't eat of that fruit." What was that all about? So Adam comes over and she says, "Adam, you should eat of this fruit. God said we shouldn't eat it, but nothing happened. So you should just eat of this fruit too, because nothing will happen." But it wasn't something that happened outside, it was something that was happening inside; when she crossed the line and Adam crossed the line; when they crossed that line something happened.

Now, if God has placed in each one of us the desire to search for Him, what is the enemy of God's tactic to all of us in life? His tactic is to take that desire to search for life and deceive you, manipulate you and influence you to choose another form of life that you think might be a better option. So, as you go along you start to make these choices and for the most part people don't realise that the choices that they're making have such a destructive pattern in their lives. So I don't think I know for sure that when my mother was confronted by a lot of church people, so we had a conservative church environment that I grew up in. When my mom and dad did a first trip to the USA in 1968, they went to America for six months or eight months, she was introduced to 'alcohol drinking Christians', whereas her whole life had been away from drinking alcohol. So she was introduced to 'alcohol drinking Christians'.

Now, I'm talking about a personal testimony here. I'm not placing any demands on anybody for any kind of lifestyle. Okay? This is a personal testimony of what happened to my family. She was introduced to an alcohol drinking lifestyle. I can guarantee you, when she took that first sip of wine, where she crossed the line based on her own values that she had grown up with, and she looked at everybody else and said, "But all these Christians are doing it and it is all fine. All these Christians can do it, I should be able to do it and it will be fine for me." I can guarantee you when she crossed that line, she didn't think of the consequences or even remotely have any idea of what the consequences of that one stepping the line action would have taken. In the beginning, it didn't look like it had any consequences. I like it, I'll just have another glass, I like it, I'll just have another glass. I like it. So what happened was that the desire in her to serve God, the enemy came and influenced her and the enemy came to show her in the lifestyle of other people that it's okay to compromise on this issue, on this matter, it's okay to compromise. It's not really going to hurt you and harm you. But you don't know which issue you're compromising on that it is going to be your downfall. And of course, the enemy is not going to show you the end result of what you have chosen to be your downfall. You don't know what it is in life. What he is going to do is that he is going to present you with many different alternatives and many different options for you to choose something that is not God. But inside of you the desire, the strongest desire is

for your heart to be filled with Him; to be filled with His love; to be filled with His presence; to be filled with His life. That's what He has put inside of you.

Every single person born in the universe is born with this thing. You can read Romans 1 and if you read Romans 1, it will tell you that people know about God through their conscience and because of the scope of the universe that He has put before our eyes, it all speaks about Him. So nobody in the world is without excuse when they come to say, "But I didn't know about God." He has put inside of us, each one of us, the need to have life; the need to pursue life; the need to have a full life and to search out the things that might bring us full life. So He, Jesus, is the way of full life and He wants us to pursue Him. Hallelujah.

I am very much aware that as I go through life and as I've been helping people that whenever they have embarked on a course of action, they never realised that those choices they were going to make, was going to end up hurting them the way they did. And so, I feel this morning, I know people that have been around me for a long time, you know my testimony about this, but I just feel this morning that I need to share it again, because it's my life. I have no other story to tell you but the story of God's intervention in my life. And I know sometimes if you hear it a few times it gets boring but it is my life. I don't have another story to tell you about my life, you know. And I remember when I met Sharon and I started to be married to her and started to live this married life, how challenging it was for me to settle down and live with this person who was making all these demands on me, you know. I just wanted to have fun, play sport and be romantic and then she fell pregnant and I had all these responsibilities and I had this person making all these demands on me, you know, big demands.

It was a defining moment in my whole life, when I went to God for the answer of my marriage. I didn't go to men, I went to God. I didn't hear, at that time it wasn't a man's counseling message or a good marriage message that changed my course of actions; it was my search for God's life in my marriage. And this is the life that God spoke to me and He said to me, He said, "John, go read in Ephesians where it says that you must love your wife and give yourself up for her, even as Christ loved the Church." And so when I read that Scripture, I began to understand that if I want to have the kind of marriage that I had dreamed about having, then it is going to cost me. What it is going to cost me is a love for her that was so completely God's love through me for that she could not resist the love of God coming from me to her.

So, I don't want to get into all the different kinds of love because I only found that out later. I understood that there is a friendship love, there is an eros love, there is an agape love and there are different kinds of loves. I didn't know that at that stage. I just knew the love of God. And so, as we started to walk through life, she started to make demands on me that many, many of my friends that were around me would say to me, you know, "It's not fair that you are doing all the giving; you are giving up everything; you are changing everything; you're doing everything." And they blatantly told to my face, "We know who wears the pants in the house because all she has got to do is say, 'I don't want you to do this anymore or I don't want you to do that anymore' and you stop doing it." And they said, "We don't know you like this, John. Where is your backbone,

you have become 'yellow', you have become cowardly, you have become a man without a will." Well, they didn't know it then but it was the greatest compliment they could have given me in my life. I became a man without will because what I willed to do was to let the love of God flow into me for her in a way that totally astonished her. It totally confounded her that I could love her so completely. So what happened to her do you think? Well, you know the story. What happened to her was, she became irresistible, I mean she could not resist my love. She could not resist the love of God that was flowing through me and so the next thing she did, she went to God and said, "What can I do to change so that I can become what he wants me to become?" And now what we started both doing is, we both started seeking God to find out what we could do in God to be better for each other. And so, you know, I look at many; and so I'm using this as an example of how people make choices, because you can make a choice and you can say, "I'm going to be married but my marriage is going to be based on these terms." And you might not even know that you are putting those terms there but inside of you, you have put those boundaries there and you may never communicate them with anybody else including your partner that you're married to.

You may just have boundaries inside of you that say; I will not give all of myself to my partner because I'm afraid of being hurt; I'm afraid that I will give everything I've got and then when I've given it and I and they are unfaithful, or they do something that's really bad to hurt me; if I give everything I've got then I will never recover from it, therefore I will not give everything that's me, I will always hold it back.

I'm preaching very well today. You see that is already an insertion of a thought process into your world of you're searching for life in a relationship but you're not prepared to give what it takes to make the relationship work because fear has already become a prominent thing in your life when it comes to relationships. So the only thing that you can do is let God change you, so that no longer do you live by fear but you live by the confidence that is in God.

I had to face that decision. I had to face that decision with my wife. I had to face the decision that I had to give; I had to be completely vulnerable to her and give her everything that was the deepest darkest, and lightest and best of myself. I had to give her all of what I was; I had to give it to her. I had to put myself out there and give it to her and say; I'm not trusting her, I'm trusting God to help her deal with it the way that she needs to deal with it. My trust was in God that when I gave her everything that God would actually help her deal with me. How else could she deal with me? How else could she deal with me if it wasn't God that was there helping her deal with me? Because sometimes the responsibility that's on the person in the partnership is so big to deal with this person's dreams and all their love, and all of their hopes, and all of their future; there's such a big thing going on here. How can I be responsible for all of that?

So, I couldn't and I couldn't have verbalised all of this to you at that stage; I was in my early twenties; just figuring my way around. But I knew this thing that if I chose God, and I chose the life of God, then I would have the best that I could possibly have.

Let me tell you what choices that stopped me from doing. The choice to give myself to her completely stopped me from looking at other women. When other women looked at me and brought invitations to me, it stopped me from considering those invitations. When temptation came to me from any form or any angle or anyway, this complete commitment that I had to God was a barrier for me. It became a safe place for me to function in my life. Hallelujah.

You see I was searching for something; I really was searching for something. I had this dream when I was a teenager, and many people said to me it's a pipe dream what you've got, John, you know. And I would talk to my friends as a teenager; 16, 17, 18 years old. I would talk to my friends about the kind of marriage I want; about the kind of life I want to have and just hopes, inside of yourself, just things that you dream about. You know, maybe you don't tell anybody else about it but maybe you're, you're sitting, lying in your bed at night, or you're sitting in your lounge having a cup of tea, or a cup of coffee, or whatever it is, and you are having some deep thoughts about, within yourself, you're having some deep thoughts and some of your deep thoughts are, I would really like to have this kind of relationship, or I'd really like to have this, or I'd really like to have that and so you've got these thoughts going on. Well, I was having those thoughts. And at that stage of my life, as you do when you're a teenager, as you do, you don't think about what it's going to take to get there, you just think about; that's what I want.

And so if you ask any teenager around now and say, well, what kind of car do you want to drive when you get a license?" They'll probably say, "How much money can I spend?" And so when you say, "Well, don't worry about the money just tell me what car you want to drive." So they say, "Well look, if money's not an option," then they might say to you, a Coupe M5 BMW or they might say a City Golf, zooped-up whatever GTI. I mean, I don't know, money's not an option, so they will dream. Right? You don't have to ask them that question, they're dreaming it anyway. They are dreaming it and thinking, yeah, I wonder what my life is going to look like one day. Maybe I'll drive a car like this? And so what they're trying to do is find themselves an identity that they feel like, this kind of fits with the way that I would like to, you know. And maybe I'd like to make enough money so that I can fly my own jets one day, and maybe I'd like to do this, and maybe I'd like to do that. Right? You just dream. So you don't, at that point in time you're just dreaming, you're not thinking about what it's going to cost and what'll take for you to get there. You're just dreaming.

Well, when I dreamt about a woman that I would marry; that would, we would have a kind of relationship, there's a lot of things that I dreamt about at that stage. I can tell you, I've been married to the same woman for nearly 39 years and everything I dreamt about when I was a teenager has come true, and continues to come true in my marriage.

Now, you might turn around and say to me, "It's not you; you're faking it somewhere, you're not quite; can't be that good." I can tell you that it's that good, it's that good. And I can tell you that it's that good for her too because she tells me that every day; every day; every day. And I tell her that every day. It's part of the way that we keep it this

good, is that we tell each other every day. And not just every day but many times every day, whenever we get a chance, we tell each other.

So, I'm doing this because the Lord has put it on my heart to teach this way this morning. So you know already, that when I talk about relationships, I talk about closing the gap. My primary function of helping people in relationships is closing the gap because this world's system is designed to bring gaps. What this thing happened here between Eve and Satan; his questions and his manipulation of her thought process was designed to bring a gap between her and God. And so when Adam came, it was designed to bring a gap. So he used her very desire to search for more life, to bring a gap with life. So then, what to do?

So, I thank God that I just pursued the Word of God; in some way I could say with the form of naivety. I just said I'm going to believe God with everything I've got, and I'm going to trust His Word with everything I've got, and then; what have I got to lose? I mean basically that was my whole thought process at that time. What have I got to lose to not trust God with this whole thing? But if God is right about this, I've got everything to gain. If God is right about this then He's the only One that can give me the marriage I'm looking for. Not me, I can't give it, and I know she can't give it because in our humanity both of us are limited to be able to give what everybody needs. Come on now. Because we bring baggage with us, doesn't matter what kind of upbringing you've had. You always bring baggage with you, and that baggage comes into the relationship, and when you bring that baggage into the relationship, it becomes a barrier to be able to give what you need to give to make it work. But if you give God the opportunity to work on it then He can help you pass the baggage out. How's that going to happen? You don't know until you give it a chance. And so that's what I did, I just said I'm going to give it everything and I gave it everything. I put my heart, my soul; I put my life on the line for her. I gave everything to her; everything.

You know, I was a fairly good; fairly good soccer player. I played, in those days it was called the Super League Soccer. And when she married me she said, "I didn't marry you to watch you play soccer on the sidelines. I married you because I want to know you." I said, "When you married me you knew I was playing sport and you even came and watched me play sport when we were dating. Now? Now? Now that's not anymore?" She said, "I married you because I want to know you, I want you." "What do I do, Lord?" He said, "Quit." "Okay." So then I started watching sport on TV and she said, "I didn't marry you to stop playing sport so now you watch it on TV." So I said, "What do I do, Lord?" He said, "Get rid of the TV." Now just on those two issues there, most men are already out of the marriage. Come on; shout me down because I am preaching really good here. You know. So, and so it went, things, one by one she would come after things that I was doing in my life, one by one. I said, "I am dying because Jesus died on the cross. He gave everything and I'm dying to myself so that the life of God in me can love her the way He needs to love her." And that's my only hope that I had.

Six years later, we have two children now. I arrive home from work one day. She says, "Hey John, I think it's time." I said, "Time for what?" She says, "I think you have got to go buy yourself some new soccer boots." I said, "Say what?" She said, "You know, I have

lived with you these years and I have come to understand that the love of God in you for me is so complete that you will never put anything in your life ahead of me and God ; never. There is nothing more important in your life than God and me and because I have that confidence, you should go back and play some soccer, if it's in your heart's desire to do it." I said, "Where's those boots?" And so I started training again with the guys and pretty soon I was in the first team. Next minute she and the boys were coming, sitting on the sideline, "Go John go. Go John go. He, John, John, he's my man, if he can't do it no one can."

You see what happened was that because I put God first place in my life, my capacity to love her grew beyond own ability to love her. And because it grew beyond my own ability, it was no longer just my love touching her world; it was the love of God through everything that I did. Every affection that I gave her, every kiss on the cheek I gave her, every little thing that I did for her, the love of God used it and multiplied it and magnified it and did things inside of her that I could never have done with those things if it were just one human doing it to another human. He used that to supernaturally do something to her. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

So, I'm here today to say to you that God has this same attitude towards you. He says, "I understand that in your own humanity and in your own world there is nothing you can do in your own strength to close the gap with Me. You are weak. You have got all kinds of nonsense going on in your head, in your life, in your habits, in your ideas, in everything that's going on. You can't possibly do what it takes to get to Me. So I am going to send Jesus. He is going to die for you and when He has died for you, you are still not going to do it by yourself. What you've got to do is allow Him, in you, to actually pursue Me. So when He comes to live inside of you, then He will give you the desire to search for Him and close the gap between you and Him."

So now I have got confidence, I've got confidence, believe it or not, I do, do some things wrong sometimes. It's not often, you know, I mean it's not often. I mean, you know, some of us are nearly perfect but I do sometimes do some things wrong. But I know that when I'm doing something wrong and I become aware; ah, I let myself down, I let God down, I let someone else down, that I have this confidence that God has already chosen to close the gap with me and that there is nothing that I can do that is big enough to separate me from Him. His whole world is designed to close the gap with me. His whole, everything thing in the universe is designed to close the gap with me. He lives to live with me. His whole existence in the universe and the reason He made us is because He wants to have fellowship with me. He wants me to talk to Him and He wants us to live life together. For the while that I'm on this earth, in this body, He has an interest in me worshipping Him and living with Him and Him living in me because He wants to show everybody else in the world, how great He is and He needs us, me, you, to show them. Which is why I have confidence to talk about my relationship with my wife this way because I know that one of the things that have had people become attracted to our ministry and our life, was the quality of the marriage that we have because I've realised that there is a great need for people in this life, to want to have relationships that are meaningful; that are satisfying; that have got purpose; they've got joy; they've

got peace and it's not this endless struggle to find out, is the relationship going to become something or not become something or what. God has designed relationships to meaningfully be something wonderful for us and that includes our relationship with Him.

So you want to change something in your life when it comes to relationships? You got to change what is happening between you and Him. So now, let me just come to, I want to come to closing. I don't want to close; I want to come to closing. You know. If I realise and recognise that in my way of being a man, so if people want to label me and you could label me this way, and you would be fairly accurate if you wanted to place this label on me; you could say that I'm a phlegmatic that has some sanguine in me. So that means I am an emotional introvert that's what a phlegmatic is. An emotional introvert that is deeply analytical; that expresses everything internally; almost never wants to say something until he has thought about it five times and analysed where it all could come back and this and then five other angles and another ten angles of the five angles and so you analyse and you think and you re-hash it before you speak and by then, relationships that are around you have moved onto the next thing. So then they call you quiet; you don't communicate, you don't talk, you don't say anything. Nobody in this church like that.

I have some sanguine in me which makes me not just an introvert; but it makes me want to enjoy people's company too because a sanguine is someone who is happy, happy-go-lucky, smiling, sole of the party, happy person, full of joy. It's all about the people, people, people, people. It's all about people. If I'm not around people then I'm not happy. I've got to be around people all the time; sanguine. So I don't want to teach about that today but if you want to put a label on me, you could put a label on me that says I'm phlegmatic. So now as a phlegmatic, if you do something wrong, what you tend to do, is you tend to take that internally and beat yourself up about 10 000 times on the thing that you did wrong because it's just unacceptable. Because you should have analysed that before you did it and so your analytical nature about yourself let yourself down; so stupid, analyse better next time. And so I'm going to beat myself so much to make sure that next time I do a better job of analysing so that I cannot let myself down. Sounds like, if I'm just judging by your facial expressions there is a lot you who want me to talk about this at some point, you know.

The melancholic is normally a very creative person and that person is, there's an English saying; he just has some melancholy. The reason they talk like that is because melancholics tends to have moments where they are; they can go very deep into their own trouble; they can go dark; they can get depressed; they can get very subdued and very anxious. But the other side of the melancholic is that they're normally very creative people and very rich personalities because of their creativity and the way they think and the way, I mean, this is just a very general broad thing. Right? Then you have the Choleric who is the driver, achiever, actually relationships don't matter and I don't care whether I have a relationship, it's just the result that matters. So anyway, I've covered all of them, I really wanted to talk about me.

And so I've discovered this with God that if I take this approach where I let my natural instinct about myself come down on myself, then it separates me from God because what I want to do is I want to beat myself up and repent internally and make sure that I'm totally, fully, you know, there's a very big English word and so I'll use it just because it's in my brain now. It's called flagellate, it's not a swear word, it's a very good English word. You know what the word flagellate means? If you flagellate yourself; to flagellate yourself is if you had a whip in your hand with many tails and you would hit yourself on the back; you know those people that do that in the natural. That's called flagellation. It's a true English thing, go and look it up for yourselves. And so what you want to do inwardly is you want to flagellate yourself in your own mind and in your own soul and in your own emotions, you want to take those whips and flagellate yourself on your back until you've said; okay, you've bruised yourself enough so next time you won't make the same mistake again. And if I allow myself to live like that with myself then I would always be in a position where I'm always paying the price to get back to God. When God has already paid all the price so that I don't have to flagellate myself, I don't have to come and get down on myself, I don't have to pay the price all the time, I can just say, "Jesus did it," and I move on. Now that takes some trusting in God that I don't have to keep visiting myself on my own weaknesses all the time that I can just have the confidence that God has taken care of it and because He's taken care of it, I can go into His presence with boldness. And that's what the Word says, "Come into His presence with boldness, come because there's grace, come because His blood has taken care of it, come not just because you're good," and by the way, you can't get yourself good enough to present yourself as being good. If you could have done that, Jesus wouldn't have died. The whole reason He died is because you can't do it. So why do we try and do it every time? We don't have to do that, we just have to trust in Jesus and say, "Jesus, here I am with all of my stuff. I'm just here. I'm just here and I want to worship you and I want to praise you and I want to give myself to you."

I've learned this, if your journey to this point, if your journey has created things in your life that are difficult to let go of, you will be tempted to try and let go of those things before you come back to God or you come into His presence. Even worse though is you're afraid to make that decision because you know when you make this decision that I want God more in my life again, that I'm just going to end up back there where my searching takes me back to my habits and then I've let myself down in my walk with God again and I think that's happened to too many Christians too many times - I'm going to make a commitment, I'm going to serve God again and then you try to do it all by yourself again and you can't live up to the standard that you set for yourself, that standard that you think you should be living and it normally involves giving up a whole lot of bad habits and so you try to give up those bad habits before you come back to God and then you find out that you can't give up those bad habits, and so the minute you go back to a bad habit, you think; aah, this whole God thing doesn't work. And I don't want to feel guilty about myself all the time so I'm not going to serve God, I'm just going to do my own thing. And so you live your whole life doing your own thing rather than doing God's thing because you don't want to feel bad about yourself. I've got news for you, it's not God who's trying to make you feel bad about yourself, it's the devil who is using the thing that God placed inside of you to search for Him to make you feel bad.

And so, now I am closing, and this comes down to every way of our lives, it comes to; God says if you just seek Him, then He will take care of your needs; financial needs, physical healing needs, He will take care of your needs. But there's a performance thing that we have in our lives that we carry as part of our culture that He can't do that unless you do something. And so the worse thing is that you actually keep going back to God with your own way that you feel like this is always the way that I've got to prepare myself to connect with Him. Whereas I tell you, you know, my son Brynn, we were talking about it, he's in New York now but we were talking about it not so long ago, my son Brynn, about how he gave up smoking. He gave up smoking because he realised, actually this smoking is killing me. (demonstrating dragging on a cigarette) I'm enjoying this cigarette but actually my lungs are being destroyed. And he's a big body builder and so he quite likes his body, he does, I mean why else would you go and build it? I mean it doesn't take a rocket scientist to say I like my body; I'm going to go build it. I want it to look better. So he did and I mean, you know what he looks like, he makes me look skinny and small but anyway, you know, Brynn gave up smoking because he wanted to because he realised that he had developed a bad habit socially, because of social reasons, not because of God reasons and now he needed to give it up. And so he realised that in his own strength he couldn't give up smoking because he'd been smoking for too many years and it was too much part of his life. And so we encouraged him to do this because we have this walk with God. He would light up a cigarette and as he was smoking and dragging on that cigarette, he would speak to God and he would make this declaration, he said, "Thank You, Lord that Your power, Your life that is inside of me helps me quit this cigarette (demonstrating dragging on a cigarette). Thank You, Lord that I am free from this nicotine habit of smoking cigarettes (demonstrating dragging on a cigarette). Thank You, Lord; I'm free (demonstrating dragging on a cigarette). Packet, after packet, after packet for three months. You understand, he's stopping at garages, shops buying cigarettes. Every time, (demonstrating dragging on a cigarette), thank You, Lord, that I'm free from smoking; this habit has no hold on me (demonstrating dragging on a cigarette). Well, how else is he going to get rid of it if the strength of God, who is his most personal Helper in life can't help him to get rid of it? He's not against Brynn because he was smoking; He is wanting to help Brynn because it's bad for his body. God's not against anything that you're doing in your life; He's just wanting you to live a higher life. He's here to help you live that higher life. He wants to help you with everything He's got, with Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the Word, the Holy Spirit. He wants to help you with everything He's got. He wants to help you live a higher life. He wants to help you live a higher life.

One day, he lit up a cigarette and as he was looking at this cigarette, he said, "I'm free, I'm really free, I don't need to drag this cigarette anymore." He didn't even finish it, he put that thing out, he took the packet, threw it in the dustbin and from that day to this he hasn't dragged on another cigarette. Not once and I don't know how many years that is now, seven, eight, I don't know how many years. It's a long time that he hasn't touched a cigarette; he's completely delivered free from it. You see he didn't try to do it in his own strength, he accessed the life of God that was there to help him and that life got so big on the inside of him that it overcame even his desire to have it and he was free.

And isn't that the way we're supposed to live with God? It isn't that I've got to get myself better so that I can have a relationship with God. Why don't you go to God and let Him help you with the stuff you're trying to get rid of or just stuff you can have better because inside of you He's put that search so that you can switch. He's out that search in you so that you can switch, switch from those things that are trying to take you into a world system. I promise you, there is no one out there in the world that you've got to prove yourself to, because just when you've found a group of people that you think you've got to prove yourself to them, they are in it for themselves, and it just takes one thing and they'll walk away from you like that. They will drop you like a hot potato. You say, "Not my friends." Yes, your friends. "Not my family." Yes, your family. But Jesus, He won't, you can count on Him all the time, all the time, all the time, all the time, every time, everywhere, every day, every situation, every circumstance, everything. He's got it covered. Everything, He's got it covered, everywhere. It doesn't matter where you go, He's got your back, He's got you covered. And just when you feel like you've done it again and you did this thing again and I'm trying to get rid of this thing, He says, "I'm with you, I'm with you. I haven't given up on you. Don't beat yourself up now. Stay with Me, stay with Me, stay with Me, stay with Me." I know in Afrikaans they've got this saying; *Fokus my kind, fokus*. You know, it's like stay with me, don't go away, don't go away, stay with me, stay centered, stay straight, stay strong here. Just in relationship, yeah okay, it's alright if you go do that and do this, "Stay with Me, just stay with Me, stay with Me. My power will deliver you, My power will obliterate, everything that's keeping you back from a better life." Hallelujah. Praise the Name of Jesus.

How many of you want to have a better life? Come on, come on, don't let your personality keep your hands here. I can see the personalities that don't want to raise their hands, you know, it's like, not me today, in case the Pastor, you know. Because inside of you, you want to have the life that He's got for us, you were created to have it. That's where the searching comes from and your searching for so many different places in so many different ways to have life, I promise you, you're going to get to a stage in your life, and maybe your way of getting it is money, maybe it's political power, maybe it's fame, maybe I don't know whatever it is that you're pursuing to try and find and fill that thing in your life, you will get to a point one day where you will say, "Actually this is not as grand as I thought it was. It's not as grand as I thought it was." Hey. Hey. Praise the Lord because He's the One that satisfies everything. He's the One that satisfies everything. Won't you stand with me, please?

I've got so much to preach on this subject that I didn't even scratch the surface this morning. But it was the Holy Spirit that led me here, in this way this morning. Hallelujah. Did you get something out of this today? We're going to pray a prayer together, all of us, we're all going to pray this prayer together and we're just going to ask God to help us live a better life. Okay? We're going to ask God to help us live a better life. We say; Jesus, we come to You today with a simple prayer. And we say, we ask You, to come and just be real to me. Come show Yourself as my Saviour, as my Helper, the Life Giver. And I thank You, Lord, that from this day onwards, I'm going to live with You, I'm going to live in that help that You've given me and I'm going to do the best that I can, just to

connect with You every day. I thank You for that Lord, in Jesus' Name. Amen. Hallelujah. Glory to God. Glory to God.

I'll tell you; if that's your whole thing that you do is just connect with Jesus more than you've done this last week, more than you've done yesterday, you just begin to connect with Him. I'll tell you what, it will change your life, it will change the whole way you see the world. Now I know, I know, I know, I've been, God called me to do this, I know all the psychological games that are going to happen. I know all the things that are going to hit your emotions, hit your mind, hit your world and the reality of this service this morning by Wednesday may look so far away that you can't hardly even remember that that was a real moment that you had with God. But I'm here to tell you, it doesn't matter what happens to you between now and Wednesday, God heard your prayer today and He's with you. He's with you. He's not quitting on you and He brought you to this church today and you're in this church today because He knew you needed to hear this message because He wants to help you and He wants to strengthen you and He wants to be your Lord. He doesn't want to be, He doesn't want to be my Lord to you, He wants to be your Lord to you. Hallelujah. And that's the greatest thing in the world that He's so personal about His walk with you and your walk with Him. Personal, personal. Hallelujah.

I want to bless you but I just need to take care of some things, I want Pastor Melusi to come up, Pastor Garth to come up, please. Just come stand by me, and who else, Bertus. Where's Bertus? Just come and stand here. There's some of them, the Jo'burg people are not here this morning, so they're just going to have to represent the whole bunch, just let's hold hands. So Pastor Sharon and I and some of us are going to America. And I'm doing this under the direction of the Holy Spirit that I want to just say that these are the men and there are others that go, but they are representing everybody, that they are going to be in charge of spiritual activities and administrative activities in the case of Bertus' wife Stefnie, she will be in charge of some administrative financial accounting things while we're gone. And this is a wonderful time that in all the years I've been travelling that I can have my son, Garth, up here and I can delegate spiritual authority to him, to actually be in charge while I'm gone. Hallelujah. You know and to Pastor Melusi, yes, so these are men that I trust. They have been in relationship with me for a long, long time and I know that you can trust them too and you can bring anything to them and they will help deal with it. So I just want you to agree with me that the enemy is defeated with any attack that he might bring against this church and against you as a people while we're away. And just stretch out your hands and say; we bless these people and all of them that they stand with, they are blessed in helping us run the ministry while we are gone, in Jesus' Name.

So, are you okay, Melus? Are you sure? I'm just checking on him, you know. Praise the Lord. It's a great joy for me to be going away because of what God has asked us to do in the USA with Heritage of Faith, Crowley. What we're going to do in the whole trip there, what God has ordained for us to do to make a difference and make an impact, and so I just pray for you all. And I'm glad you are with me, just stretch your hands out to them. Father, we pray that You protect them with Your Word and the blood of Jesus.

No weapon formed against them will prosper. I thank You, Lord, that they are blessed going out and blessed coming in. And I pray, Lord, that when I get back, I'm going to hear of supernatural business deals that have happened, supernatural income streams that have happened, supernatural healings and things and relationships restored and many good things that You have wanted to sort out while we are gone, because we know it's only You that's sorting it out, Father. I ask You to do a supernatural and mighty thing. We give angels charge over you while we are gone in Jesus' Name. So be blessed, may the Lord bless you and keep you and may He make His light shine upon you, every day in Jesus' Name.

Thanks for coming to church. God bless you all.