

The Lies We Believe

Week 3: Two Roads

Philippians 4:8-9

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- September 8, 2019

Have a seat. When the band has fun, everybody has fun, right? Thank you, band, very much.

If you'll turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4 and get to the end of that chapter, verses 8 and 9 --- you want to circle those. Those two sentences will change your life. I'm celebrating ten years since they changed my life this fall. Ten years ago --- I'll tell you how and why.

Let me start with a story. Niccolo Paganini --- that will ring a bell with some of you, maybe --- a famous violinist, one of the most famous, and probably because of this story. He was standing before a packed concert hall. Napoleon's sister, the duchess herself, was in that audience. Full orchestra --- and on the final song he's playing his violin, and he's featured, and the E string snaps. But he's a genius. There's no one like him during that time, and so he's going to finish this song with three strings. And then the A string snaps --- BOING! That's okay. He still has two to go. And then the D string pops. One string. He finishes the song, every single note. The house goes wild and you would imagine. And everybody stands and applauds and Paganini --- he's kind of known for being a little bit flashy --- and so, he holds his violin over his head and says, "Paganini with one string!" He cues up the orchestra and he plays the encore, the whole thing, with one string.

It's a great story. We're still talking about it --- Paganini and one string. When Chuck Swindoll tells this story in one of his sermons, he ends with this. He says, "Life is ten percent of what happens and ninety percent of how you react to what happens." Life is ten percent of what you experience and ninety percent of how you interpret what you experience. That's true.

Let me ask a few questions. You, do you have a goal in life? Do you have a goal for the next year or five years to be different, to be changed, to not be defined by how you're made, the bent in your soul? Not to be the victim of that magnetic pull that takes you to a place that you generally and almost always forget?

Or do you have a plan about how you will no longer be surrendered to maybe the way you were raised or your experiences in your life? Or are you going to actively participate in what God has planned for you, to become like Christ in all of life? Do you have a goal for that, by the time you're thirty, or by the time you're forty, or sixty? That you're not going to talk about the way you were made or the way you were raised or things that you experienced, and when you talk about those things, you'll no longer talk about them with tears of defeat. But rather, you'll talk about those things as bragging rights of conquest. By this time ... do you have a goal for that? Do you have a plan? Do you have a plan to reach the goal, a road out, a road to freedom?

Third question: let's just pretend you have a goal and you have a plan. What power are you going to use to no longer be a puppet? What power do you think that you could take advantage of that could straighten a bent frame or erase or make trivial deep programming? What power? It's going to need to be a supernatural one.

Good news ... no, great news. Great news today. Because God has a goal for your life, He has a plan for your life, and He has the power to make that happen. His goal for your life is for you to be who you were meant to be. His plan out --- we're going to talk about that today. And the power --- it is the Holy Spirit that lives within the soul of a believer, a person who trusts Jesus Christ for the consequences of Jesus' death and resurrection. That person has the Holy Spirit --- infinite power available. God's will for us is this: that we would be a saint. And in that sainthood, that we would brag --- yeah, uh-huh, God wants us to brag --- about what God has made in our lives; about God's miraculous intervention, all the stories of God changing us. He wants us to tell everyone about that.

As a matter of fact, when we become like Christ in all of life, each and every decision that we make towards obedience is a public declaration. Say it in your prayers. It is a public declaration to all unseen creatures: demons and angels and the like. It says when you obey Him, it is proclaiming to all these things, it is bragging. Here's the bragging part: that Christ, Jesus Christ, is king. He is king of you; that as you pray the prayer, He rules in your heart as He does in heaven. That's the point of life. That's the meaning and purpose of all life.

Today we're going to talk about how to get there. Today we talk about the fundamentals of human understanding and change --- the fundamental principles of human change. If we understand these, if we apply these, then we can live peace-filled lives instead of living in panic. We could be compassionate and courageous. We can live courageously, not timidly. We can live

joyfully, not in despair. That's what we're going to look at today. We're going to look at the power of change. We're going to look at two principles of change today, two influences that define who we are. For better or for worse, these things define us --- for good or for bad, for better or worse. And if you want, take notes, and you can use this in parenting. You can use this in workplace situations, you can use this in relationships, because they're just absolutely true things about the nature of the human soul and what changes them --- what makes a person who they are.

Two Principles of Change

1. You Are What You Think

Here they go. Number one: you are what you think. You are what you think. There has been an extensive study on this subject, but particularly this one that I'll be citing was in England. It took years to accomplish. It required a considerable amount of time, money and energy. And what they did was study people that were under a considerable amount of stress versus those who were living kind of carefree lives. And what they did is they interviewed these people over years and tried to analyze and compare and contrast these types of people.

And what they found was: first of all, the number-one influence was their perspective on life. This made the most difference, it seems. The people that live stress-filled lives full of anxiety and, quite often, bitterness, were pessimistic in their outlook on life. Generally speaking, they were stuck. The other people, the people who were living carefree lives --- they were enjoying one day at a time --- they were optimists; they were hopeful in their outlook.

And they looked at their focus. The people that were living under the burden of all the responsibility tended to focus on their past. They looked behind them, and maybe for good reason; they saw that for every silver lining there was a cloud. These people had stories to tell. They had stories of maybe personal injury, illness, about deep relationships that had been lost and had broken up. Some of them would talk about the way they were raised or the way they were made and how unfortunate that was.

These people over here were the people who were pie in the sky --- they focused on the future. They focused on tomorrow. Because you know what happens tomorrow: the sun will come out tomorrow. And that's how they looked at life.

And when they looked at these two, they could see, obviously, that in light of their circumstances and situations, life injuries, and the way they were raised, you could see the difference. But the most staggering, shocking revelation was --- the reason it took so long was because optimistic people that were looking towards the future – they didn't talk about their past much. And so when they started interviewing them and doing follow-up questions and were requiring these less-stress people to do their biographies, they found this out; that these people over here, the ones that were enjoying life, had the same stories as the stressed people did, and some far worse. They had worse life circumstances --- some of them came from terrible backgrounds, even in comparison. They suffered injury or some kind of prolonged injury. They had broken relationships. But they didn't live that way.

So what was the difference? After years of the study, this is what they said: the way they thought made all the difference in the world and all the difference in their lives. This group of people over here, the ones that liked living every single day --- they were Paganini with one string. That's how they lived. They were blessed to have one string.

Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent of how you interpret it. And that makes sense. Because God has made us rational beings. We think ... we think. Do you want to change? Change your thinking, and you change your life. That's the first principle.

2. You Are What You Do

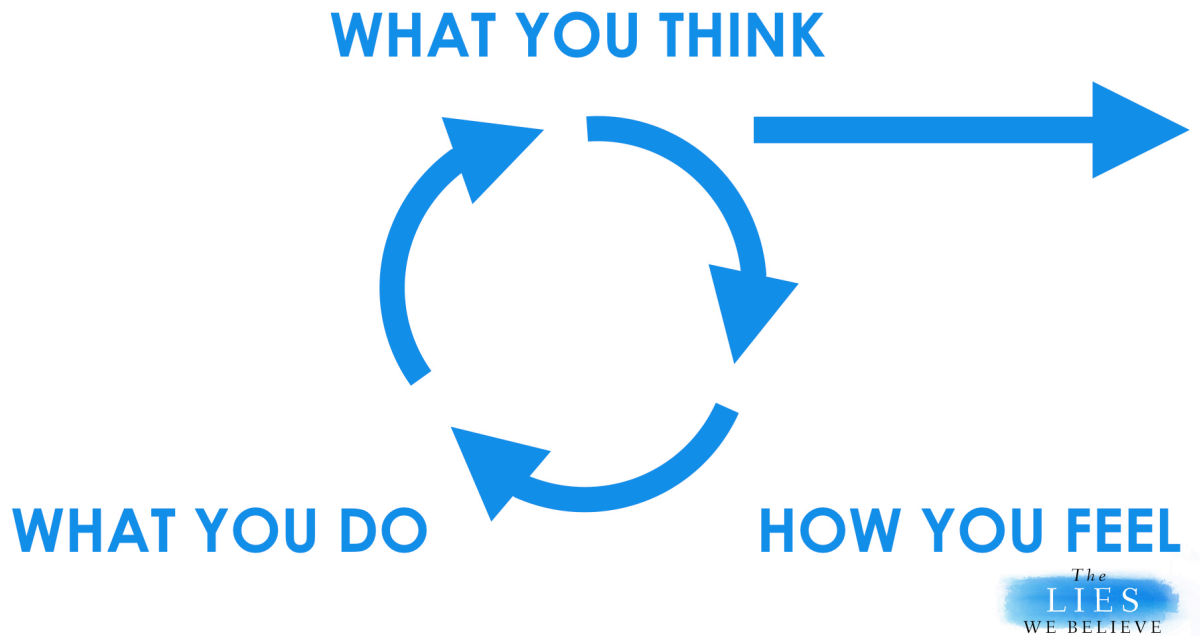
There's another one. There's another way of looking at human psyche, and it's this. There's another school of thought and it goes like this: if you do something long enough, then it changes your behavior and it changes who you are. It goes like this: you are what you do. You are what you do. And certainly, it goes back to Aristotle, maybe before that. But Aristotle was writing his son on how to live the beautiful life. It's called *Nicomachean Ethics*. And he writes his son this: the secret to life is habit; is practicing doing the right thing, to live in virtue --- I'll define that in a moment. But to live in virtue, you practice it over and over until it becomes pleasurable to be virtuous. It's changed you, just the practice of those things. And virtue is this: doing the right thing in the right circumstance for the right motive. That's virtue. How do we get there? You just do it. You just do it again and again and then it becomes you.

I had a coach in junior high. He was a sadistic, mean-spirited coach, but he was a behaviorist. Coach Rainey --- I still remember his name --- I don't remember the kids' names but I remember this guy --- he made an impression on me. Right there --- he made an impression right there on me. He didn't read *Nicomachean Ethics*. I don't think he read even the back of his Froot Loops box. But he knew how to change a young man. He would grab us by the facemask and he would scream into the facemask and he would say, basically, "You do what I tell you to do. Because if you don't, you're going to have instant regret. And if you do, you'll be glad ... eventually." And we were --- actually, both of those. If we didn't obey, there was instant regret. But in the long term, we ended up being a pretty good football team.

In parenting, you're a behaviorist when you have a three-year-old or a teenager. Because when they hit you with the "Why? Why? Why?" you know this. This is true, intuitively. You never negotiate with terrorists. And so, you're realizing what you're dealing with here, and you just say, "You know what? Because I said so. Just do it. Do it, do it, do it, do it." And maybe, if they practice it long enough, they become that.

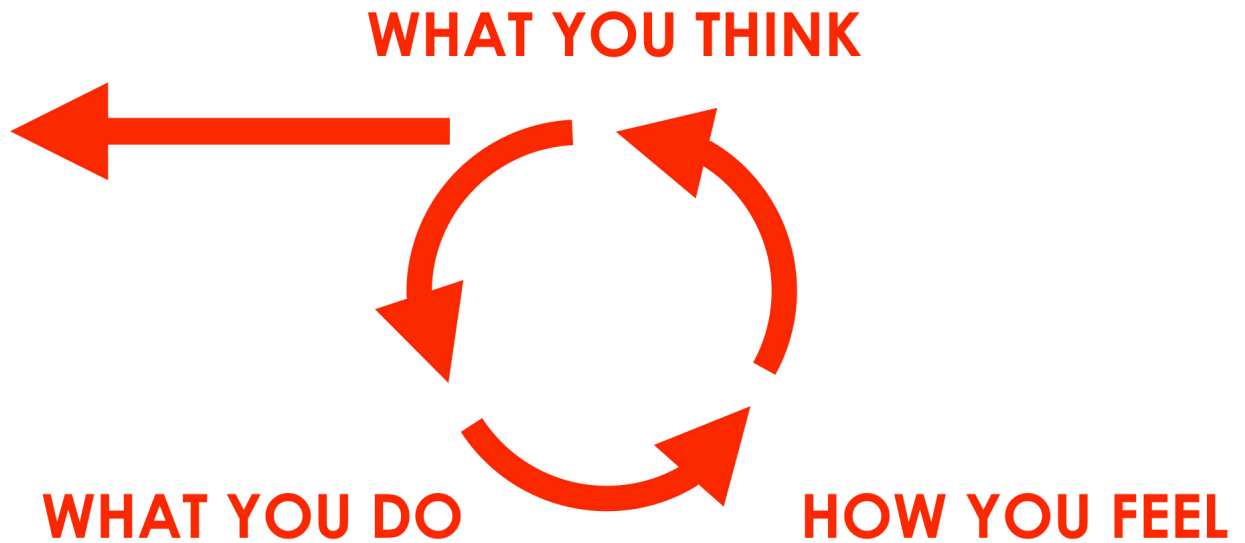
Aristotle wrote this to his son and it was a summary of his virtue lessons and it is this: what you practice, you become. Think of that. What are you practicing? Because you're going to become that, for good or for bad. What you practice, you become. What are you practicing?

Behavioral psychology --- this "let's just do it" thing --- that is especially effective when a person is kind of stuck. When they can't think their way out of something, they just need to "do" their way out of something. So this view of psychology says this --- do you want to change? Okay. Change what you do and you will change your life. Change what you do and you'll change your life. Those are the two ways that a lot of counseling and psychology pour their energies into.



But what if they're both true? What if they kind of fuel and feed each other? That is another form of psychology, actually. If you change both the way you think and you change what you do, think of the compounding effect on this. Look what happens here. You can jump on this circle anywhere you want. You can change the way you think. That will change the way you feel. That will change what you do.

Or you can just change what you're doing and that will change the way you think, and that will change how you feel about life. And these things keep spinning in a very positive direction, and there you are off to the right. You're becoming maybe like Christ had intended you to become. Very powerful. You are what you think and what you do.



But here's the problem. This is nuclear. It's good for good and for evil. If you spin this the other way --- again, jump on this roller coaster anywhere you want --- you do something you regret, you do something bad, you're going to feel terrible. And then you're going to think terrible thoughts. So, you'll do something really bad again, which leads you to thinking wrong. And then you spin off. You're in a tailspin with all engines down. It ends poorly.

But, the point is --- look at the power of this, right? Look at the power for life change, the profound wisdom that's found in these two principles, and especially when they work together with each other, they can take us places that maybe we couldn't go otherwise. I'm just saying this --- we are so lucky to live in the twenty-first century where we get to live on the shoulders of Albert Ellis and Alfred Adler and B. F. Skinner. Because I don't know how anybody else did it before these guys came up with this stuff.

Well, there is Paul the Apostle who wrote 2,000 years ago this entire library full of personal psychology. He wrote this in Philippians chapter 4. He said, *You are what you think*. And then he said, *You are what you do*. And he said that in two sentences: you are what you think and you are what you do. Paul asks this question in Philippians chapter 4. He said, *Do you want to change? Then think right. Do right.*

Philippians 4:8-9

Finally, family, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Look what it says. Let's look at these sentences here. Look at how they both end with commands, by the way. So Paul says this: "Finally, family" --- he says "brothers and sisters" --- "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." Think these things. And then he says in verse 9, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things" --- do these things --- "and the God of peace shall be with you."

Two big commands. Think right, do right.

Let's look closely at the first one – think right, verse 4:8. Look how it's broken down into categories of things that are intellectually right and then things that are aesthetically right, beautiful. Look at the emphasis on whatever. "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute." These are summary sentences. "If there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."

Let's look at that --- six attributes. The first three have to do with truth. The second three have to do with beauty. And then there's the summary sentence of anything of excellence or worthy of praise. Whatever; anything; take it all. Here's the point. All truth --- God's truth. All beauty --- God's beauty. Art, music, movies, entertainment, books --- whatever it might be, if it's true, if it's beautiful, let your mind dwell on these things.

Les Miserables --- a pretty good book, kind of long. Pretty good musical. Focus on these things. It's cheesy, but *A Wonderful Life* has kept me up. It's kept me in the business for a long, long time. Beethoven --- that's beautiful. The Commodores --- that's beautiful, too. Now some of

you young people need to look that up because it's a band, okay? It's a band from the seventies and the eighties. Anything, everything beautiful and true. That's the point.

He says "Let your mind dwell on these things." It means --- here are some synonyms: to reckon, to reason, to ponder, to liberate. It's a cow chewing its cud. It's just always chewing, never letting it go.

Look, when I was doing this sermon, listening to it and going over it last night, I was listening to a Carly Simon song. I've heard it a hundred, a thousand, maybe ten thousand times. It's a beautiful song. I never chewed on it. I realize as I was listening to the lyrics, *This is true. It's not just beautiful. This is a true song.* I went onto the web and looked up the lyrics and read along as she sang. Wow. That's what she's talking about: reckon, ponder, consider all, let it simmer in there. Let it marinate your brain. What? These things. What things? The wise things -- - things that are true versus a lie, that define reality. Honorable --- that means grave, things that cause you to feel awe. He says "whatever is right or just." That means sacred things, set-apart-for-a-purpose things. Anything, any source.

And then he says "the beautiful things." He says the pure and that means holy, there's no defilement there. Lovely --- it means attractive as opposed to being bitter or embittered. Good repute --- that would be like something that God would like to hear. That's what he means.

And in summary he says, "Whatever is excellent, whatever is praiseworthy." In this section, Paul asks us this: do you want to change? Do you want to change? Change your thinking, change your life. Change your thinking, change your life. You have to protect the thoughts that come into your brain so that the God of peace --- not the peace of God --- the God of peace will be with you. That's awesome.

Here's how to apply this. Here's how to apply "change the way you think." You have to use this list as a filter for discerning what gets into your brain. Envision or picture this. You're moving from your current residence to a new place, a new apartment, a new house. Now you should have done this when you left, but we're going to use this illustration. Before you move anything into the new house, you get to start over, right? All over again. And you get to decide in your brain --- the house is a metaphor for your thoughts --- what gets inside. Anything from anywhere that is wise or beautiful ---

The movers: *Where do we put this?*

Is it wise or beautiful?

Yeah.

Put that in the living room. I want to see that wise and beautiful stuff everywhere all the time.

Okay, good. We've got excellent and praiseworthy.

Put that in the kitchen. I spend a lot of time there.

All right, ma'am, we've got from way back, it's pretty dusty, looks like it's been with you a long time. Sure, it's this old box of shame with a bunch of ratty little sermons that have been bangin' around in your head for a long time. What do you want us to do with that?

Well, I've had it for a long time, so --- you know what? Put it by my bed, right there by the nightstand. It'll be the last thing I listen to when I go to bed, it'll be the first thing that I read when I wake up.

Really? The lies you believe --- that's what you want to go to bed thinking about? You know what is a terrible book that I try to promote? The lies I don't believe. No one cared because they don't believe them. It's the lies we do believe that we let into our minds and we let get into our souls. And these are things that we are supposed to leave in the truck, take it to the dump, throw it in the pit of fire, send it to hell where it came from --- that's where lies come from, take it home with you. That's where it's supposed to be. But instead we let it inside. Paul is saying, You want to change your life? Change what you think. You are in charge of your thoughts. *It's my subconscious.* It's your subconscious. You're in charge.

This is brainwashing. Yes, it is. It is brainwashing.

Is it wise?

No, it's a lie. I'm just going to chew on it like gum that never loses its bitterness.

Why? Is it beautiful?

No, but I just thought, you know, I would play with it like a monkey plays with a hand grenade. What could possibly happen if I entertain this long enough?

Why are you doing this?

Here's how you change the way you think. The first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night and probably somewhere in the middle, you take God's truth and you chew on it. You let your brain, your thoughts, you let it marinate in this. And here's what I've done that really helps me, because I'm taking God's truth and I'm making it my truth. Here's

what I've done. These is life-changing in my experience and here's how they became life-changing.

Galatians 6:9

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9 says this: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up." Okay, the problem with that is it's written for everyone. And so, what I've done is I've gone through and I've taken out the pronouns and I insert my name and make it a personal thought from God to me. And now it says this: "So let **Matt** not grow weary in doing what is right, for **he** will reap at harvest time, if **he** does not give up." That's the sentence that I write on a little card, a business card, and I carry around, I put it on my dashboard, and I marinate all day. I chew on that truth. That will change the way you think.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Here's something that literally changed my entire destiny. John 3: 16 --- it's written to the whole world but it didn't make a lot of sense to me. I heard this for twenty years and didn't care. "For God so loved the world He gave His only Son, that whoever would believe in Him may not perish but may have eternal life." Then, twenty years old, it's as though I were hit by lightning. I realize that wasn't a verse for everyone --- it was a verse for me. And I filled it in like this: "For God so loved **Matt** that He gave His only Son, that if **Matt** believes in Him, **Matt** may not perish, but have eternal life." That changed everything. I knew Jesus died for all men. That's something like a strategic investment with a good return on it. But when I realized that I personally did crimes heinous and consistent --- long and deep --- that I put Him there. I crucified Jesus Christ. If I were the only one that ever existed, He would come here. And I had a vision where I was driving the nails into His hands and into His feet, and I thought, *Oh. Now I*

get it. And I feel like that was the time when I was born again. That's when I understood. That's when it changed the way I was thinking. I marinated my brain on those thoughts.

You decide --- you decide what thoughts move into your head, what keeps your mind spinning. Paul says, *You want to change your life? You have to change what you think.* That's what he says in chapter 4, verse 8, of the Book of Philippians.

And then he asks, *Do you want to change? You need to change your behavior. You have to do what's right.* Verse 9 says, "The things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you practice those things. And the God of peace shall be with you."

Paul says, You want to change your life? **Change what you do and you will change your life.** His emphasis here is that you're just doing what the leader says. You're following the leader. You find a mentor and then, he says, "What you learned and received and heard and seen in me ... just do that." *Just copy what I'm doing. We'll make sense out of it later. You will become virtuous when it becomes pleasurable to do these things.*

This is how we learn almost every life skill. This is how we learned how to read and write and do math and drive a car. We got somebody that was ahead of us and they just said, "Okay. What you've learned or seen or heard --- practice this." And you will. Just do it. Practice makes perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.

Proverbs 24:16

For though the righteous fall seven times, they get up again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.

And his promise here is that the peace of God will visit you in a very special way. Here's just a "do it" verse -- again, it changed my life. This is a life verse for me. "For though the righteous man falls seven times, he gets up again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes." In 2009, I read that differently. In 2009, I read, "For though **Matt** has fallen seven times, **he** gets up again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes." I had to change that sentence. I had to just get up. I just had to get up. I got tired of thinking about it. I had to just do this.

Here's how you get right. Here's how you do right. Probably the most important application of doing is you find this --- it's already saying it's who you're around --- you're probably copying who you hear and see. Maybe some of you need to find a new set of friends ---

a whole new set of friends. Some of you may need to find a new individual friend. That one person needs to move out of your life. Some of you might need to lose a significant other, a boyfriend or a girlfriend, because you're doing what he's saying. You're doing the learning and hearing and received and seen, but you're following the wrong person. And it is very difficult to do this, but if their influence on you is consistently negative, then you have to do this. You have to change who you call a friend, who you call an influencer. And you will never regret ending a toxic friendship. You will never regret losing a bad friend. You won't.

Full disclosure: you need to know this, especially if it's a group of friends. If you choose to leave a tribe so that you would obey the Bible, so that you would become like Christ in all of life --- I'm going to tell you right now, it's going to cost you, so you need to know that. It will cost you loneliness. You're just going to need to brace before you start and know this is the tuition. When you are in a toxic clan of people, you're probably toxic too. If you're around people that criticize and snipe and are bitter, then you criticize and snipe and are bitter and are sarcastic. And if you say to them, *Look, I'm going to take a couple of months off, I'm going to be over here trying to work on stuff* --- you're going to be rejected by them. Or you're going to go back and not want that anymore.

And that path of loneliness is hard. But I want to tell you the other path of this full disclosure: it is worth it. It is worth it. You go through a drought, but then you get refreshed. You see the oasis at the end of this journey. And what happens is that --- I don't know why this happens, it just seems interesting --- but you kind of make this decision about who you're going to spend time with because it's affecting what you do and what you think. And then you go through the journey and then suddenly it's like, *Where are all these people from that are beautiful and truthful? Have they been here all the time?* Yeah, they probably have been, but you weren't in that clump.

And this happens. This is fairly common with high school seniors. They look around and they think, *It's a bunch of knuckleheads around here.* And they have to go through a high school senior year where they're all alone because they're standing up for Jesus Christ. And they get to college and they look around and think, *There are thousands of people that love Jesus and want to live a life that is braggadocious towards the glory of God. Where did they come from?* They've been there. You just needed to get together. You had to get through that senior year.

Then four years later they're seniors in college and are saying, *Where did all the knuckleheads come from?* Again. And then you kind of have to go through that year, and then you come out of that and say, *What? It's not so bad out here again.* It's just a thing that happens. I felt like I needed to tell you the whole truth on this. The most important thing you're going to do when it comes to doing is to find a great set of friends. It might mean that you're going to have to lose a long-term set of friends or a friend or influencer. But it is worth it. It is worth it, because you're going to love what God does in your life.

At Grace, one of the major values that we have here is these two verses. What you think and what you do and the people you spend time with --- huge impact. And so, we've set up almost all of our ministries in a way that you could develop a relationship with someone so that you could follow them and you could emulate what you hear from them and what you see in them. You are to follow a leader.

And then we also offer just as many opportunities for you to be a leader to someone else, carry them along, so that you can learn and receive and hear and see. And so, you can be a person where other people learn and receive and hear and see. We understand the power of friendships, the power of relationships. And my call here is would you consider doing something at this church that's more than just attendance? Go to Re|Engage, which is a marriage ministry, or Celebrate Recovery, a recovery ministry. There are adult Sunday school classes, there are opportunities to serve where you're just rubbing shoulder to shoulder and you see selfless acts of service and you think, *What does that mean?* And you can do that.

And if you practice these things, there's a promise here where it says that the God of peace will be with you. "The God of shalom, the God of blessing" is what that means to this Jewish writer. So that you might be a leader, that you might follow a leader. That's my ask today.

It was ten years ago that these two sentences absolutely changed everything. I lost the horizon on my dashboard and I couldn't tell what was up or down or level. It was between 2007 and 2009 --- those years were extremely difficult for me. And I was kind of spiraling out. And I was thinking very bad thoughts regularly. Some of it had to do with the circumstances around here. We had to completely scrape to the ground the school that was sitting right where you are. It had been in existence for twenty-five years and had our name on it and everything. We had to end the choir. We had to make a lot of difficult decisions. And people couldn't wait to tell me

how bad the decisions were. I would go to dinner parties, there were weddings I'd perform, and I'd try to get out the back door because people would say, "So, I heard you don't like children and children's education." What? And then the choir sort of things --- "You know, God listens to choir music and you don't ..." You know, just all the help I was getting from so many people wasn't really the big issue for me. There were two: one was that I was surrounded by some really wonderful people that I had chosen, and within that place of safety there were a handful that weren't wonderful. No matter how much I did --- and by this time my body was pretty much wrung out --- no matter how much I did, I could have been doing more. And no matter how I did it, there was a guy somewhere else that's so much better.

That was part one. I had some people on the inner circle that shouldn't have been there. And this is the part that matters. I chose not to listen to all the wisdom that was around me; I chose to put in an echo chamber --- my mind --- those other voices. And I was really --- I was in a desperately bad place, just teetering. And then, as I was thinking wrong, I was starting to do things wrong, and I know through Aristotle that what I practice, I become. And I didn't like what I was practicing because I knew where it led. And then --- this is weird, okay --- but I was watching *The Matrix* again, which is Plato's allegory of the cave, never done better. It's a good thing and it's a true thing. And so I'm watching the allegory of the cave and there's a woman in the movie named Trinity. And she jumps through the window --- you kind of have to see the movie --- she jumps through the window, rumbles down a flight of stairs, and then stops. And she's exhausted and she's going to quit. And then she says to herself, "Get up, Trinity. Get up. Just get up, Trinity." And I watched that and I kind of thought --- I still think about it --- *That's me. I've got to get up.* And my life verse here, in Proverbs 24: *Matt, you've fallen down --- good for you --- seven times --- okay. Get up. A righteous man gets up, even though he's fallen down seven times. Just get up. Don't think about this. You can't think anymore. You can't be trusted with thoughts. Just get up.*

And I went to this passage in Philippians chapter 4, verses 8 and 9, and I thought, *I've got to do right because I'm stuck at thinking right. So, I've got to do right.* And I thought, *I can't get these thoughts out of my head so I've got to get some people out of my life.* And so, I got some people out of my life. And then I went to this passage and I kept thinking, *Is this a good thought? Is this a noble thought? Is this a truthful thought? Is this a beautiful thought? Put the deflector shields up. I'm going to fight for my life here.* And I kept meeting with the right people that were

telling me the truth and inserting my name into Bible promises. And guess what happened? Ding dong. The God of peace was waiting on my soul. He said, *Hey, I'm here*. The God of peace visited me --- Cassidy, with one string. Made it.

Do you want to change? You have to change the way you think and you have to change what you do. What you allow in your mind is the most important decision that you make and most of us don't make the decision. We just play along. We just listen to whatever. No time for passivity. This no time for passivity. You need to put the shields up. You need to put a high filter and you need to reconsider what you view and what you read and what you listen to, because it changes who you are.

You need to change your habits. You are a product already of what you think. And you are also a product of habits. What you practice you have already become. What do you want to become? This is no time to be lazy. You need to find examples of people that are living a righteous life, and whatever they do, whatever you see them do, whatever you hear them say, whatever you enjoy in their lives, you do that. You follow an example; you be an example.

It's coming up on 2020 --- it's a good round year. That would be a great year for you to have as a goal to become like Christ, maybe not in all of life, but in one part of your life. Just in one part of your life. And in that one part of your life --- listen to this --- in that one part of your life, because you're choosing this day to decide what you think and what you do. In that one part of your life in the next year, you say to demons and angels all around, "Look what the power of the grace of God has done in this soul. He's my king." Insert your name, with one string.

Do you want to change? God has a goal, He has a plan, and He's given us the power. Let's brag about His work in our lives.

Let's pray.

Insert your name. Do not grow weary in doing good, for in time you will reap the harvest if you do not give up. Whatever is true and whatever is honorable and whatever is right, those truths --- those are wise things. The beautiful things --- wherever it comes from, the pure and the lovely and the good reputation --- look, if there's anything excellent and anything worthy of praise --- there it is -- let your mind dwell on those things. Let them marinate your thoughts. Let them cause you to become like Christ in all of life. Whatever you see, whatever you hear, whatever you've been instructed to do, you just do those things.

Lord, I'd ask that we be a church of great stories that we brag to our friends, to strangers, and certainly to angels and demons about the power of Your Spirit in our minds and in our wills, so that we might become all that You've designed us to be. We pray this for Your glory and Your honor, so that the world and all of creation would know that You are king in this soul, as it is in heaven. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.