

Walking the Path: To Do or Not To Do

by Chris Famisaran

That was awesome. Thanks. Sure. I'm on. Awesome. Let's pray. Father in heaven, Lord, we thank you for the opportunity once again, be able to come together. Lord, we thank you for all of our moms out there for those who've been a mother figure in our life, Lord, and as we now move forward into our word be with us in Jesus name. Amen.

Good morning, everybody. How y'all doing? Right. It was December of 1994. I think it was Wheaton Valley Academy versus Waubonsie Valley was a soccer match. And well, bonzi Valley was the favorite. There were supposed to destroy Wheaton Christian Academy. However, in the closing seconds of the game, senior Rob Mouw, hope I pronounced his name correctly, got the soccer ball. And he started to dribble. And he started to make his way all the way across the field. And just as he was about to kick he could see on the post where it showed the scores and also the time, he saw that as his foot was about to kick the ball it hit 00.00. Well, his foot had actually already kicked the ball. And it made the goal. His whole team shouted with joy because the game was hiding yet he thought they thought he had scored the winning goal, of course, Waubonsie Valley their fans cried foul saying "no, the time had already passed. It was too late." Rob had to make a decision at that point. Would he just stay silent? and hopefully get away with it? Or should he do the right thing? He talked to his coaches and he told him it was clear. The time had already passed. He and his coaches went to meet the other team. And he said you guys have won. Now Bob Greene wrote an article about this. And he asked them why why would you do that? And his response was "every time in your life you have an opportunity to do right. You should be thankful for a person to know what right is and then not to do it. That would be a sin to have one the fame. I mean, really, who cares? Doing the right thing is more important."

Now, we're going through the book of Proverbs. course there's a lot of wisdom that can be found in Proverbs. And it deals with a number of moral and ethical issues. For instance, you It talks about hey, how should we treat animals. How we should live. How we should deal with temptation. holding firm, for instance, to your marital vows. How you relate to one another. Keeping your vows. How should you live your life? There's plenty of challenges in life that deals with morality and ethics. How do we make decisions? It seems like almost every, every day, there's a new problem that, you know, it's like, well, never heard of that. How do we? How do we handle that? Or even just regular things that come up and saying, Hey, I know that it's not good for me, I know I should walk away. Dealing with issues, the path, the path is not always clear for you, for maybe those who are a little older.

When you look back when you were a kid, did you think I know what I was going to do for the rest of my life? Or maybe when you finished high school, you were thinking, I have no idea what I'm going to do with my life. But sometimes along the way, the path gets a little twisty and, and sometimes, things don't turn out the way that you want them to be. Sometimes life, it's not always clear what you should do.

There are challenges and situations that we sometimes perhaps don't even have answers for. But there's a promise, one that many of us probably know. Trust, okay? Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all of your ways, submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Have you ever been lost? Like legitimately lost? I don't know if I've told this story before. But many, many years ago when I first became a pastor, I had met a colleague Will Sellers. He can validate the story. True story. He's a pastor at the Ridgecrest church now, but it was December of 2006. And we had decided we wanted to go backpacking. And so we went up to Mount San Bernardino peak. My mom was gracious enough to be able to drop us off in Angela Oakes at the trailhead because we were going to do a point to point we would hike over the peak and then down into Forest Falls. And that trip, it was a bear. It was hard. I didn't drink enough water. I was dehydrated. I remember going to bed. I was so exhausted. I remember falling asleep at seven o'clock and waking up the next day at 7am in the morning, and I never sleep more than eight hours but that night, I was able to sleep over 12 hours. So finally I felt a little bit refreshed. We got to we got ready to go. We made our journey we finally submitted and we started walking along the ridge and then to get down into Forest Falls we thought it would be super awesome idea to create a little bit of extra adventure by going down this unmaintained trail I don't think it even has a name. And we learn that you should do your due diligence when it says unmaintained is literally unmaintained. Because maybe about a third of the way down the trail just you couldn't find it, all of these leaves had dumped down. And it was really, really, really steep. There was at one point where we started to slide it was almost like the leaves it turned into snow. And it was so steep that you just you cannot stop. And so we kind of slid down. And finally, we were able to stop try to reorient ourselves trying to figure out where we were, we looked across and we saw that there was an encampment, there was also plenty of buckets, and hoses and tarps and maybe some plants. Some of you know where I'm going with this. And then all of a sudden, oh, we stepped into somebody's camp and not the good kind of camp. We were even more anxious to get away because we didn't want to crop come across anybody thinking that we tried to invade their territory. And the only the only way that we figured we could get out of the mess. We knew we had to head down that way. We just slowly but gingerly started to just keep going down this ravine until finally finally we found the trail. But there was a good 15 to 20 minutes where we had no idea where we were at. And we tried to find we tried to look we had tried to see and there was no evidence of a trail. So we just we thought okay, the best measure we can at least try to go down this way and or be able to provide some security for the most part, but it was one of the scariest moments of my life being in the mountains where I thought if I fall, I could seriously get hurt. And it was also later in the Day, it was probably about maybe 430. And I had to be at a board meeting in San Gabriel by seven. So I was anxious to get down. Finally, when we found the trail, it was such a relief, there was solid ground, there was solid footing. But, man, that 15-20 minutes, my heart was telling me My heart was shaking, because it was scary, it was disconcerting. Trying to get somewhere, you need to have some kind of reference point.

Now, when you're lost, you need to make a decision, what are you going to do? fact, the other thing is, you have to come up with the idea. You have to ask yourself, do I have all of the facts? Now I didn't have all the facts. But we had to make an educated decision, the best decision? So sometimes I just mean,

stop looking around. In, you know, metaphorically, do I have all of the facts for this? Sometimes just stopping to think helps us to be able to see more clearly, when we're so super focused on something, we're not able to see around, maybe even the potential danger. It's kind of like maybe you're also continuing on a footpath. And if you're only looking at the ground, alright, because maybe there's rocks, there's branches, there's, there's shrubs. Yeah, it's easy. You could easily trip and hurt yourself. But if you're also not looking up, you also may see the branch. You may not see the branch that's coming towards you as you're walking down and you could hit your head.

So ask yourself, do I have all of the facts?

Proverbs 13, sorry, 18 verse 13, says, to answer before listening, that is folly and shame. The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge for the ears of the wise seek it out. In a lawsuit, the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward, and cross examines.

You know, that we have the ability to have a lifetime of learning. And as we go through life, you know, we learn from our mistakes. And we can hopefully, therefore make better decisions. Some of you perhaps have heard the saying, "God gave us two ears, two eyes, and one mouth. So listen and look twice before you speak." When you move forward, how you carry yourself as important to listen and to think, hear, before we speak, before we come to a conclusion, a decision. And, again, as we've looked at, if we look back does my past and the motives that I have informed my decisions and objectives? So yeah, our past certainly, it can inform our, our future, especially when we've made those mistakes that we can learn from sometimes they can be painful. But it also can remind us, hey, that's not how I want to live anymore. I want to do live in a new way a better way.

Sometimes you may feel like, Hey, I'm in a rut. What can you do? That's new, try something new. Yeah, we're also having to make a tough decision. Maybe we also have to ask ourselves, how does this reflect God? Does this reflect God positively? or negatively? Am I doing this for God? Or am I doing it for me? What's your motivation? Do you have an ulterior motive? Have you ever met someone or I should say, Have you ever worked with somebody who you know that all they are invested in is for themselves? Maybe they're trying to get promoted quicker. Or maybe you just know somebody who is basically just for them. And the sad truth is, we all recognize it and see it. And especially when you're in leadership. Don't look out for yourselves, but look out for others. If you truly want to grow and you want to truly lead and be successful. Be there to help your co workers, your friends and your family. not think about yourself humility, as we talked about last week. Humility is a key trait in helping to find decisions. Don't just rely on yourself.

But is there wisdom in seeking help from others? Absolutely. I think that's one of the benefits of, of being in the church. In fact, when you look at the life of Jesus, he took the disciples 12 men and he invested his life. into them. He modeled he mentored them. He taught them. And eventually, as the

disciples, you know, went out, they started the church. They were leading the church, there were times, especially in the book of Acts where they were wrestling with certain issues. And they got together, they prayed, and they tried to find a clear answer. And finally, to collectively, and they sought wisdom, they looked in the past, and they realized, Hey, this is the way that we should do it. And it was there, that they were able to move forward in a healthy, productive way. And that's one of the part of the benefits of being a part of a church and a fellowship, to meet new people, to create friendships, to develop them, and to be able to look out and to help one another, especially if there are challenges.

Proverbs 11 verse four says, For the lack of guidance, a nation falls, but victory is one through many advisors. When we talk about making decisions, it's important to be able to have people that you can trust that you can go to and who give good advice. Seek those people out. Now in life, there's also the potential for for red lights. Are there red lights? That gives me or gives you pause? So without a doubt, at least, at least once a week, okay, I get a phone call from somebody claiming that do they want to ask? They're asking if I want to extend my car warranty?

Alright, maybe have you ever received that phone call? All right. My other favorite one. So yeah, several years ago, I was with I was with Leisa. And we were we were sitting down at her parent's place. And somebody allegedly from the IRS, calls their home and says, you owe however much it was I'm just gonna make it up. Okay, you owe \$3,000 you know, and if you don't do anything you're gonna what?. They're gonna send somebody to to arrest you, or I can't remember exactly. But you, you know this, you know this story or case scam. Okay, it's popular on the internet as well, especially guys going after them. It's rather interesting. All of a sudden, like red flags pickup. So for instance, like the IRS is never just going to call you up and say, Hey, you owe this amount of money you need to pay us now, because if you ever had to deal with the IRS, what they do is they send you a letter, a real letter, hardcopy, and they inform you, you have 30 days to either get more information to dispute it, or pay it.

And so in life, when you're trying to make decisions, when you start to think, is this a good idea, have red flags start to pop up? Hey, give pause. Hey, that's what the Holy Spirit is there to help lead into guide you. And remember going back to our first verse that we talked about trust and Lord always, with all of your heart, okay, God will help you to smooth the path. Look out for red flags. God gives us warning lights to be able to help us to make better informed decisions.

Well, the last things I want to talk about to this is a hard truth. But if you truly have good friends, honest friends who really care about you, they're going to tell you the truth. wounds sorry, this is proverbs 27 verse six, it says wounds from a friend can be trusted. But an enemy multiplies kisses. True friends and your true loved ones will tell you the truth, especially if you're down going down a path that may not be so productive. Because they care about you because they love you. If there's somebody who just wants to get something from you, they'll tell you anything, they'll build you up, right? And they'll make you feel great. But you don't want to go down that route. Having loved ones who are around you can help you to

make better informed decisions. Even sometimes you got to admit Oh, yeah, maybe I messed up there. I really want that. But I know it's, it's not good for me.

The final thing that we have to ask ourselves when we're making decisions, when it comes to decisions of right and wrong morality. Will my influence the witness be questioned? Because sometimes, you know, we could make decisions that affect how we're perceived and even Proverbs 25 verse 26 says like a muddied spring or polluted well, are the righteous who give way to the wicked. When we make decisions, we have to think about the long term consequences or their long term potential ramifications. When we're called to do the right thing, when it's a moral issue, yes, we have to stand firm. But think about the choices that we make, does it honor God? Does it honor our family? Or is it potential for trouble? And the last thing is, is there a better way, there's always a way, sometimes it may be a tough choice, may be a challenging choice. But if it's the right choice, no one can fault you for that, to be faithful be to to stay true to what God has called you to do. So especially you know, for our younger or younger friends here, whether here or online. You know, life is going to be full of challenges, it's going to be full of obstacles, there's going to be things people are going to maybe ask something of you that you probably shouldn't go down. make good decisions, that at in the night in the evening, when you lay your head, you can sleep with peace, knowing you did the right thing.

Proverbs has a lot of wisdom to be able to help us to make good decisions and helps us to think you know, the Book of Proverbs. It's it's challenging, because there's just so many good sayings and they're spread all over the place. But I hope that as you journey now, right now, we're, you know, we're reading a proverb a day, I hope that this has been a blessing to you in that you're finding little nuggets and kernels that you can be able to apply every day to your life. And if you continue to lean on God, even when challenges come up, there's always a way that God can help pull you out of it to do the right thing.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, Lord, in this life, we are challenged by many things, but yet you are faithful when obstacles come, Lord, especially when we're asked to do something that we shouldn't do. Help us to be faithful and true to you to do the right thing. Help us to care for one another. To love one another. May our dealings with others be true and honorable. May the decisions that we make positively reflect you. Help us to be a faithful people, and that others may know who Downey church is that we are a place of love. A place where people can come and they can know who you are. And God above all, except you and as well go out and share you with others. Thank you for your goodness. And as well. We've talked about moms, thank you for all of our moms, bless them. And I pray that tomorrow especially if they have a wonderful day, and just thank you for the blessing that they are in Jesus name. Amen.

Grace and peace everybody. Have a great week. Take care.