

“Walk in the Spirit And Work Together”

By General Pastor Peter F. Paine

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Pray with me, please. God, thanks. We love you, plus, what I have to do right now is to bring Your Word to Your people, in Your glory. We thank You for that in Jesus name, and everyone said, “Amen,” and everyone said, “Amen,” and everyone shouted, “Amen!” Amen, I love that. Thank you all, it's great to be with you. I'd like to start by just visiting with you for a little bit before I bring the message that I feel God has laid on my heart. There has been a topic—and it happens in churches, it happens all the time—a question will come up, and sometimes it's a doctrinal issue, and, sometimes, it's non-doctrinal, it's just an opinion kind of issue. And it comes up and, you know, we all weigh in on it, and not everybody lands at the same place. I'm going to give you a couple of examples before I start on the one that is most recent here, in our fellowship here. You know, how many of you heard—some of you are young and maybe never heard this, some of you were older and maybe never heard it, I don't know. I never heard, growing up, that there was a possibility that people could have a strong difference of opinion about whether women should wear pants or slacks in church. Has anybody ever heard that? Oh, a lot of hands, okay. Some people feel real strong that if a woman wears slacks in church that that's a sin. It's inappropriate, it's non-biblical, and certainly she wouldn't go to Heaven and the church probably is in danger, too. And, you can tell by the way some of the women are dressed here today that I don't believe that. And, if I did, I would say, if you're coming here, ladies, you have to wear a skirt or go somewhere else. Right? I don't believe it's a sin for a woman to wear women's clothes in church. Slacks or a dress or pants or whatever the proper nomenclature is. Does that make sense? And, yet, churches have split over things like that. Are you with me? If you're with me say, “Uh, huh.” It just happens, right? And there's other issues that come up like that in church families. People feel strongly one way or the other. And, sometimes, it causes a church split, doesn't it? Sometimes it causes people to have to take sides. It gets discussed to a point where everybody's got to weigh in on it, you know, because it's become a big issue. And, then, you make your decision. Well, what side are you on, on this side or that side? And recently, what has come up—I'm going to jump right in the deep end now. It's a question about a marriage, divorce, and remarriage. And, what does the Bible tell us about marriage, divorce, and remarriage? And, I'm going to speak to that just a little bit today. I'm not going to preach on it. Today, I'm just going to speak on it a little bit today, then I'm going to bring the message that I feel the Lord is laid on my heart. Because, how many of you have been involved in that discussion in the last month or so, marriage, divorce, and remarriage? Several of you, not everybody. Some of you have, and it's been brought up and there are some people in our church family, who I love very, very much, who have come to the conclusion that they believe that the Bible clearly teaches if you have been divorced, unless your spouse that you are divorced from is dead, has died, has passed, then you cannot remarry. The only grounds for remarriage is if your previous spouse has died, other than that the only way to be remarried is back to your previous spouse, and I want to go on record right now as saying that I don't believe that's what the Bible teaches us. I do not believe that's what the Bible teaches us. That's not me, you know, shaking my fist at someone that believes that. It's not me being mad at someone that believes that. That's not me saying, “Oh, you're this, that, or the other.” That's not me finding fault with someone that has done their own search of the Scriptures and says, “I really believe the Bible only allows remarriage in the case of your previous spouse being dead.” I don't believe that, and I'm not telling you that you have to believe what I believe, but as the Senior Pastor of this ministry, as the General Pastor of our international ministry, president of our International Board—I'm not saying that to

say, "Look at me," I don't mean it that way, I just feel that you need to hear my opinion on this important topic that's come up, recently. You might be sitting here saying you don't see it exactly that way, that's okay, we can go to Heaven together, because, I don't believe this is an issue that keeps one from Heaven and another... Does that make sense? I think there are some issues in Scripture, I'll say it again: I think there are some issues in Scripture of things that you know we won't go to Heaven together; one of us might, maybe both of us won't, but, if you disagree on that one like, "Jesus is Lord," "Well, I don't think Jesus is Lord," well, I won't see you in Heaven. Are we okay with that? Can we say that, right here in church, Jesus is *the* way, not *a* way, right? I was shocked to hear a minister of a very high profile recently in an interview on television, and he was asked, "Are you saying that no one will go to Heaven unless they accept Jesus as their Savior?" and he said, "Well, I wouldn't say that," and I was thinking, "I would!" Amen? So, on the topic of marriage, and here's what I—and I've studied it, and we'll talk more about it this week. We're going to have some conversations, and I'm here—Debby and I came here this week largely because of this issue, and for those of you who are not troubled by it, you haven't been challenged by it recently, don't worry about it. Don't look for a ghost where there isn't one. Does that make sense? Those of you who are visiting, don't think there's a problem in our church. There isn't a problem in our church; our church is fine. God is blessing. You heard the praise reports and the prayer requests, today. I'm thankful that God is blessing. I'm thankful to be here today. But, sometimes these questions come up and they deserve to be addressed. Let the church say amen. So, here's my understanding, and I'll just say the shortest version. We could talk for several hours on this topic, obviously. Quite frankly, I believe the Bible doesn't address this so specifically where there is no possible—let me step out of that statement, so I can clarify with this statement: Do you know what the guidelines are—some of you may have legal backgrounds here, some of you may be lawyers or judges here, today. I don't know your background; I'm not a lawyer or a judge. I don't have a law degree, but here's what I understand is the criteria for an appellate court case. That means it's been tried; a case has been tried at the level it was assigned to, but the outcome is being challenged, and it goes to a higher court, if it's accepted for the appellate court. And here's the criteria. If two reasonable people could look at the same set of facts and come up with a different conclusion. Does that make sense? Then it could be reviewed and it could go to the appellate court, which is a higher court, which means that a judge with more experience in that area is going to hear that case and make a ruling. If you're with me, say, "Amen." I'm just talking to the church, I'm not preaching yet, don't get nervous. This is not law class. But I think it's important to talk about this in a very crystal clear, plain way; that you hear from me, what my understanding of this is. I really believe with all my heart—I said that for an illustration now, appellate court—I really believe this issue of marriage belongs in a higher court than you and me, I really believe it's a personal thing with God. I really believe that every individual has to approach it very carefully. I believe that the Bible does in the New Testament allow for remarriage in the case of an unfaithful spouse. I believe that. I understand a reasonable person could look at the Scriptures and say, "I don't think it says that exactly." Okay, okay, but you're hearing me tell you today that I believe that the Bible allows for remarriage in the case of an unfaithful spouse, I believe that. I'd be glad to discuss that with anybody. It's a topic that's come up in our church and now I'm going to try to wrap up these comments and get into the message today by saying, please don't hear this as anything confrontational or negative. I don't believe it's either. I believe it's just one of those things that comes up. It's one of those things that comes up. Does that make sense? It's one of those things that comes up in a family and we're a family and it deserves to be addressed. Amen? And I also think it's one of those things that we might disagree on and still might get to Heaven and be able to find out which one of us misunderstood. And, I like that; I like having those kinds of problems. It's much heavier, but it's not a topic that relates to salvation. But this is a big topic. It's an enormous topic. It's not a small topic. And we deserve as a church congregation to be clear on what our leadership believes on that, and what our ministry believes on that topic; so that's my statement, I know it's very brief, but I hope it's at least

clarifying enough that you understand that that's what my understanding after prayerfully studying the Scriptures, not for a day or a week, but over a long period of time, and that's my understanding. And I'll be glad to sit—I'm here all week, Debby and I came to be with you all week; we'll be here next Sunday. If that's a topic that you want to discuss, we will be glad to make ourselves available to discuss it to the best of our ability. I think we have a church meeting on Tuesday, and we will be able to discuss that further. So, so for right now, that's all I want to say on that topic; I felt I should start with that, and just clear the air on that important topic. So, now, let's just all clear our minds and get ready for the message.

Pray with me, please. God, we're going to look at your Word now. We're going to look to see what You have to say to us about how to live this Christian life that you have given to us. And, I want to say to You how much I love You, and how much I thank You. So, bless this part of our worship, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

So here we go, let's jump into the Word. Let's go to Hebrews, chapter twelve. We don't have a definite—this is another good example: People can argue about who is the author of Hebrews, but I believe it's Paul. I believe most of the evidence points indicates that it's Paul, but it might not be. I might get to Heaven and find out that Luke wrote it. Some think that Luke wrote this. I think it's Paul, but, one thing we know, regardless of who wrote it, one we know for sure, is this: it was written to Hebrew Christians. And it's really a powerful book about how Christians who have an understanding of the Law, because they're Hebrew, should live. It's a really powerful book about how do Christians that were raised with the Judaic law, were raised with Jewish law, live the Christian life. Jesus was Jewish, Jesus had the Jewish traditions and he abided by them. But Jesus is our Lord and Savior. And, if you're going to be a Christian, that means to be Christ-like. So sometimes the challenge of accepting and embracing the Messiah, and the New Testament story of salvation means that some things have changed. Amen, a lot's changed. We now have a Messiah. We now have the Promised One. And, Jesus didn't come to destroy the Law, He came to fulfill the Law. So, now the writer comes to us in chapter twelve of Hebrews and he says:

Hebrews 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...*

And here's the writer's exhortation to faith, exhortation to godliness. He is going to tell us how we, as Christians, in this present day, should let our light so shine before men that they see our good works and glorify our Father, which is in Heaven. We're supposed to be, as Debby shared in her testimony today, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Could the church say amen? We're supposed to be different, we're supposed to be about something different. We're supposed to be so different that people are drawn to us and say, "What is it that's different in your life? What is it that makes you think the way you think, act the way you act, live the way you live, forgive the way you forgive, do what you do?" Amen? The answer is Jesus. He's what makes the difference. He said we have so many testimonies, we have so many around us, and they're doing this right, we have examples. Then he goes on to say,

Hebrews 12:1 *...let us lay aside every weight...*

I believe that the weight Apostle Paul is talking about right here is the weight of tradition, the weight of the law, the weight of doing it the way we've always done it. You have to pray this way, you have to do these things in this order. He's saying we live under grace now. This is a new day. This is a new age. Things have changed. Are there still rules, guidelines? Absolutely! Are there still do's and don'ts? Yes. But Jesus is Lord and savior now, and he says we should:

Hebrews 12:1 *...lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us...*

And he goes on to say:

Hebrews 12:1 *...and let us run [and this is an interesting combination of words in the same sentence: run] with patience...*

Have you ever thought of running with patience? I mean, to me, if I'm running, I'm running fast or I'm running slow, I've never thought of it as being a patient thing. I think of patience is more like, I'm waiting. I don't think of running as waiting. But what he's saying here is, we should have forward motion, we should have an activity, not walking, running, but we should do it with patience. What did the prophet Isaiah say about patience? They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31). Right? The Scripture says, in our patience, we renew our souls (Luke 21:9). Running this race with patience and we get to renew our souls as we run this race. We get to revive ourselves as we run this race. We need to stay focused as we, we get to be able to look. Let's read on.

Hebrews 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*

The Alpha, the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Author and the Finisher of our faith. When we run this race, we should do it eyes on Jesus, eyes on Jesus. Amen? Eyes on Jesus. Some of us run this race and we get so weighted down. He said, Let us lay aside every weight. We get so weighed down with the rules and the regulations. Are there rules? Sure there are. If you're screaming out loud right now as you were sitting in the sanctuary I might ask you to please wait until I'm done talking. There's ways we interact with people, right? I was watching a YouTube video because I was searching for something yesterday. I came across a YouTube--this is not a political statement. Whatever your political persuasion is, fine. But, I came across a YouTube video of President Obama when he was in office and he was in the White House, and they were at an event, a celebration. There was a heckler that showed up at the event. I'm not sure exactly how the heckler got there, but he was loud, obnoxious, ugly-voiced heckler. And he was going to shout down the President of the United States and, I like the way President Obama handled it: he said, "No, no, no, no, we're not going to do that." He said, "I'm going to ask you politely, right now, to stop. And if you do that, then you can stay." And then he went on with what he was there for, and the guy started screaming again, the heckler. He said, "Now I've asked you once." He said, "We're not going to get to third. I am the president of the United States. You're in my house. Right?" And I thought, "Well, good for you, Mr. President, way to handle that." Right? And then he went again. And this was, he said twice, and we're not going to get to three, and the next thing he said was, "Security." And the president just said, "Security." So he talked to the heckler twice, he didn't talk to the heckler the third time; the third time he talked to security. They ushered him out, and everybody applauded and he went on with the event and, I thought, "Well done, Mr. President. Well done, Mr. President, way to handle the situation." And there are guidelines, and there are rules, and there are things we should do a certain way. There's a way that things should be done in decency and in order, right? Sometimes we pick up weights that have nothing to do with the way things are, it's just the way we think, it's the way we always did things. And we heard...

I'm going to try something, so I could move around. If I talk without the microphone, can you hear me, ok? Can you hear me in the back? Ok. If anybody, you can't hear me at some point, raise your hand. I'll change, but I want to just be able to move around for a little bit. Okay, okay. Did you hear the story about the lady that was cooking the ham? And it was the first time that she had cooked a ham for her family. She was a newlywed. They'd been married a few months, not a whole year yet. She was cooking a ham for her family, and she was pretty excited about it. And this is not a joke; this is one of those stories that makes a point, and, so, she was cooking the ham. She got out the pan and she cut the ends off the ham. And her husband said to her, "You know what? when I was growing up, and my mom always cooked ham, and she never cut the ends off. Why do you cut the ends off?" Then, she said, "I don't know, let's call mom and find out." So they called her mom, and she said, "Hey, mom, how come we cut the ends off when we cook the ham?" And she said, "I don't know, let's call your grandma." So she called grandma, and she said, "Hey, grandma, why is it that when we cook a ham we always cut the ends off?" And she said, "Because my oven's too small." Sometimes we do things because that's how we've always done them. And, I really believe what Paul is saying here in Hebrews, twelve, is don't do things just because

that's the way you've always done them. Find out if it's the right thing to do, and the right way to do it. Amen? He said, "Laying aside every weight and sin, which doth do so easily beset us let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Amen? And that's what you and I are called to do: Run with patience the race that is set before us. Now I want unmask the devil as we see what Paul's talking about to Hebrew Christians in this passage here. What Paul is saying is, "Look, the devil is trying to get you to major on the minors. The devil is trying anything to get you to focus on things that don't matter instead of things that do matter. There are some things that matter, and we, as Christians, need to focus on what does matter. And if we're not careful, the devil will get you to focus on what doesn't matter. Amen? Anybody here ever played baseball? Anybody ever been a good hitter in baseball? You gotten up to bat and you were... Several of you. Okay, what do you have to focus on when you're at bat? The ball? Yeah, you don't care if the guy on first is trying to steal second, right? Your concern is you, the pitcher, and the ball, right? If you start worrying about whether that guy is trying to steal second—I don't know, am I wrong? Baseball players, you know, does the batter worry about that? No, because that's his job. He's got to figure out if he can steal second. If you don't know anything about baseball, all I'm talking about is people on a field playing a game got their position and you've got to focus on what your job is. And sometimes as Christians, we start focusing on things that don't matter. We get all bound up in our mind in our heart and we are worrying about things that don't matter. Saints, if I could leave you with something today: Run with patience the race that is set before you. It's a personal race. It's a personal challenge. And if the devil can get us to focus on things that don't matter, here the writer calls it a weight or a sin. They're separate things. A weight isn't a sin, it's just something that slows you down. A weight isn't a sin, it's just something that slows you down. But a sin is something that will divide you from God. He says let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith who, for the joy—who, for the joy, when he was going to the cross, He was looking at the joy that was beyond it. And sometimes we're going to the cross, in the day of our life, in this moment of our life, it's like our cross. Look for the joy that's beyond it, amen? I have never seen a mother holding a three-month old and when you say what a beautiful baby, she says, "You should have seen how it hurt when I was delivering this." If you have, she needs counselling. I'm just saying it did hurt, it was a big challenge, it was painful, but she looked for the joy of the process, not the pain of the process. Amen? Did you ever see anyone being interviewed after winning, let's say, the Super Bowl, and they say, "Oh, I think I bought broke my thumb." No, they're looking at the joy of victory. Amen? They're looking at the joy of victory, and sometimes the devil tries to get us on the agony of defeat instead of the joy of the victory, looking for the joy. He says, "...who, looking for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross." Saints, if you haven't found it out yet, maybe you're a brand new Christian, you haven't found out that there's some enduring to do as a Christian. There's some enduring to do as a Christian. You are going to be misunderstood. You're going to have some problems. You're going to get fired when it was your coworker that should have gotten fired. Life is like that. I'm not saying, "So what?" You've got to deal with it. Sometimes you've got to challenge it, and fight for your rights, and I'm fine with all that. But you better realize, right now, we're going to have to endure this life, if we're going to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," at the end, amen? You know who's going to hear, "Well good, well done, thou good and faithful servants?" Good and faithful servants. Amen? What does it take to be a good and faithful servant? Enduring to the end. Keep fighting this good fight of faith.

Don't stop. Don't quit when the going gets rough. You've heard it: When the going gets rough, the rough get going. When the going gets tough, the tough get tougher, right? Sometimes we're supposed to go through challenges because it builds our character as it builds our faith. Think about this. The Bible is clear that God won't put more on us than we can bear. If you're writing notes, I'm making reference to First Corinthians, ten, thirteen. There is other passages that say that, but in First Corinthians, ten, thirteen, a piece of the passage is, "Who will not allow us to be suffered above that which ye are able," which

means he won't let us be tempted in a way that's bigger than we have to endure it. We're talking about endurance in Hebrews twelve right now. So, God won't allow us to suffer above that, which you are able. Step out of that story for a minute I'll be right back to it. Look at Job if you're familiar with the Old Testament story of Job. On a scale of one to ten, how much do you think Job suffered? Ten. Ten, eleven, I don't know. I don't know how he put up with it. Job suffered a lot, didn't he? Job was going through trials, and challenges, and tribulations beyond anything I can comprehend beyond anything I've ever had to go through. And if you read chapter two verse, one is in all this Job not sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. I love that, I'm thinking, "I love you, Job! I want to be like you, Job!" Yeah, WWJD. What would Job do? I'm being facetious, don't stone me. But, read the last chapter of Job. Before the end, God had to come back to Job and say, "Excuse me, excuse me," this is a loose paraphrase, "Where were you when I was creating the Heavens and the Earth, putting the whales in the ocean? Excuse me, Job, do you think you're all that? Remember, I gave you the air in your lungs." So sometimes we're heroes, and sometimes we have to be reminded that we couldn't even take a breath, but for God. Amen? That's life. Run with patience the race that is set before you. Look for the joy that's beyond whatever it is you're having to endure. Let the church say amen. There's joy to come. Amen? There's joy to come. Let's go on and see what else, he said. He said, "Who endured the cross despising the shame..." I'm in the middle of verse two, "...and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And, verse three:

Hebrews 12:3*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners...*

You know you're going to have to endure some contradiction of sinners if you're going to live for God. That's the world we live in. That's why he started with lay aside the weights, lay aside the sin. You've got to decide what you are going to carry with you and what you're going to leave. I'm going to say that again. You've got to decide what you're going to carry with you and what you're going to leave and let go, amen? And He sat down on the right hand... For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. Why? Lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. That's why you have to lay aside the weight, because, if you don't, you'll get weary. If you don't, you're going to faint. If you don't, you're not going to make it. There are some of you, you've had this experience, you're driving cross country and you get to the desert lands and they say, "Last chance for gas for the next 280 miles," or whatever it is, right? "Last chance for water for the next..." however long, you don't want to ignore a sign like that, "Ah, they don't mean that." A hundred and fifty miles later, you're sitting there on the side of the road with your hood up. The people are driving by going, "Ha, ha. He can't read. Ha, ha." You don't want to ignore that. You don't want to ignore this warning that if you're not careful you can get weary. If you're not careful, you'll get tired. Debby said it in her testimony, or maybe her sermon may be more accurate. Debby said, "You know what? We're the same as you; we get discouraged. We get tired; we need someone to lift our hands up when we fall down." If you don't know that it's a Scriptural reference to how do you win the battle (Exodus 17:10-12). Let me say that another way: We know how to ask someone for encouragement when we need it." Sometimes there is no one there to do it; think of David, in that story, he had to encourage himself. Even his closest people, his closest allies, his strongest soldiers weren't there to encourage him; they wanted to stone him (1 Samuel 30:1-6). It's a fabulous story. He had to encourage himself, but you know what? he didn't have to encourage himself without the Lord. You know, I like that he encouraged himself. I think of the phrase, sometimes when I think of that David encouraging himself, "a self-made man;" he didn't do it without the Lord. David did not encourage himself without the Lord. And you will never have to encourage yourself without the Lord. Isn't that great? Isn't that great to know that you'll never have to encourage yourself without the Lord? He's always there. He's as close as the whisper of His name. Hallelujah, hallelujah. The Bible said He'll never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5), hallelujah.

So, let's go to Romans. Where's that at from Hebrews? Let's turn left go back that way. You'll find it, right between Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Let's see what we find in Romans chapter twelve. So,

Romans, now, it's a similar situation that happens in Romans chapter twelve. You remember who the writer was writing to in Hebrews twelve? To Hebrew Christians. To Jews who had the Jewish background and guidelines in their life, right? And what they had to overcome, what they had to come out of, was Judaism—not saying there's anything wrong with it, but Jesus came and completed it. Amen? And he's saying, don't carry all of your Jewish traditions; some of them have been completed and fulfilled, and we don't have to do them anymore. He said circumcision no longer profits you anything (Romans 2:25-29). There are certain things that you don't have to do anymore, you can do them, but you don't have to do them anymore. Amen? We okay? We don't have to do them anymore. Be careful, you don't carry a weight through the race you shouldn't be carrying, it will slow you down, it will hinder you. So, now, what we have in Romans, chapter twelve, is he's speaking to people in Rome who didn't have those traditions, but they had other traditions.

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, [we're in Romans chapter twelve in verse one now.] by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [...which is your amazing service. Did I get something wrong?] which is your reasonable service.*

Huh, Saints? You know what? that's what we're supposed to be doing: Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. I don't know, I want an award, how about you? I presented my body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. Don't you think I should get something? No, that's your reasonable service that's what you're supposed to do. I remember the day my dad came home from work and I was about twelve years old. The lot that I lived on was three quarters of an acre had a lot of trees on it. Just a normal, rural lot that our modest home was on, that I grew up in, and I cut the grass. It took quite a while because of all the trees and you had to trim around all the trees. So, I spent the best part of the day as a twelve year old cutting the grass. My dad came home and I wanted some ribbon for my uniform, you know, I was looking for a big prize. And I said, Hey, dad, did you notice how good the yard looks?" He said, "Yeah, I did notice that, Pete, thank you." And I said, "Anything you want to give me, or anything?" Then he said, "Yeah, I've been thinking about that, since I got home." He said, "I appreciate what you did. How about you get to eat for free tonight?" And I'm thinking, "Everybody's eating for free tonight here, aren't they, Dad?" And I said, "You've never charged us for anything before," and he said, "That's sort of the point. That's your reasonable service, son, thank you very much." He didn't say it, but now that I'm older, I'm thinking he might have been thinking it, "While you were cutting the grass, I was out working really hard to pay for the food we're going to eat tonight, so..." All right, he says, "Be not conformed..." we're in verse two, "...to this world..." Do you realize how easy it is to get conformed to this world? Do you realize how easy it is to get conformed to this world? Debby and I were visiting our fellowship in Jacksonville a couple of weeks ago, and I used this illustration. I heard a preacher say this once, he said, "If you don't think you are conformed by this world, let me give you a test. Think of a commercial that you saw recently, that you would not have seen on TV ten years ago. I can think of lots of things I see on television, billboards, and other places that you wouldn't have seen. Things that make me go, "Really? Really?" I'm old enough that I get shocked by things like that. I do. Billboards. Commercials. I saw a Victoria's secret commercial the other night. There was no secret.

I'm just saying. Some of you didn't know what I was talking about. I'm just telling you, I don't think there was a secret there, okay? Be not conformed. Back to the message, come on, guys. And be not conformed to this world, but be what? Transformed. How? By the renewing of your mind. What? By the renewing of your mind. No, no, the first part. What? Transformed. How? By the renewing of your mind. Transformed. We're supposed to be made fresh, made new, made different. Some of you know what a transformer is, it's, something that looks like one thing and then you move some parts and it looks like something else, right? How about you? Are you transformed by the renewing of your mind? Are you changing into something new, something that is different than it was before? What did the Bible say when old things are passed away? What follows that? All things become new. Amen? Be ye transformed by the

renewing of your mind. That's how we're supposed to be changed. And you know what? we do it here in our mind. And what the writer in Hebrews and what the writer here in Romans is saying, it's not about how you act. It's not about how you look in public. It's not about whether you wear a suit or a dress or you carry the big Bible. It's about, are you transformed by the renewing of your mind? It's about how you pray, how you think, and how you relate to God. Amen? By the renewing of your mind. Do you have a renewed mind or are you being conformed to this world? It's one or the other. It's one or the other. Be careful you don't get too conformed to this world. Be careful, be careful you don't get too conformed to this world. You want to be different. He went on to say, that ye may prove we're in the last part of verse two, here, of Romans twelve. That ye may prove—I love the word prove. It's not used very often in the Bible. That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. That ye may prove—I love that. That ye may prove... How do you prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God? By the transforming of your mind. By our renewed mind that is transformed by God. And you can do that and I can do that. And it takes focusing on God's Word and God's life and not being conformed to this this world, amen? "I don't know if I want to be like that. You know people will think I'm weird," I want people to think I'm weird. Debby you did good today. It's like we compared notes. And I said, "You lather them, and I'll shave them." Yeah. That's a silly expression. I don't know where it comes from. I know my dad used to say it.

So what was the purpose of all that in the context of what we're going through as a ministry today? Here, I'll tell you what the purpose of that is. Here's the purpose. We've got to be careful not to get distracted by things that might be good things to talk about. Politics, I don't know, some of you are big political fans. Sports. Some of you are big sports fans. You know what? Here's what I believe. We're going to survive regardless of who gets elected, regardless of which team wins the Superbowl. By the way, who is likely to win the World Series? The Cubs again? That's what they say? Who else is likely to win the World Series? Cleveland? They are smoking hot, aren't they? Yeah, the Indians. Guess what? we are going to be Christians no matter who wins. Amen? And in the next presidential election, if a Democrat gets elected or a Republican gets elected, I'm still going to Heaven, amen? You and me, amen? I have some thoughts on that; I won't say them here. Amen? But I'll tell you this. I'm going to Heaven regardless. And some of you are so excited about politics that you think we're going to Hell if this person doesn't get elected. I don't believe that. I believe I'm going to Heaven, regardless of who gets elected. Because I've elected Jesus Lord of my life because God gave me a chance to vote for Him, He gave me a chance to say yes.

I've got a couple of other verses here. What's my next verse? Galatians five, sixteen through twenty-six. Let's read that. Galatians five, we'll start at verse sixteen. Thank you very much. In your Bible, is Galatians in the New Testament? In verse sixteen of Galatians five, Apostle Paul writes to the church in Galatia. What does he say? He said, "This, I say, then, walk in the spirit." "This, I say, then, walk in the spirit." I am going to do it one more time. "This, I say, then, walk in the spirit." What's the importance of walking in the spirit? Say it out loud with me: "...For ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." And ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Let's go from the back to the front. Some of you that know me, know that I like to do that with verses, sometimes, go from the back to the front. Ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh, If ye walk in the spirit. First Corinthians ten thirteen, I made reference to it earlier. I'm going to come back to it now. There is no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you, or allow you, to be tempted above that which you are able, but will, with the temptation, but will, with the temptation, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it. You've got a way out, or sometimes we think the devil made me do it. I didn't have a choice. You had a choice and you decided to get in his car. Amen? You had a choice. And you have a choice the next time he tempts you. So, here, he says, in verse sixteen, and he said, "This, I say, then, walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," then he goes on to say, "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit."

This is so important for us to remember, as Christians. Am I okay, time-wise? I've got a couple of minutes? What does he say in verse seventeen? he says, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit..." that's your flesh, that's my flesh, that's everybody's flesh. The flesh, what does it do? lusts against the spirit. So, we've got a spirit, right? We've got God's spirit in our life. If you're not a Christian yet, become a Christian, have God's spirit in your life. I don't know where everybody's at here. Maybe you're already saved. If you're not, this is your invitation today, accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, He stands at the door and He knocks, and He says whosoever—amen—I don't care what you did in the past. Honest. Honest, you want to find some bad people that became good Christians? I could show it to you in here. One of them is a person who we're reading his words right now, Paul, yeah, he was a bad dude. If he went to prison, he'd have been feared. But he got saved, and he had a tender heart. Then he said, in verse seventeen, the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. These are contrary one to another so that you cannot do the things that you would. Paul is saying this is going to be an ongoing battle. You're going to have to endure some things in this life if you're going to be saved. Don't think it—I'm gonna borrow some words from Peter now: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial..." Amen. Think it not strange concerning this fiery trial.

You know what? We're all tempted. We all have trials. We all have challenges. But the real part of what I'm trying to share with you today is, don't get distracted by things that don't have an eternal significance. I am going to say that again, don't get distracted by things that don't have an eternal significance. Amen? If you get distracted by something that doesn't have eternal significance, you're wasting time. And you're not running the race with patience that is set before you. If you're with me, say amen. And he said here in verse eighteen, he said, "But if ye be led by the spirit you are not under the law..." listen to that, Saints. Somebody came to hear that verse today. If ye be led of the spirit—remember when we read in Romans twelve and in Hebrews twelve people were holding on to things they shouldn't hold on to? In Hebrews, it was the law. In Hebrews, it was the law; it was the way it was. He said, if you're led by the spirit you're not under the law. Amen? We don't live under the law. Amen?

Under the law, you have to be good enough to go to Heaven. We don't have to be good enough to go to Heaven, we have to accept One who is; One who shed his blood for us, Jesus Christ. It's by the grace of God that we were saved, amen? We are not saved by our good works. And that's the danger of holding on to good works. Now, Romans, six, one, says, "What then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Amen? What it's basically saying is Grace covers sin, but that doesn't mean we should choose sin, amen? But if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Amen? Amen? I'm thankful for that advocate with the Father. How about you? I am thankful that Jesus is my Lord and Savior and advocate. Amen? I am not saved because I'm good enough, I'm saved because He was willing. Because He was sinless and went to the cross and shed His blood, amen? He made the invitation to you, to me, amen. I don't mean He made the invitation to you *through* me, I mean, he made the invitation to you and also to me. I am not trying to connect your salvation to me. Clear? Okay, good. "I think that means I have to go through Pastor Paine." No, I didn't mean that. We, okay? Let's read on. What verse are we in, like eighteen, maybe? Oh, we're on nineteen, now. Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies. I taught on these recently; you could spend a whole message just on these points, and break each one down. But for right now, I'm going to group them all together and then make a powerful point, I believe that the writer wants us to get from this. Our envying, murders, we're in verse twenty-one drunkenness, reveling and such like of which I tell you before. Listen, as I told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Now, does everybody understand, at least, maybe not understand every detail—some of those words are not modern English, but you understand that list in concept, show of hands? You understand that list of things in concept, okay? Is there anybody here, you can tell me

you've never done any of those things ever in your life? We're all going to Hell if we go by the law. You with me? Let's read and see what follows. But the fruit of the spirit is love joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Amen? Saints, we have Grace. Let's be careful not to use the Law as an excuse. To make guidelines that God doesn't intend for us to have. Now, let me flip that over and come at it from the other side. Let's be careful not to use Grace as an excuse. I am getting ready to wrap up, whoever is going to follow me here. Let's be careful not use Grace as an excuse to sin any way we want. Amen? Amen? But if we make it so hard to be a Christian that we have to live by the Law then we frustrate— Galatians two twenty, if you're writing notes, Galatians two, twenty and twenty-one, we frustrate the grace of God, amen? Turn to that, if you would, please. I want to read that, Galatians two, those two verses together: I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Someone was reading it, check me if I'm wrong. I live by faith—I need to read that, Galatians2:20-21. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...” There you go. Thank you. That was the word that I wasn't getting. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I live now, in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Debby, could you go to the organ? I'm getting ready to close so help me as I do. I do not frustrate the Grace of God for if righteousness come by the law. Saints, that's it right there. He said, I do not frustrate the grace of God for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. For if righteousness, come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Righteousness doesn't come by the Law, it comes from Christ, amen? In the Old Testament it had to come by our good works. And in the New Testament, it comes by Christ. I'm thankful that we have Grace. I'm thankful that we are forgiven. And now we have to live like it, and now we have to live like it.

Lord help us to not frustrate you. Help us to accept Your righteousness. Lord, thank You for Your words, I thank You for Your truth. There's any, here, Lord, today that have not yet accepted You as Lord and Savior, Let them know that You're calling them. Even though the message wasn't preached on salvation. If there's any here today that have not accepted You as Lord and Savior, let them come, and let them speak to someone, and take action. Your Word talks about being buried with You in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life.