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Michael Snetzer

Step Study 10 – Principle 7a Long Obedience In The Same Direction

If there are any of you who have not already expressed an interest and have an interest in serving at Recovery at The Village in Denton, please let us know. You can contact us by calling or e-mailing up at the church. Lauren Williams would be the person to contact and to talk to. Currently as it stands, we have approximately forty people who have signed up which is a great first step study. The majority of those people are from the Denton area so that's going to do wonders as far as the back side and having people in that area to be able to pour into that ministry. But it's not limited to people in the Denton area. In fact I would encourage anyone that you know or if you yourself have had trouble getting through this study in the amount of time that we've allotted that maybe you reengage in that Next Step study as well. We currently have about forty people; we've divided those up to about seven groups. We have four woman's groups and three men's groups. At this point, we have one male leader for each of the men's groups. And so we could use another one or two or three people to help fill in the gaps there for the men's group. For the woman's group, we have about 1 ½ leaders for the woman's group, so we could still use a couple of other female leaders as well. So if you want an intimate opportunity to get plugged in in serving here at Recovery here at the Village that would be a great way to do that. In order to help prepare you for that, next, is it next? Yes, next week end, Saturday, October sixth you see there on your schedule possible step-study leader training. You can cross off "possible" and it is the Step-Study leader training and it will be held out here in the Servant Central building. And it will be from two o'clock in the afternoon to three thirty. And so for any of you having a desire to be a Step-Study facilitator, that'd be a great way to get more information on exactly what that looks like. You already been through it once so you have kind of had "hands on" training; you know what your leader has done and the role that they've provided and facilitating your Step-Study but you can get more information on that and if you are going to do that we would like you to try and participate in that. We may have if you can't make it to that one, a follow-up to that. So if you have a desire; can't make it to that one and would like to be a part of the follow-up, again contact Lauren Williams and let her know. Yes?

-inaudible in background, person asks question

Right, well I'm gonna say that people, that if you have been faithful and you are pretty much caught up to where we're at. You're making your amends; you've done your inventory and you're moving on towards the goal; that you're OK to go ahead and start serving in the ministry. So we're not going to ask you be completely finished. We're gonna let you transition in that. And also if you want to serve in our January Step Study, that's when we'll have the next Step Study down here. And you haven't been through leader training, you can come to that leader training also. It doesn't necessarily have to be in preparation for the Denton Step Study; it can be for the Highland Step Study in January. And so I guess what I'm trying to get you to do today is kind of think forward to the extent that you want to serve in this ministry; to begin to think about what capacity do you want to do that in. We try to, in a general way, the first step to doing that would be facilitating a Step Study group. Because number one, it gives you an opportunity to immediately jump back in and we don't have to figure out a bunch of things about where best you're going to fit based upon your gifts. And two, it gives you a chance to listen back through the curriculum one more time and so that you have a good handle on in. The other way that you can begin almost immediately in helping out is by being a sponsor. And I know that's a scary thing, being a sponsor, because you really feel like the weight of this person's recovery is on you. But let me just assure you that it's not. It's not. It is completely dependent on that other person in their relationship with Jesus Christ. And if they are half-hearted in their walk, they are gonna get half-measures sort-of

results. And you won't be able to force that person to engage. There's nothing you will be able to, I mean God will have to impress it on their heart to be more faithful or not to be more faithful. All you can do speak the truth in love to them. And encourage them, exhort them, edify them, share your experience, strength, and hope. And so we will have a Step Study. I mean, excuse me, we will have a sponsor training that's not scheduled yet but you can see there at the bottom of your schedule, the we will eventually have a sponsor training for you. And so I would encourage that. I would encourage that if God has done something in your heart and in your life here, that you use that. And you don't have to use that here. You don't have to use that within the confounds of Recovery at the Village. Not everybody is called to serve here. But use is somewhere. You know? Use is somewhere; and that will be part of step twelve which we're not at yet but I'm just trying to prepare you a little bit.

Also, I want to hand out to you some homework. I say it's a homework but it's really a gift from the Village Church, but I'd like to assign it as homework just because I think it's great material. And if you haven't heard it or you didn't attend the "How to study your Bible" course that was offered up here by Matt and Josh, a couple of our pastors here, back in May that I have asked that we provide each one of you guys a CD with that so can you, man, help pass out some of these?

My understanding, and I haven't had a chance to listen to it; I did come to the second part of it, was that it was outstanding. So I highly recommend, because that's going to be step eleven, essentially. So that will be great preparation for our next teaching.

Yes?

-inaudible in background, person asks question

I think it's a CD. Yeah, we would have had to order the DVDs, so you can listen to it in your car; if you don't have a CD player, you can listen to it with a friend. And if you know somebody who's not here who would like one, you can come up and pick one up. We should have several extra copies. Alright.

The last time we were together we were talking about, basically, reconciliation - taking what God has done in our hearts and in our lives, vertically, and then carrying that out into the world. By making amends and offering forgiveness. And so that was our last lesson. Since we have been together the last time - since I've been with you the last time, I've been to a conference called Peace Maker Ministries. And it is in the business of teaching people on how to do biblical peacemaking - conflict resolution. If you are a male, I would tell you that we have, currently going on, a study that just started. It's a four week study. It will be going on for three more weeks, on Thursday mornings at six-thirty AM. It's a men's bible study on Conflict Resolution. And a lot of material, at least from that first session, was directly from this material. The book that kind of goes along with that is "The peacemaker" by Ken Sandy. This will be a resource that we will begin to offer also through our recover ministry here. It's a great supplement to steps eight and nine or principle six. I might also add, just as a way of leading in to our lesson today is that we are all called to be peacemakers. We are all called to the ministry of reconciliation. It is part of who we are and what we're called to be as Christians. And so what that means is we are going to deal with conflict and we need to learn how to deal with conflict in a biblical way. And so that is a great resource. Part of that, and the excitement that I have in addition to what all that we have going on here as far as the new Denton campus is as we speak right now we have a group of husbands and wives or former husbands and wives, six couples who are meeting together as we speak at this exact same time, at a location not too far from here, and working through these materials seeking reconciliation in their marriages and in their lives by first getting their hearts right with God and then getting their horizontal relationships right. And so what a great witness to the grace and mercy

and the impact of the Gospel in our lives in saving marriages, in bringing marriages back together who may not be together now. And so what I'd like to do right now is to pray for those marriages; not only those marriages but for all marriages in our community; marriages in our body who are currently struggling. And so would you join me in prayer?

Father God, I thank you, Lord that you are you using us as a church, as Your body, Lord. To be instruments in Your hands, Lord. To encourage reconciliation in our mirths, Lord. And what a testimony that is to You because true reconciliation can not occur apart from the Cross. And so Lord we pray now for those six marriages that are currently meeting together. Lord, that through the power of Your holy Spirit, Lord, that there would be miraculous fruit and testimony, Lord; that would encourage us and exhort us through this ministry. Father, we pray for those marriages that are close by in proximity but may be along way off spiritually, Lord, that You would begin to draw them. To this purpose. Lord, I know that there are men and women in this room who are affected. And so, Lord we must entrust You to You these relationships and ask You to provide us a pathway; what is our responsibility? And help us to see what our role is to be just ambassador of Your redeeming love. Not out for our own gain, Lord, but in the best interest of Your glory and of that other person. And so, Lord I pray that now if there are those who need to be in this study that you would begin to call them to this study, and, Lord, that we would reach out to those couples and encourage them. Not to live in denial that there's anything wrong, but begin to address the issues. Father, we thank you for bringing for those that you have, and we wait patiently for You to bring more. It's in Jesus' name we pray, Amen

Alright, today we're gonna be talking about principle seven, which is to reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, bible reading and prayer, in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will. Our focus today will be on the first part of that, the self-examination piece of this principle. In a lot of ways, what we'll be talking about today will not be anything new. It will be a review. Step ten says, "We continued to take personal inventory; and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." I thought two great scriptures to go along with this, number one, is second Corinthians thirteen – five. Is says, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the Faith, test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves: That Jesus Christ is in you. Unless indeed you fail to meet the test." And Acts nineteen says, "Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices." So this business of inventory should not be a foreign one to you now at all. Do we now know how to examine our hearts using theses inventory sheets. The answer should be, "Yes, we should be pretty good at that. We should have done it many many times over at this point; over countless relationships. And so what we've done is we've gone back historically to begin to look at what and pray through those old hurts and wounds and then begin to see our part. And then begin to turn away from the plank essentially in our own eye, the log.

And so the next question is, "Do we now, should we now have a pretty good grasp on how to confess sin, confess sin to God and to those that we trust?" Absolutely. Absolutely. That is what we did in step five, principle four. And so we're just continuing in this step, doing what we've already done but on kind of a continual basis as we daily walk this walk of faith. I know most of you here are probably looking forward to the completion of these steps, but we are beginning to now see that these are not things that we ever finish but things that we practice. It's really more of a lifestyle and a way of life. Jesus calls himself "The Way" and we are to follow in His ways for all the days of our life. And we must persevere to the end. There's nothing principally here that we've been talking about at Recovery at the Village that should not be a regular part of our lives; regularly doing these things, practicing these things. For example, one is, continually coming together and meeting together. Hebrews ten twenty-four and twenty-five says this: "And let us consider how to stir up one another, to love and good works.

Not neglecting to meet together as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” And so we may be looking forward to that day where, “Gosh, we don't have to come together anymore; we don't have to meet together” and God's saying, “No. ” It may not be in this context but we are called in an increasing manner to meet together as the day draws near. That this isn't an inconvenience. This is, this is good, this is right. In addition to meeting together, we must continue to humble ourselves before God. We must continue to exalt Him and to worship Him. We must continue to submit to Him. We must continue to examine ourselves. We must continue to turn from sin. We must continue to turn towards Him. To Confess, continue to repent, continue to make amends, continue to offer forgiveness, to pray, to meditate on Scripture, to practice spiritual disciplines and to serve others. And it's easy to become complacent or apathetic in our approach to God. We might have up to this point come along ways and we may be satisfied in what we have obtained so far by the grace of God. I remember hearing this phrase early in my spiritual growth and that is, “It's easy to begin to rest on our laurels” and I thought “resting on your laurels” meant “resting on your rear end.” I guess that it kind of has that connotation but really what it means is, “resting on your past accomplishments.” OK? It's not about what you did yesterday, it's not about what you did last week, it's not about what you did a month ago, it's what are you doing today? It's about persevering. Our spiritual live often times, or our spiritual growth. I think a good analogy to that is kind of like peddling a bicycle up a hill. K? As long as we keep peddling that bicycle, we get to that top of that hill with some effort but its not overwhelming. But when you stop peddling, what happens? Well, its really hard to get started again and because you're on a hill, you have a tendency to backslide and end up crashing at the bottom. OK? And so just a really cruel idea is the idea of long obedience in the same direction. I heard that from a pastor up in Seattle, Mark Driscoll. I think he probably borrowed it from someone else. But I think a lot of us get into this mentality that this is a one hundred yard dash. If we can just get to the end, and there is no end. There is no finish line on this side of heaven. And so we need to approach this thing not like a hundred yard dash but more like a marathon. And so its just that long, faithful obedience and continuing the things that we've begun and not going, “Whew, now that this Step Study is almost over, I don't have to do these things anymore.” It's tragic; it is tragic when we stop doing theses things. When we go back to our old ways of doing things, when we stop coming forward, we start living in secrecy and darkness and these things start to manifest themselves again in our own lives. And we begin to isolate and become bitter and then when it does get exposed the mess is huge.

First Timothy four, eight says, “Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important. For it promises a reward in both this life and the next.” There's something about physical exercise. That as long as you continue to do it, you make progress. A lot of people want to just make a whole lot of progress real quickly, right? And so use steroids and use you know gimmick diets. Because it's not about long term discipline, it's about quick results. And so either you get the results or you don't and you've run so hard after those things that you don't persevere and you end up falling off. But there's something about training over a long period of time where you get stronger and more physically fit. And that's good but if you ever stop. If you stop, then what happens? Your muscles start to atrophy, OK? And you again become weak. And then you have to start all over again. And so if we have a benefit with our physical bodies in that way, how much more will we have in our spiritual fitness as we continue to press in to God and pursue Him and we begin to gain something similar to physical fitness. And that's endurance, right? And you continue to run the race. You build endurance; you build perseverance.

I think the parable of the sower is a great example of perseverance. It's a great example of several things but here is Luke eight four through fifteen.: “When a large crowd was coming together and those from various cities were journeying to him, 'being Jesus' he spoke by way of parable: 'The sower went

out to sow his seed and as he sowed, some fell beside to road. And it was trampled underfoot and the birds of the air ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky soil and as soon as it grew up it withered away because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns. And the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. Other seed fell into good soil and grew up and produce a crop a hundred times as great.' As he said these things he would call out, 'He who has ears to hear let him hear.' His disciples began questioning him as to what the parable meant. And he said, ' To you it his been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God but to the rest, it is in parables. So that seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. Those beside the road are those who have heard then the Devil comes and takes away the word from their heart. So they will not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky soil are those who when they hear receive the word with joy and these have no firm root. They believed for a while and in time of temptation fall away. The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to maturity. But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart and hold it fast and bear fruit with perseverance.'" Luke Eight.

Now there's quite a bit of controversy over theses verses and I don't want to talk about too much today. As far as, who's saved and who's not saved; I think that we can definitively say that in that first group, in the first example out of the four, that those that don't believe. It says very clearly there. And then in the fourth example you have those who obviously bear fruit through perseverance. But the middle two is where the debate is. And I don't think necessarily that that's a bad thing. That there's that debate because I think it makes us polarize in one direction or another. It makes us either go, "Wow, I'm in kind of a questionable area, here. I need to put more into my pursuit of God. Which is where in that obedience, in that pursuit which will eventually bear fruit in my life. Not my own work but the work of the Spirit." Or we have a tendency to just fall away. We see here that if we persevere we will bear fruit. Again, long obedience in the same direction.

First Corinthians nine twenty-four through twenty-seven says, "Do you not know that those who run the race all run." There all running "But only one receives the prize. Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we, an imperishable. Therefore, I run in such a way as not without aim. I box in such a way as not beating the air, but I discipline my body and I make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself, will not be disqualified. "

Hebrews twelve, one: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a great cloud of wittinesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

I think that many times in our lives our life looks more like a roller coaster than a constant pursuit of God. Kind of an up and down. Like something like this. And here at the bottom of this valley. What do we do? Were like, "Well, this stinks." We cry out for help. "God help me." And we begin to draw near to God and we begin to cling to God and we begin to trust in His promises and we humble ourselves to Him. And low and behold, He lifts us up. And we begin to experience some amount of success by His grace and all of a sudden we go, "Thanks, God. I've got it from here. I don't really need to do these things anymore that, I don't really need to pursue You anymore. And what happens? We fall. We end up back up here at the bottom. And we again cry out to God - humble ourselves to Him and He begins to lift us up. Here we are at the top, pride returns and "Pride comes before the fall."

First Corinthians ten, twelve says, "So if you think that you're standing firm, be careful that you don't

fall. I think we also have to remember what our ultimate pursuit is. What is our ultimate pursuit. As I was in a class this week, it's a biblical counseling certification class. And as we were going through the materials, God began to convict my heart. And the way that He convicted my heart is that He has kind have been laying a foundation for this. But it's just when God kind of shows it to you it just seems a lot more clear. It's like He's, He kind of, "OK, I see it, I see it, I see it; OK now I really see it. And he was talking about how sometimes the fruit of our relationship with God becomes the pursuit. The pursuit. And so the fruit of a right relationship with God in my life is the fruit of the Spirit. Love and joy and peace and patience and you go on from there. But I began to realize that, that I pursue peace above my pursuit of Jesus Christ. That that often become the most important thing to me. And so I will try to manage my circumstances and manage people in order for that peace to be upheld. And if you're not giving me my peace, I will get angry. And so part of doing inventory work, it really, the crux of doing inventory work is to discover those things that we love more than we love God. The things that we pursue more than we pursue the person of Jesus Christ. And so we have to be careful. What is our pursuit? Is it for the goodies? Is it for the fruit? Or is it for Him? Because a failure of the greatest command is what's going to lead to all these other problems because it's sin. And I'll become frustrated when I seek those things above seeking God. Because it's all based on a lie. So we continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. I want to give y'all just a couple of ideas here to contemplate. The first is an acknowledgment that there is a wrestle, there is a war going on for control of my heart. And I want to use an enhanced version of something that came out of Campus Crusades for Christ to kind of explain this battle that's been going on between the Spirit of God and my flesh as a believer. But before I do that I want to describe the life of an unbeliever, of a natural man. And so, what I'm going to do is I'm going to draw three circles up here. And in the, tell me if you can't see this. In the center of each circle, I'm gonna to draw and upside down four which is really a chair, or a throne. And want to describe each one of these lives and this can be three different lives or it can be my life at three different stages. The first is the natural man, how I'm born.

Can you all see that?

-inaudible in background, two people say something

I don't now what I did with the purple one.

I am born sitting on the throne of my own life. Is that better? Maybe? -laughter- Alright, so sitting, so there's some characteristics to this natural man that I want to underscore. Number one, who's in the center? Me. I'm self centered. And I'm ruled by a selfish heart. I'm gonna put the cross here on the outside of this circle representing that Christ is not in my life. The second thing I want to point out is that I'm self-seeking. If you don't believe this you can look at a child. They want what they want, right? And in that self-seeking, we're ruled by fear because we don't know God and we don't believe that He's gonna provide what we need and so we think that we need to provided it for ourselves and so we become self-reliant. And that just means we're operating on our own power. And a fourth thing is that we are obsessed with control. We want to control outcomes, others, and circumstances. So essentially, I'm playing God. Right, I mean isn't that God's roll? He's responsible for the outcome, he's responsible for, I mean, he's in control. I'm not. So I'm playing God. But the reason why I try to control these things is cuz I think that's where my happiness lies. In others, outcomes, and my circumstances rather than God. Well, what happens in that place is chaos. When I am sitting on the throne of my life as a sinful human being, I'm gonna put chaos dots in my life. This represents chaos. But thats just what happens when I take control. Now spiritually,spiritually dead, I am a walking dead man, but I am alive to sin. That means I like sin and I want more of it. And I have no choice but to sin because it's my nature, it's all I is sin. I live in constant rebellion against God in my independence.

Alright. So the next circle I want to draw up here for you is the what they would call the “carnal Christian” I think I'm the only guy who can walk two feet and loose two markers. -laughter- I just can't figure it out. Alright. Now I think as Christians we vacillate between these two. OK? Let me explain what happens when we become a Christian. Alright? What I believe. And I think the Bible supports. I'm gonna draw three concentric circles here; the first, I'm going to label our spiritual, the Spirit inside of us. The second, I'm going the label the soul and the third, I'm going to do the body. So I think essentially we are spiritual beings that inhabit a soul or inhabit a body with a soul. OK? And in this middle circle here I'm also going to put things like my will, my personality, my mind, OK? Now as a natural man, this is all about me – this center circle. OK? What happens when we get saved is that the Spirit of God slams into the spirit and that we are spiritually reborn – the very core of who we are is transformed. And now the Holy Spirit lives in us. And it begins to change us from the inside out – it begins to transform us. And so the Spirit of God is transforming and is healing and is making new the spiritual components of my life and my soul while my the outside of me, my body, continues to wither away. OK? And I think that thats why, you know, over time, as that has occurred in my life, you know, I've kind of straighted out mentally because as the Spirit begins to work its way from the center out, all that stuff that sin was doing to mess up my mind and my soul, but this is a lifetime work. It doesn't happen overnight. So now that the Spirit of God is in me and indwelling me and so there's this battle between my flesh and my spirit. OK? That which has not yet been transformed. Now the carnal Christian knows Christ and so Christ is on the inside of this circle but he is still sitting on the throne. So any guesses what his life is gonna look like? On the outside, the same. Full of chaos. Why? Because people are producers of chaos and God is a god of order. The only difference being that this person has been made alive in Christ. But there should be a progression; there should be fruit at some point. And so when I'm sitting on the throne of my life as a Christian, when I'm not submitted to the Spirit of God, then what's going to come out of me are the deeds of the flesh. And you can find those in Galatians five nineteen through twenty-one.

Now this last circle is gonna be what I'm going to call the spirit-filled Christian. Now the spirit-filled Christian is gonna look completely different. Number one because who's going to be on the throne? Christ is going to be on the throne. And we're going to be at the foot, worshiping and serving. And so what's this life going to look like? Well, it's not going to be not self-centered but it's gonna be God-centered. It's not going to be ruled by a selfish heart; it's gonna be ruled by a servant's heart. It's not going to be self-seeking but it's going to be God-pleasing. My greatest desire is to do what God requires not what I want because I know what I want is full of deceit. And it's impossible according to Hebrews to please God apart from faith so instead of acting out of fear, we're acting out of faith. And we're not self-reliant but we're dependent on our Creator. We're back in that Genesis one and two sort of relationship with God. And we are not trying to control but we are surrounded to God's sovereignty. And so what's going to come out of this person is order. I'm not talking about necessarily circumstantially, I'm talking about internally, in my ability to relate to the world and circumstances.

Alright, so the question is why if I'm over here do I keep moving back over here? Why do I keep taking control? Well because that Voice of the Evil One keeps telling me that you can't trust God, He's gonna miss this if you don't step in there and do something. And so it's fear. That's how he motivates us – Satin. It's the same voice as in Genesis three. “God doesn't have your best interest at heart, He's gonna miss this, you'd better jump in there and you'd better take control. And so we continually, as Christians, are trying to move more and more to this Spirit-filled Christian life, which means that we submit to the Holy Spirit that is living in us, and trust God. OK? So it becomes a matter of who's sitting on the throne of my life is the underlying theme here. Who is ruling my heart? Is is me or is it God? And I've heard it said that the throne of our life is a one-seater – it's either God or me. And it it's me, I'll take idles or

other things, other people. When it's me, it's pride. Pride will always lead me to take idles. This will lead to what? Death. These are the two central issues that I have to deal with – my pride and my idolatry. My rebellion against God, my desire to live independently, and my desire to love other things more than I love Him. But when God sits on the throne, it leads to life and peace. OK.

Ephesians five, eighteen. It says, “Do not get drunk on wine because that leads to debauchery, but instead, be filled with the Spirit.” So a lot of us are going, “well, that's not my deal. I don't get drunk.” Some of us will say, “ Yeah, that is my deal.” But God is saying, “Don't be filled with wine. Because if you fill yourself with wine, if that is the object of your worship, it's gonna lead to debauchery.” OK? And so we can just put our heart up here, I mean not literally, but we put a heart up here, and we can say, “OK, if I fill myself with wine, what's going to come out of me is drunkenness. God says, “Don't do that. Fill yourselves instead with the Spirit of God through a lifestyle of worship and what's going to come out of you is the Fruit of the Spirit. But wine is just the example that they use here because you can fill yourself with anything. The object of your worship can be anything. It can be money, and if money is the object of your worship, what's going to come out of you is greed. Maybe it's food. What's going to come out of you is gluttony. The idea, here is that whatever you fill yourself with, this is the key, whatever you fill yourself will control you. It will control you. So you get to choose what's gonna control you. Is it gonna be God or is it going to be some created thing? It's the object of your worship. Because we can also fill ourselves with the adoration of men or man. We just want the “Attaboys” Well, as long as they're giving me the “Attaboys” I feel great. But they start to criticize me, I'm gonna feel this big. So what controls me? People. People controls me. Same with money. If I've got a lot of money in the bank, boy, I feel good. Whoop. But if I've just got a little bit of money in the bank, I feel this big. What controls me? Money. Alright.

Last example, here. I know we're kind of just doing a bunch of different ways of looking at the same thing, but I'm hopeful that one of these sticks and resonates with you and is something that you can use on an ongoing basis. The last thing that I want to talk to you about is just this root – fruit relationship that God talks about in the Bible. A lot of these ideas I'm borrowing out of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* by Paul David Tripp. It's this book right here. In fact, a lot of what we teach is out of the resources of C.C.E.F. And so on pages sixty and sixty-five it talks about a passage in Scripture: Luke six forty-three through forty-five. It says, “No good tree bears bad fruit nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good and the evil person out of the evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” So this analogy here of root and fruit basically, the root is gonna be that which my heart worships. And the fruit is going to be my behavior, my thinking, my emotions – these all come out of my heart. OK? And so what I want to do is I just want to draw two trees next to each other. And depending on what I'm rooted in, what the object of my worship is is gonna determine what's going to come out of me – what's going to be the fruit of each tree. Now I think it's pretty clear that if we are rooted in the Spirit of God, if God is the object of our worship, if that is the thing that we love more than anything else, what's going to come out of us is love and joy and peace and patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, self-control. What's the key word over here? Self. If we're rooted in self, what's going to come out of us? Or kind of the opposite of this. Like depression and anxiety, addiction, which is just idolatry, issues with control, obsessive compulsive, outbursts of anger, impulsivity. Now I don't know how many of you are familiar with psychology and that sort of thing, but there's this thing out there called the DSM4, diagnostic statical manual for mental disorders. And if you are to look at the symptoms of these disorders, they match these. It's rooted in self-love. Only God will be able to transform that. And so I believe that most things that are not organic, meaning that are not caused by physical problems are really based in spiritual issues, self-absorption. Now it is

possible to try to take good fruit and staple it on a bad tree. K? In other words, we can pretend. Pretend to be patient, pretend to be kind, pretend to be... But the Bible says that that's Pharisaical. That when you pretend to have those things when really the object of your worship is self, that that's the Pharisees. It's tough, it's convicting, but we do it in the light of the Gospel and understanding that this is a continual process and that God is at work in our hearts and in our lives to transform us. Who will save us from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have been saved.

Let's pray. Father, God, I do pray, Lord, that You would give us the perseverance, the strength, the endurance to approach our walk with you as not a one hundred yard dash but with long obedience in the same direction, putting one step in front of the other, living day by day, sometimes moment by moment in a position before You that is humble and is exalting to You where You are our pursuit. And so I pray, Lord, that Your Spirit would be working among us, even now to give us a great sense of hope in You. That You who began this good work in us will carry it on to completion as we submit our lives to You. Lord, we love You and thank You that You have rescued us. It's in Christ's' name that I pray, Amen.