

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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The Good Life

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9

TITLE

Keeping Flies From The Perfume

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 18:10-11; 23:19-21; 24:10; 25:28; 27:12



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Well, it's great to see you, Providence Family. If you have been here for every week of the series, that'll be the last time that you get to see that video and so, that's sad. But great little video.

I hope that you're doing well and you had a great week. If you're new with us, a guest, welcome. We're thrilled that you have joined us and we really do think it's an honor that you have done so, and we pray that you're encouraged while you're here. If you are new or even if you're not, you call Providence your home, it's important to know why we've gathered.

We've been built as a church family for such an amazing, incredible purpose, and that's to glorify God by introducing people, all people, to Jesus Christ. And then to labor, to help them to grow, to love and to worship Him. And the fact is that when you recognize in this world and you finally see Jesus for who He is, we're gonna understand one day that that is the greatest purpose that God could have ever given us on this Earth, and that is to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, to be brought back into right fellowship with God Himself, through His son, and then to love Him with all of our heart and to spend all of our life, not just our singing, but our working, and how we relate and our families, and every part of our life is an act of worship to Him.

Such nobility, and yet we're at risk. Tremendous risk. Every single one of us are incredibly vulnerable, and the reason is not because of what's without but what's within. You see, the Bible tells us something that's rue about ourselves, and He does so with vivid pictures. I wanna show you one of these pictures. This is what He says. He says, "Dead flies makes the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor."

Now, we don't normally keep perfume and ointment in bowls. You and I, we put soup in bowls. So if you went out to a restaurant, you said, "You know what I really want some soup." Right? And they bring you a bowl of soup and that bowl looks like this, okay? SO there's a dead fly in your soup. Then you know something of what it's talking about, and that is, no matter how amazing the soup would have been and no matter how much of the soup is not being contaminated by that little bitty fly, you don't eat the soup. And when you leave, and you talk about the soup, you talk about the fly and not the soup.

And this is what He's saying, He's saying why we are at risk, why there is a tremendous vulnerability for every single one of us, is because five minutes of folly can outweigh five decades of wisdom.

So much of our life can be spent in obedience and faithfulness and wisdom and love, and yet, we can do something by which that one thing we're known for. Every one of us has the capacity of those five minutes.

You read through people within the Bible, the heroes of the Bible. And you look at how many of them did for so many different years, just amazing acts of courage and valor and all of a sudden there was just a moment of their life, and it's interesting that we still talk about that moment today.

And it's interesting that, as believers in Jesus Christ, we have this mission that is so noble. It's such a unique, unbelievable purpose in life, and yet every single one of us can change Jesus Christ and we can do so in a matter of five minutes.

This is why the Apostle Paul, when he thought about Jesus Christ and the opportunity to represent Him in the world today, he says, "I discipline my body and I keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I should be disqualified."

You see, the Bible has a whole lot to say about self-control and a lot of it is found right here in Proverbs. So if you brought a Bible, if you wanna head with me to Proverbs 18. We've been in a series this summer through Proverbs, or at least through several different facets of what it speaks about in Proverbs. And what we've been looking at is wisdom. And wisdom, we've learned, is the ability to know and do the right thing even when the Bible does not specifically address our situation.

Now, you know that the Bible specifically addresses all kinds of situations, but it doesn't necessarily say this is one to hire. This is the friend to trust. This is ... Should I eat the whole pie? No.

There's no verse that tells us specifically, exactly what to do. And so, what we've been looking at is that Proverbs doesn't always tell us the wise choice to make, but what it does do is it tells us the kind of person that routinely makes the wise choice, and then calls us to become that kind of person, to pursue that kind of character in our life.

And so, what we've been looking at this summer is different facets of a person who frequently makes wise choices, and we get, this morning, to a person of self-control. It's so critically important that we wanna pray before we start, okay? Let's pray together. Father, in Heaven, we look to You now. We come to Your word and we recognize, every single one of us, Lord, that we have done things in a matter of moments that have embarrassed us later on. So we know that it's within. And so, I pray, God, for every single one of us in this room that's seeking to walk with you, seeking to be faithful before you, I pray that you would use this to fortify our intensity in pursuing self-control. And I pray, Lord, for those in the room that are literally on the precipice, they're right on the edge of moral collapse, something that they would do, something that they would say, something that they would want that would cripple the rest of their life.

I pray that You would use this morning, Lord, to pull them away from the edge. And God, I pray for those in the room that have already walked over that edge and they already feel as though their character and their legacy has been ruined. I pray that You would show us, in Jesus Christ, the possibility, not only of forgiveness of sin, but that You have the power to re-write the script of the rest of our life.

And so, would You help us, now, would You speak through weakness, and give us grace as we open us Your word? We pray, in Jesus' name, amen.

So, if you've never looked at Proverbs, Proverbs is not written like a story, there's individual sentences that are sorta mixed together. And so, as we read, I'm gonna have you turn to a few different places where a bunch of these Proverbs speak about self-control.

Kay? So, we're gonna start in Proverbs 18, starting in verse 10. And this is what he says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous man runs into it and is safe. And the rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination." Now, turn to Proverbs 23, we're gonna start reading in verse 19.

Proverbs 23:19. This is what it says, he says, "Hear my son and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty and slumber will cloth them with rags."

And then Proverbs 25:28. He says, "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." And then Proverbs 27:12, "The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it."

So what I wanna do here is I wanna show you really two overarching principles of truth and then we're gonna end with three applications to how you and I can actually pursue a life of self-control that will protect not only the name above all names that we're seeking to represent, but even our own name, among people who know us. So the first truth is this, it's very simple. You saw it throughout as we read. It's that God reveals the dangers of lacking self-control.

Every single one of us thinks about or can think about a time in our life, maybe even this week, where you say something rashly that you wish you wouldn't have said, you wish you would have had a little bit more control in that moment because it wouldn't have created such an injury had it not come out of our mouth.

Every single one of us can think about times like this. It's evident there's a lot of dangers to self-control, but first we need to understand exactly what is self-control? And at least how I would talk about self control, kay? Cause then I'm gonna talk about it for a while so it's important you understand what am I thinking about self-control and what are we even gonna find within scriptures? And this is it, okay, self-control is the ability to control urgent desires because our heart is set on important desires.

Now, lemme try to help you understand that in three different illustrations. First, is this. You may say or you may hear somebody say, "You know, I want to say this, but it would destroy trust in that relationship."

See, in that moment, there's an urgent desire. I want to say this. It's right at the end of my tongue. It's coming. And yet, there's an important desire and that is that there's a friendship here and I want trust to be built and established and fortified in this friendship. And so, I have to make that choice, and a person of self-control limits their urgent desire in order for something that's more important to them in the long haul.

You've probably heard it said, somebody may say, "You know what? I want to. There's a desire in my heart to look at pornography. There's something in me that draws toward it." You've been told.

And yet, someone may also say, "And yet, I know that it objectifies people by looking at a human being without seeing a soul and it also rewires my own category of love and beauty and marriage and sexuality, and so I'm not gonna do it." What's happening there? There's an urgent desire, that a lot of people feel. There's an important desire, and a person of self-control, in the moment of temptation, says no to the urgent for the important.

You may really enjoy pie. You may say, "You know what? I wanna eat the whole pie. I wanna eat the whole thing." And yet, that's not gonna contribute to something I want even more than that, and that's to live a healthy life. And so, there's urgent desires and there's important desires, and a person of self-control has the capacity, the ability to control the urgent for the important.

Primarily because the urgent isn't always obedient. And so, this is what self-control is. Now, what happens when it's lacking? That's what we read about. I wanna show you three different things that we saw, that we read about.

The first thing we saw is that when it's lacking, lacking self-control, it leads to personal shame. It leads to personal shame. Every single one of us has done something rashly or impulsively and later on we felt like, gosh, I shouldn't have done that, in particular in public. That's embarrassing. I feel ashamed.

This is what Proverbs 23 said. We read this already. He says, "Look son, be not among drunkards or gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty and slumber will cloth them with rags." What's he saying here? Well, when we eat too much and when we drink too much, we get drowsy. Thanksgiving. Okay? Just think Thanksgiving, right?

We eat. We're like, I need stretchy pants, and I wanna sit down. I just wanna lay down and suddenly the only thing we can do, if we eat so much or drink so much is just lay down. We're just in a stupor. We just have to sleep. And that's one thing if you do it one day, one meal. It's another thing if that's your life legacy, you see? And this is what he's talking about here, is this, if we do this every single day, that drowse-inducing pattern does two things in our life, it says.

It limits our ability to do important things like keep a job, work a job, pay our bills, be with our family, and so, what happens? He says his life is characterized in the end as though he was someone who lived in rags. Our clothing doesn't turn into rags after overeating one meal, but it may turn into rags if every single meal is an overindulgence in not only food but drink.

It creates patterns to where important things are left behind because of the urgent. The second thing it says here is that it leaves a shameful legacy. You noticed that he calls them gluttons and drunkards. Now, these are words that are now a person is characterized by because they're there so frequently.

It's not just that they have a glass or wine or they have grape juice or they have a steak, it's that they ate so much of it and drink so much of it, and they do it every single meal, that other people go, "You know what? That's a glutton. That's a drunkard right there."

You see, every single one of us, maybe we've even said it at some point in our life. You've heard it say, "You know, my dad was a drunk or my mom is a drunk, or my uncle, whatever, is a drunk." And isn't it true that their life and character is so much more and deeper than that, sorta like the soup? And yet, their whole life is characterized by that one attribute, by that one characteristic.

Because they cannot control the urgent for what is important. It creates patterns. It creates a legacy. It becomes like the fly. The only thing we talk about is the fly instead of the 99% of the soup that's not contaminated.

Well, the second thing that it says here is that lacking self-control leads to endless risk. This is another danger. It leads to endless risk. Proverbs 25, this is what we read. He says, "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." Now, you and I, we live in a city without a wall, kay?

In fact, there's really no cities that are built anymore with walls. Okay? But back in the time, in fact, if you travel right now, and you go to a city with walls, you don't really think much about it other than, "I need to take a picture." Alright? Like this one here. Okay? This is a long time ago. You notice the brown hair.

And we're in Jerusalem. This is the wall, this is the portion of the wall around Jerusalem. So, we're looking at it, we're like, hey this is cool, let's take a picture.

But you have to understand that in ancient times a city without walls was a disaster. It was a critical part of their army. It was their defense mechanism. This is why when that same wall was broken down and the news was carried and Nehemiah heard about it. Nehemiah 1:4, he says this, "As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days..."

Why? Because the city without walls has no protection. It's a disaster that's waiting more disaster. And so, it is when we cannot control our urgent desires for the important ones. And we should all be honest with ourselves right now, every single one of us struggles to control ourself in something.

Oh, there's the more traditional, socially-recognized ones, right? Where we have groups that help one another. Like, drugs and alcohol and gambling and pornography and things like this, but isn't it also true that there are many things that continue to cripple people's lives that are not so socially recognized, and yet we struggle to control them? Things like, some people in this room really struggle to control their time. So their entire life is characterized by over-commitment and they can't get any of it done.

They always say they're gonna be there but they aren't there. It creates a legacy. Some people in this room really struggle with controlling their attention. So they say, this is what we're gonna do, and we start a path. It's ten steps. They get four steps down. So their entire life is 40,000 paths made four steps instead of ten. They never finish anything. Some people, they struggle in controlling our thoughts and so we're given over to worry or maybe our tongue, things just lash out, words just come out and all of a sudden it hurts people and we wish that we'd just vent. Why can't I control my tongue?

Some people, maybe it's the spirit. They're just impulsive. They just act before they think and it just happens and it's like, oh, I wish I could just control my spirit. Another two seconds to think. What's interesting is what it says here is that we don't have to be a city without any walls to be at risk, you only need to be a city without part of a wall.

There's one little breach, the army can come in, destroy the whole thing. One little area of lacking self-control can bring about tremendous danger to our lives, tremendous and endless risk.

So, not only does lacking self-control lead to personal shame and endless risk, but it also leads to destructive addictions. Really destructive addictions.

Proverbs 18, this is what we read. It says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous man runs into it and is safe." And then there is some wisdom in verse eleven right after verse ten, and it says, "A rich man's wealth is his strong city," He's not running to the name of the Lord, he's running to his wealth, "And like a high wall in his imagination." So, what's happening here?

We have to understand that not everybody that lived in a city lived inside the wall, kay? It usually started that way, but eventually, even Jerusalem, is so full of homes that if someone else wanted to live there, they had to live on the outside of the wall.

And so, farms and farmers and other neighborhoods were outside of the wall, but anytime that the city as a whole was attacked, everybody on the outside of the wall would run inside of the wall. They'd shut the gates and they would be safe. But if that wall was ever breached, there was one other fortified place inside the city that people could run, and that was the tower. A fortified tower.

Now, in a moment, I want to show you how to run to God. But I want you to first notice the risk. And he highlights the risk in verse eleven, and that is when we're attacked the wise thing to do, the righteous person, runs to the name of the Lord and he finds in Christ a strong tower. However, many of us, actually all of us, we run to imaginary high towers.

Oh, there's still the risk and yet we turn to run and the wall is breached, and so what do we do? We run to a high tower and he says it's imaginary. He says for the rich man, it's his wealth. Oh, I can just stand behind my wealth. I can buy my way out of this problem. And that's one example of a imaginary high tower.

You see, the problem is when we run to an imaginary high tower as our ultimate source of security because it's imaginary. It doesn't work. It's not fortified. And what we find is imaginary high towers, they do two things. The first thing they do is they confuse our desires so we can't tell the different between what's urgent and what's important.

They both look the same and so we can discern one from the other. The second thing that happens when we run to an imaginary high tower is it creates addiction patterns. And I wanna show you how this works, okay? Now, I'm gonna show you a screen and your temptation, for those of your who are note-takers is to write the whole thing down, it's too much. You're not gonna listen to me, okay? I need attention here. I'm gonna talk and you're gonna want to write... Well, let's just do it. Okay? I don't know what's gonna happen here, okay?

This is life for every single one of us, okay? The first thing that happens is this, it's that we're under pressure. We get attacked. Okay? It may be your marriage right now. You feel under pressure. There's marital strife. It may be that you have been divorce. It may be you just lost your job. Something is happening, you look on the horizon, and suddenly you see an army racing toward you and you need something. You need a fortified place. You need a safe place.

Because we're all fallen and we keep running towards imaginary high towers instead of the high fortified tower, which is Jesus Christ. Number two is we run to these imaginary high towers. We turn and we run and go what's gonna keep me safe?

And so some people, in those problems of strife or maybe they're divorced or maybe they're just bored, or whatever it is, is they turn to the drink.

Or they turn to pornography. Or they turn to just making money. They say, you know what? I hate to come home because he or she is just always there and there's so much strife so I'm just gonna stay at work because when I make a lot of money I feel good about myself, it's the only time that I feel good about myself because I go home. Plus, if I'm at work, I'm not home and that's all the better because there's less strife so I'm just gonna work, work, work, and make as much money as possible.

It's that imaginary high tower.

For some people, they're overwhelmed so they turn the Xbox. Right? Four hours of Fortnite tonight. That's what I'm gonna do. I'm just gonna veg in front of the thing and see how many people I can shoot and ... It's the most popular game in the whole world right now. It's absolutely phenomenal, right? SO we run to these imaginary high towers, and this is what happens.

Number three is this imaginary high tower creates added pain to the pain we hoped it would alleviate. You see, if you're divorced, that's a problem and there's pain. If you turn to the bottle, now all of a sudden you're divorced and a drunk.

And that becomes double the pain. If we're looking for, if we're looking to an imaginary high tower to alleviate pain, it only creates more pain. Some people say, you know what? I got a terrible marriage so I'm gonna turn to pornography. Now all of a sudden they have a terrible marriage and there's an addiction to pornography. And that leads to the fourth thing that takes place, and that's this, that we run to the imaginary high tower even more often to escape both pains.

We just think, you know what? It's a quantity issue. I don't need one drink a night, I need ten. I don't need one affair. I need two. Now, here's the problem, anytime we turn to an imaginary high tower in order to alleviate one pain it only creates another pain, and now we have to keep going back to this imaginary high tower now to deal with both pains. Now we're stuck. That's called addiction.

Because now we don't even know what we're trying to solve. And so, my question is this: What is your high tower? We all have one. Something bad happened this week, right? To all of us. There's some disappointment, some loss, something, right? Just think of the worst thing that took place in your week, what did you do next?

Hopefully, I prayed to Jesus. If so, praise God, cause that's where we're going. But for most of us, that wasn't the first thing that we did. We turned to something. And what he's saying here is this, God reveals these dangers to us to protect us because He wants us to represent Him well in the world today, Providence.

And if we give ourselves over to imaginary high towers, it only creates pain, which creates more pain, which creates more pain. So what is that high tower? Well, there is really good news. You're like, this is the most discouraging finale of a series I've ever heard in my life, right? There's great news coming and that is this, I just told you how we get into addictions, now lemme tell you how we get out.

How do we control that tongue? How do we control our time? How do we control the impulses? How do we control all those urgent desires so that we live for the important, so that we can rewrite the script, so that the rest of our life people will say, you know what there was a time that this person was like this, but now, look what they became over the last 20 years of their life. Isn't that what we want? Every single one of us, we've all messed up. We all have a history. Everyone of us. And yet, God has hope for every one of us. So what does He do?

God invites us to run to Him for self-control. I want you to think about this for a second. Jesus comes, He dies on a cross, He rises from the dead, He says, if you trust me and my accomplishments, I will forgive you and fill you with my Spirit. And then, as you continue this relationship where you're following Me, where you're running to Me, and he calls it abiding, like a branch on the vine. He says that My Spirit will literally flow through you to produce new fruit in your life. He lists nine of them: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The person who abides by Jesus. What does that mean? They run to that fortified tower. They find the self-control that is needed to say yes to the important instead of the urgent. You see, our only hope, Providence, is to run to a high tower that's not imaginary. And the good news, the Bible says there is one.

But there's only one. We have the math problem, not the Bible. God says there is a way and there is one name, there is one person, there is one high tower, and our impulse says, "I want two!"

There is a high tower for you today. And it's big enough that all of us can run to, whether you know Jesus Christ or not, you can run to Him today. See, I hate to use this sentence because I actually thought about this a long time and if it's wrong, you just need to forgive me, right? Jesus, if you can say it this way, is the only addiction on the Earth that can lead to a healthier life.

He's the only one that you just wake up and you have to be with Him, that actually creates healthier relationships with everyone else in your life. It sustains you with greater peace and joy and contentment in your life. It's the only addiction that can do that, that can intensify the health of every other thing in your life, if He is your tower.

He says, "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous man runs into it and is safe." What's happening? You only run to that tower when you're being attacked. You notice he's not saying, hey, let's just meet at the tower. I'll tell you what, let's go play Frisbee golf, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll just meet there at 2. No.

We're running to this tower. Now the question is, how do we do it? How do you run to this tower? And I wanna frame that in three applications as we close. The first is this, let's tell ourselves the truth about God.

If you need to boil all these three down, it's truth, it's trigger, and it's pleasure. Number one, truth. Let's tell ourselves the truth about God. See, in the Bible, your name conveyed something about you. For example, Issac.

Issac was born, really, in pretty amazing circumstances. The Bible says of his parents, it says that the man "was as good as dead and she was barren." Okay? So, when the Bible says you're as good as dead, you're almost to heaven. It's close. They have no kids. God says, "You're gonna have a kid."

And they laughed. They're like, alright, yeah. That's good. That's a good one. I like that. They have a kid and they say, do you know what we should call him? He laughs. That's what Issac means.

And so, within the scriptures, everybody who has a name, there's a reason they had that name. And so, when it says that the Name of the Lord is a high tower, what is he saying? He's saying this, to run to the Name of the Lord is to remind yourself who God is. This is the Creator of the world, therefore He has Creator rights over my life. He has authority and He is the protector of my life, and He is the healer of my life, and the judge, and sustainer, and Lord of my life. When He says something, I must yield.

Cause He's Lord. It's to remind yourself forcefully who He is. Second, what He did. It's to remind yourself what He did. What did He do? He made a Promise after we sinned against Him to send us a rescuer and He made good on it by sending us His son. His son died for our sin, an agonizing death on a cross. And He rose from the dead. He did this for us. And so, in that moment of tension, when you have an urgent desire and there's an important desires, like, what are we gonna do? At that moment, we must tell ourselves forcefully who He is, what He did, but also what He promises.

I'll never leave you for forsake you. We sang a song last week, you guys remember it? Who You Say I Am. "I'm Chosen. I'm not forsaken. I'm more than a conquer. I'm forgiven. I'm a son. I'm a daughter. I'm a Peace-Maker." All these things that He says. Listen. We all have things that we think about ourself, but I want you to know that what He thinks about you is the truest thing about you.

It's the truest thing about us. And so, at that moment of tension, we must learn self-dialogue. And we also must learn group-dialogue. That's why we have Life Groups. That's why we serve together as a team because something when we forget to remind ourselves we need friends near us to say, "Hey, don't forget who He is."

“I know you’re going through a storm right now but don’t forget what He’s done for you. If He did that for you, He’ll also be with you and for you now.” You remember in Luke 8?

Luke 8, Jesus and His disciples, they’re on the water. They’re on a boat. He falls asleep. There’s a huge storm and the disciples lose their self-control and panic. They freak out. Jesus wake up, He rebukes the storm, it all turns totally calm. He looks at His disciples and says, “Where is your faith?”

What does that mean? Not, you don’t have any. He says, you have it, now where is it? Where are you keeping it right now? This is when you need it. You don’t need it when it’s sunny and 78. You need it when you lost your job. Now is the time. What He’s saying is, you’ve seen my power and heard my promises. Do you think this storm is the end of me and all that I’ve said? No.

And so, we have to learn this self-dialogue where we’re reminding ourself of the truth that we know, and so, important desires remain important and urgent desires remain small.

The second thing that must take place in our life, right? I said trigger is let’s part with the obvious triggers of our temptation.

And what does that mean? “The obvious triggers of our temptation.” Well, if you are literally on the precipice right now of doing something morally that’s gonna shame your name and the name of Jesus Christ, there are temptations in your life that would lead you to want to do that. And those temptations typically have a trigger. There’s something that frequently kinda goes off in your life that reminds you of that. It’s there again.

You see, every single one of us, we have to flee sinful imaginary high towers. Proverbs 27:12 says, “The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.”

So what does this look like? Well, for some people in this room right now think, you know what? I really have a struggle. I keep doing this and I feel like it’s gonna be made known.

And there’s a trigger in your life. For some here, it’s pornography. And the trigger is your cellphone or your computer. That’s the trigger. It’s always there. That’s the mechanism that it’s always happening. I’m always introduced by it through this way, this is where the temptation ... Every time I’m here, I get tempted. Jesus says, get rid of the here.

Really? Does He really say that? He does. In Matthew 5:29 He says, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.”

Now, this is a metaphor, okay? This is only a metaphor. We’re not supposed to actually do this. What is He saying? He saying this, how deeply do you not want to shame my name?

Some people say, well, that computer is my work computer. Get a new job. How deeply do you not want to shame your name and His? This is what He's talking about, eliminate the trigger. This is the only way to get rid of an addiction.

If you have an addiction to drink, you can't store it in a locked closet in your house. It's a trigger. It's there. And so, we need to tell ourselves the truth about God. We need to part with the obvious triggers of our own, personal temptations. And then there's a third.

And it's so important. And it's let's find in Christ a superior pleasure. You see, nobody can hear a truth long enough and eliminate enough temptations without also getting into the tower that isn't imaginary. You see, there is an expulsive power to superior pleasure.

And there's a lot of people that fight addictions for a long time, but if we do not find something that's more pleasant to our soul than whatever we wanted, we'll go back to it. We must find, in Jesus, a superior pleasure. And this is what he means, we run to Jesus Christ. You see, self-control is ultimately fueled by what we love. This is the story of Jacob and Rachel, isn't it?

He looks in love and says, I want to marry this girl. He goes and what would it take? He said, well, you gotta work seven years in these field. And he works for seven years. And they're unfair wages and it's hard, and it's hot, and it's dusty, and there's just animals. Can you imagine, seven years, how tired you would get of this? And it says, of those seven years, and it says, "And they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her."

It didn't feel like self-control because of love. It's what he wanted to do, so he was willing to make sacrifices that seemed like small sacrifices because of such a greater love that he had for Rachael. How do we run to God and do this? We run to Him in prayer and we say, God, I have desires in my heart that are confused.

More than anything, I want You to be the tower of my life, and so, I'm asking that You would help me to love You in such a way that seven years of faithfulness in this area of my life feels like just a few days.

And Providence, do you know why we can do this? It's because Jesus Christ exercised self-control in this same way. You see, we've seen, in these Proverbs, that when people were attacked, they ran into the city behind the wall, or into a fortified tower. But when Jesus went through His greatest turbulence of the cross, they sent Him out of the city. It represents separation, alienation for the People of God. Alienation from God the Father.

Why did He do this? He was run outta the city, away from God, so that we, who are far from God, could be brought into the city to have a relationship with God? And how did He get the self-control to endure such pain and agony and embarrassment and shame? How did he do it?

Hebrews 12:2 says, “Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.” The joy! What are you talking about, joy? But did you know there’s only one thing Jesus ended up with after the cross that He didn’t have before it, and it was us.

It was the Church. What does that mean? It means that Jesus is the true and better and greater Jacob. For some reason, we were His Rachel. He looked at the seven years of agony and says ... I shouldn’t say small, but it was manageable. Why? Because of His love for us.

Love in His heart motivated the self-control. And to the degree that we grasp that, Jesus will become like Rachel to us.

Seven and even seventy years of faithfulness will seem like just a few sacrifices of what we parted with, of what we gave up in order to be faithful to Him. And it’ll feel that way because of our love for Him. If you’ve never trusted Jesus Christ as your savior and Lord, you are exposed to a terrible risk. But today, you can see and sense that risk that you sin is separating you from God.

And you can run to this high tower called Jesus Christ. You can trust Him as your Savior, and He will forgive you of all of your sin. And Providence, for those of us who have already trusted Jesus, I want you to know that we, too, are at terrible risk.

Everyone of us has within us all that is necessary, within five minutes, to ruin every good thing in our life. But He is the high tower, and so I implore you to run to Him.

He’s safe.

Next week, we’re actually gonna begin a new series called “Follow Me.” What does it look like for Jesus to be the one that, we look at His footsteps? What does it look like in the world today to be His followers, but I pray that this series in Proverbs has been really encouraging and inspiring to you, and I pray that you would consider and apply to your life the things that we have studied, kay?

Let’s pray together. Father in Heaven, we thank You for Your amazing grace in our life. We thank You, Jesus, that You endured so much out of love. It’s hard for us to even imagine, but we thank You, God, that it’s true. We confess to You, God, all of our imaginary high towers, all the things that we run to, all the things that we lean on, to prop us up, that are apart from You, that cause even more pains within our life.

I pray this morning for those that do not know You, Savior and Lord. I pray that today would be the day that they look and turn their face to Jesus and trust Him for His accomplishments and believe upon what He did and who He is. I pray for those who are on the brink of moral disaster. Would You use this to pull them away from the edge? And I pray for every believer who is seeking to labor before You faithfully, and yet fighting temptation every day, would You use this to strengthen their hands, to continue to run? We love You so much, and as we now sing to You, and as we give to You, we pray, God, that turn the fire in our heart towards You, these resources, or that You would take the Gospel and propel it. Get it to the ends of the earth, where people need to hear that Jesus Christ is the high tower. And we pray this in Jesus's name, amen.



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