

James - Chapter 4

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[0 : 00] Well, we are continuing our consideration of James chapter 4, and we see surfacing just one more practical situation after another.

And such is the case as we're going to be dealing with this morning. And I am reminded once again of this powerful, powerful thing that God has granted to each of us called a volition, a human will. Sometimes I think that tends to be overlooked in light of the fact that God is sovereign, and that yet does not mean that we as His creatures in His image and in His likeness are not responsible. There are those who see the sovereignty of God as being so demanding and so overwhelming that human responsibility just doesn't count. Why? Because God is going to have everything His way anyway in the end.

It doesn't make any difference what you do or what you think or what you don't do. But the whole of Scripture screams a negative to that. We are responsible beings.

[1 : 12] That's the reason God has created us with a volition. And He did the same thing for angels. He gave angels volition as well.

Perhaps the principal difference is angels in their rebellion and in their falling fell individually. But with humanity, it was a corporate thing. Because humanity has a capacity to reproduce after itself and to pass on to each generation whatever that composition was of the parents. Angels apparently have fallen individually. There is no indication that angels interact sexually and produce little angels.

So what we've got is the difference there. But the important point is both groups, both entities, both created beings are responsible and accountable to God.

[2 : 12] And we see that surfacing once again right here in James chapter 4. And if you will look at verse 6, He gives greater grace.

Therefore it says God is opposed to the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. We talked a little bit about pride and humility and how disastrous the pride factor is. And then He goes on in verse 7 and says, Submit therefore to God.

That, fellas, is not a suggestion. It's not a recommendation. It's actually an imperative. And it is something that we are required to do.

Submit to God. And that implies you have the ability to do that. You also have the ability to not do that. So take your choice. And a lot of people, of course, make the wrong one.

Resist the devil. That's another expression of your volition. We can come back with, well, you know, I just don't have the ability. I'm weak. I'm this. I'm that. Something else. And the scriptures give the lie to that.

[3 : 16] And they say, no, you do have the ability to resist. Our problem is, and this is a problem that I have seen with myself. I sometimes get my, I can't's mixed up with my, I don't want to.

And if I say, if I say I can't, then I kind of feel like I'm a little off the hook. Because it's beyond me. You know, I wish I could.

I would if I could. But I can't. So therefore, I'm just not all that responsible. Well, nice work if you can get it. But in the final analysis, it just won't fly.

And in our heart of hearts, we know that that's just not true. I don't know if I told you or not, maybe I did years ago, my little story about trying to kick the cigarette habit.

I was a two-pack-a-day guy for a few years, especially when I was in the Army. And you could go to the PX and get a whole carton of cigarettes for a buck. And by the end of the month, we were bumming cigarettes from each other because everything had run out.

[4 : 25] But shortly after I became a believer, which was in December of 56, I started thinking about the smoking. And you know, my wife, bless her heart, she never once criticized my smoking.

I know she never smoked and she didn't particularly like it. But she grew up in a family of smokers. And back then, you know, in the 50s, everybody smoked. And she never nagged me about it, never urged me to quit or anything like that.

But after I came to know the Lord, I remember just reasoning one day, you know, this body of mine belongs to the Lord.

It probably isn't a good idea to make a fire at the end of this thing that creates smoke, smoke, and put that smoke inside my body.

That's probably not a good way to take care of my body. And I never, this was, this, guys, this was long before the Surgeon General said anything. And I decided that I was going to quit.

[5 : 31] So I told my wife, okay, I'm going to give you 10 cigarettes in the morning. And you ration those out to me during the day when I want one.

And no matter what I do or say, once the 10th one is gone, you don't give me any more. And she said, okay, if that will help you, I'll be glad to do that.

I'll try to help you. And so after about three days of that, and I don't know how many fights we had, she said, I'm just holding you to what you said.

And I said, I know I said that, but I'm desperate now. I need a cigarette. And, you know, and finally she got her spunk up one morning and she said, here is your whole pack, your whole pack of 20 cigarettes.

She said, I'm not going to do this anymore. If you want to quit, you quit. And if you don't, you don't. But leave me out of it. And I said, well, okay.

[6 : 34] So we were down at the beach one day. This was when we were in Washington State in Seattle. And we were at the beach for a picnic or something. We were coming back. And I just opened up this fresh pack of Lucky Strikes.

And I was just ready to put one in my mouth. And I had, I had a thought. I don't know where it came from. But it was, it was this.

Wiseman, you could quit these things if you really wanted to. And here I am arguing with myself if I really wanted to.

What do you mean? If I really wanted to. Of course I want to. And it was almost like another voice was speaking to me and said, no, you don't. You've just been conning yourself all along.

You told yourself that you want to quit, but you can't. For you. And that was my wake up moment.

[7 : 36] And you know what? I took that pack that I'd just taken one cigarette. Hadn't even lit it yet. Hadn't even lit it. Was just reaching for the cigarette lighter in the car. And I took that cigarette.

And I took that pack of Lucky's. Brand new pack of Lucky's. And I just squeezed it. Crushed it in my hand. Opened the window. And threw out the whole pack.

And I don't mind telling you, the next two weeks was tough. The next two weeks was tough.

But, and it seemed like everywhere I went, people were smoking. Place where I worked, everybody was smoking. And it all seemed to blow it in my direction, you know. But, that was, that was the last cigarette I had.

And, and I learned a really valuable lesson. And that is this. You can justify and rationalize in your own mind just about anything you want to.

[8 : 40] And that's a scary thing to realize. But it's true. We all have that ability. Because we're all looking for a way out. So that we don't look bad. And we can get off the hook.

And it's not my fault. It's somebody else's fault. And that's just a cop out. That's all it is. And we're, we're, we're all prone to that. So, when it comes to submitting therefore to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. For the person who says, well, I wish I could do that. But I'm just so weak I can't do that. Baloney. Baloney. Baloney. Get your don't want to and your can'ts straightened out.

Because that's often what it boils down to. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. That too is not a suggestion. It's telling you that's something that you need to do.

And, by the way, guys. All of this business of resisting the devil and submitting to God and exercising. It is all in your own best interest.

[9 : 41] That's the thing that's also puzzling. What God commands us to do is always for our own good. God is so intent on looking out for you and your best interest.

And we sometimes fight against him. It's amazing. And you can use the analogy of the parent with the three-year-old child. And the principle is the same.

You know what the child wants. They want to complete liberty to do this or do that or eat this or eat that. And it's your responsibility as a parent to look out for the best interest of that child. Because he really doesn't know what's best for him or what's good. He only knows what he wants. But we are supposed to be the ones with the information and with the truth and the perception. So that we are really looking out for his best interest. And when you take that thing away from him and he cries and sobs just like you wounded him deeply.

[10:59] And those tears are tears of anger and rejection towards you and disappointment and all the rest. And they don't have a clue that you are the one in charge and you're really doing it for their own good.

But all they can think of is you're depriving me of something that I want and something that I need. And the only difference between the parent and the child and the individual and God is the distance is a lot greater.

And there's usually a lot more at stake. So if we could just keep that in mind. That's coming up here. And it ties in with something that he's going to be talking about a little later on.

And we'll get to that in just a moment. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded.

Wish I could but I can't. Oh yes you can too. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into joy and your joy to gloom. That's when the situation that you are confronting is the reality of your own sin and your own weakness.

[12:10] That's nothing to be happy about. But there is a happy result if we follow the prescription here. It will be turned around the way it ought to be. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he will exalt you.

There again it's your volition. We are not told to pray and ask God to humble us. We are told to humble ourselves.

And the principal way that we humble ourselves is preferring others better than ourselves or ahead of ourselves.

That too is a thing that defies the human ego because we don't want to do that. After me you come next. That's the philosophy.

My three favorite people are me, myself and I. And that's the selfish bug that is in our genetics. And it is automatic.

[13:14] And you don't have to contend to realize it. You have to contend in order to fight it. We've all got that natural tendency of putting ourselves first.

And the way we humble ourselves is by putting others first. Someone has said, I don't recall who it was, but it was a great saying, is you can always tell the measure of a person or the measure of a man by how he treats people who are not in a position to do anything for him.

So that there's no tinge of manipulation there or expectation. But very often it is, I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine.

We expect something in return. How are we going to treat people? How are we going to relate people who have nothing to offer us in return? We're often on the lookout for those who are in a position to do something for us.

And to them, we want to be especially attentive. But that's the exact opposite of what he's talking about here. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord. And he will exalt you.

[14:28] Remember the illustration our Lord gave about when you are invited to a great feast? The tendency is to want to sit in the position of honor next to the guest of honor and be elevated in a position where everybody can see you.

And Jesus said, that's not the proper way to go about it. What you are to do is to seat yourself in a lesser position. And then, if it be the case, let the host or who is in charge come to you and say, we would appreciate it if you would come up here and sit with us.

Then they are exalting you. You're not exalting yourself. That's the principle that's given. Is it a good maxim to maybe let others toot your horn?

Instead of being so intent on tooting it ourselves? And sometimes we take the position, well, if I don't toot my horn, nobody else will.

Well, maybe it's a horn that needs to be untuted. We just get so confused and mixed up in this. And the reason we do is because we all naturally put self first.

[15 : 46] That's what comes natural. And what God is calling us to is the supernatural. For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give himself a sacrifice for all.

Was there anyone that was more worthy of being ministered unto, and yet his chief concern was ministering to others? And you know, a number of people have discovered this, that the real joy, the real satisfaction that so many are seeking is not inward, it's outward.

And it is remarkable, the sense of joy, satisfaction, fulfillment, that can come from ministering to others.

And as one who's been trying to do this for who knows how many years, I have been amazed at how many times I have made efforts to meet the needs of or minister to someone else, and the payback that came from that, completely unexpected, always seemed to kind of put me on the receiving end.

And that's not what I intended. But there is a joy in giving, and I'm not talking about money, but in giving of oneself, there is a joy in that, the payoff of which is inexpressible.

[17 : 35] And I know my brethren who've been in the ministry and the pastor for years, like Tad and myself, can attest to that. But the phrase our Lord used, it's more blessed to give than to receive, hey guys, that is not just a saying.

That's really true. It really is. Now, unfortunately, most people never put it to the test. But it is true. There is a joy in giving that outweighs that of receiving.

And it is remarkable sometimes what just kind of turns around and comes back in a positive way, in a way that you never dreamed of or never expected. But that's the way the Lord works things.

And it's just amazing. And the crowning example that our Lord gave by way of illustration was at that last supper when He girded Himself with a towel and began to wash the disciples' feet, which was a servant's task.

When you came to the home of your host and you were there at His invitation for a meal or for an evening, very often, particularly people with beans, they had hired servants.

[18 : 55] And the servant's responsibility was to wash the feet of the guests. And that's something with which we just cannot identify because we just have a different culture.

But back then, everybody wore the open sandals and there were no concrete brick streets or sidewalks or anything like that. Everyone walked on the soil on the dirt.

And there was always dust and everything. And you'd get into sandals and make your feet dirty.

And it was always refreshing. And an act of necessary hospitality.

When you came to a home like that, you would sit down and the servant would come over with a basin and a towel. And you'd put your feet in it. And they'd wash your feet. Very soothing, very relaxing, and very appropriate under that custom.

And here Jesus was taking the place of a servant. And he was washing the feet. And he was supposed to be and was the host of the affair.

[20 : 00] And here is the man who was running the whole thing, acting in the role of a servant. And when he came to Peter, remember, Peter said, I can't handle this.

I just, you're, I cannot allow you, the Lord of all, to wash my feet. And the Lord said, well, and actually, Peter was exhibiting a kind of rejection or rebellion to the Lord's authority there and what he was trying to do.

And he said, well, if that's the case, Peter, then you don't have any part in me. And he said, oh, no, no, I don't, I don't mean that. If that's the case, wash my whole body, everything.

See, he was all in. So, Peter, Peter is a unique case in so many ways. But the Lord made his point.

And the point that was being made is one that we all need to adopt.

And that Philippians 2 passage, let this mind, let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form or equal with God, he did not consider that exalted position something to be cling to, at all costs, but he relinquished that.

[21 : 24] He left that exalted position behind and he took upon him the form of a man. And as a man, he became a servant. And as a servant, he humbled himself and became obedient.

And not just obedient to death, but to obedient in the death of the cross. Therefore, therefore, God hath also highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

There is a marvelous principle there of the way God's way up is down. That's the way he works.

And you know what? That's just one more instance in which God's ways are different from man's ways. Almost everything that we do by way of motivation and function, etc., God does it in the opposite way.

So, when these two boys, James and John, are arguing, they're anticipating the kingdom is coming. It's going to be really soon. And when Jesus gets to Jerusalem, things are going to start hopping and boy, it's going to be wonderful.

[22 : 46] And James and John turn to each other, these sons of thunder, and they say, we are going to be in position for some of the highest offices in the kingdom.

I mean, maybe one of us on the right hand and one on the left hand. what would that be? It would be an attorney general position and secretary of state or something to that effect, you know, and they're quibbling and arguing over that.

And they even get their mother in the fact, into the act, because, you know, every mother's concerned about her boys doing well. And she sidles up to Jesus on the side and she said, I'd just like to, you know, my sons, they've been very loyal to you, haven't they?

And I know that you would like to reward them. And I think it would be just a wonderful thing. I would be so proud if you could make them one on your right hand, one on your right hand. And our Lord said, well, that's an inappropriate request, you know.

And he said, listen, he who would be chiefest among you, let him be servant of all.

[23 : 59] That's the total, exact opposite of the way humanity operates. But that's the way God operates. And if we can adopt that servant spirit, servant attitude, and here's the point, if you really, really want to look out for your own best interest, put others first.

And I'm not saying that that's a tool of manipulation. I'm saying that's a tool of procedure that God has ordained. Joe? Doesn't the military kind of use that philosophy too?

Don't they teach their officers to really take care of their men? Oh yeah. Put your men first. They use that. Absolutely. Absolutely. And that's the principle that every officer worth his salt knows that. And the thing that endears the underlings to their officer in charge is their knowledge and understanding and seeing that officer in charge demonstrate his real concern is for the benefit and the welfare of his men, of his troops under him.

That's what it means to be in charge. It means to take responsibility for the needs of others and so often the being in charge means that you just get to bark the orders and make everybody else jump when you say jump and that's not the way leadership works.

[25 : 37] That's not the way leadership works. And some of you with a military background can experience that, have experienced that. You know what we're talking about. Verse 11, Do not speak against one another, brethren.

He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

Now you can see here in James, this is just one more place where the legal restrictions requirements surface again and again as you would expect under the rubric of the Mosaic law.

And that's how James is operating because he is one of those Christian Hebrew epistles that is still functioning under the Old Testament economy.

That's where all of these epistles belong. Yet they are fraught with all kinds of examples and illustrations and applications for us today.

[26 : 42] When we speak against one another, you know, it's a well, it's a common tendency of course to be critical of others and the things that we see others do.

and one of the most overworked and ill-used verses in all the Bible is that in the Sermon on the Mount was judge not lest you be judged.

And people use that as a basis for refusing to agree with or being critical of anything that goes on anywhere.

Well, you know, we shouldn't judge. We shouldn't judge. Well, it is true. It is true. We are often all too quick to judge and sometimes we judge with a bare minimum of facts involved and we reach a conclusion that is not justified and it's called rushing to judgment where we think we see the situation and we take a position only to discover later on oh, well, gee, I didn't know that.

I didn't know that. And a whole lot of things that we don't know can explain sometimes why somebody did or did not do the things they did but very often we're not willing to cut them any slack.

[28 : 10] We rush to judgment and we're eager and quick to condemn. And you know where this takes place? Perhaps most often which should be the last place which it would ever take place is in a marriage.

In a marriage. There can be a tendency to be critical and judgmental of our mate and they didn't do this right or they didn't do that right or this or that or something and instead of that loving disposition that kindly disposition that phrase you know that love overlooks all ills sometimes we forget that and we can be quick to criticize and quick to find fault and when we do it is it's debilitating.

Joe? Because a lot of time in that situation that person was actually trying to do the best thing for their mate. Very often, yeah. They were trying to do and the mate just interpreted it all wrong.

Yeah. Because you know that's happened to me in my marriage. That's probably happened to all of us, yeah. You get criticized for something and oh man I was trying to do the right thing. Yeah, that's true.

Here I did the wrong thing. And then when you find out when you find out that you really blew it big time you feel like a heel and you deserve to because you had it coming.

[29 : 37] You know it's so easy to just be critical and jump on this or jump on that and very often we just don't have all the facts we don't know and if we did it'd be an entirely different thing but again and we see this so often today in our culture big time where the public reaction is very swift and often very wrong and a whole lot of damage can be done lives can be lost and futures ruined because people thought they knew what they were doing and the basis they had for doing it and they were totally wrong but you'll very very seldom find any meaningful apology and by the way how many times how many times do we see in the media where they really got it wrong big time and you know what they usually do about it they just slough it off very very seldom very seldom will you ever see anything like a genuine apology given by a newspaper or magazine or TV anchor or whatever folks we have an apology to make because we said thus and so and thus and so and we were really wrong we misinterpreted the facts we'll try to be more diligent in the future please forgive us for that boy

I've never seen that I've never seen that the tendency is just ignore it put your head down bull on through and hope that they just forget it and that's the way the world operates but that's not the way we are supposed to operate we are called to a supernatural standard not a natural standard and that supernatural standard is something that God has equipped us to meet it isn't again it isn't as though well it's beyond my ability I'm too weak I don't have the strength blah blah blah no no no sometimes and let me tell you I remember this illustration it was in a movie and it spoke to me so powerfully it was the bird band of Alcatraz you may have seen that movie Burt Lancaster played the part of this felon who was in for life and he developed this thing about birds it became a real recognized authority on birds and this one time he was asking something for from this guard for some kind of a device or something to help him in what he was doing and he was just real surly and really nasty with this guard and the guard as much as told him to go fly a kite and turned him down you know and and chewed him out for his ingratitude and everything and in the movie Burt Lancaster really really got to him the way that it affected this guard and and and and he did something that was so unlike him in his character that he was playing in that role and when the guard came around next time he humbly apologized to him and asked his forgiveness for his surly rotten attitude and the guard was so impressed he was almost he was just stunned he couldn't believe that this guy was actually taking responsibility apologizing for his bad behavior and attitude and in the next scene it showed the guard came by with the very device that he had requested and it was the apology that paved the way but you know there there is even a downside to that some could look upon that as the apology was just a manipulation just to get what he wanted but the way it was set forth it appeared to be really genuine and fellas

I don't think there is anything in relationships whether it's in a marriage or in a family or in a community in a school setting or in a workplace I don't think there is anything that is so powerful as someone saying you know less and so less and so I was really wrong about that I shouldn't have done that I shouldn't have said that if I had to do over again I'd certainly not do it or do it differently and it's my bad and I want to take responsibility for that I was out of line that was my fault and I really appreciate you forgiving me and sometimes the response is stunned silence they can't believe you're saying that they can't believe you're doing that the power of an apology and a request for forgiveness is stunning and one reason is because it's so seldom done it comes as such a surprise to the person you're apologizing to and it's worthless if it isn't genuine and it can be

used just as a tool of manipulation

I can apologize for something simply because I'm manipulating that person because I want something else or something from them down the road and that's a devious deceitful thing but a genuine apology is priceless and it is something it's a it's a high priced commodity and you know the biggest reason we don't do it is because we don't like to acknowledge we were wrong we were out of line there again it's an ego thing it's an ego thing and we're all we're all cursed with this ego thing but the spirit of God will empower you if the will and the volition is there to make it right and call it eating humble pie or eating crow or whatever but it can be the most important thing we've ever done and it could take a lot of different venues too so he who speaks against the brother judges his brother speaks against the law judges the law if you are a judge you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it there is only one law giver and judge the one who is able to save and to destroy but who are you to judge your neighbor and that's a that doesn't mean that we're not supposed to hold each other accountable and we are to judge and our

[37 : 07] Lord said in the gospels that we are to judge with righteous judgment and it doesn't mean that you're never supposed to make a decision or arrive at a judgment because we're told that we're going to judge angels and Paul rebuked the congregation at Corinth for not judging a brother who was living immorally with his stepmother and he took them to task because they were supposed to render discipline on his behalf and listen question is do you really care enough about somebody to level with them do you care enough about somebody to tell them the truth if you see a brother that you're really concerned about and he is going in a wrong direction do you care enough about him to take him aside and say can we talk something is going on here and I'm really concerned about you in this situation and this hey this is this is ticklish business it's it's not an easy thing to do

J. Adams years ago published a book called Newfetic Counseling and the word Newfeto comes from Romans 14 and it means that you Paul wrote to the Romans and he said I'm thankful that you are able that you are able and willing to confront one another hold the brethren responsible this is the basis for church discipline which is virtually unheard of today but it is a biblical concept and it is born out of a genuine love and care for the brethren and you would hope or at least you should hope you should hope that if you were one who kicked over the straces and are going in the wrong way that somebody would care enough about you to bring it to your attention and to talk to you about it that's what real love does but so often we chicken out and we say oh well you know none of us is perfect and we've all got problems we've all got things growing in our own backyard who am I to confront someone else and it needs to be done in the right way and it needs to be done lovingly and compassionately and not judgmentally or angry but it needs to be done and it's a lost art it isn't perhaps very much at all anymore yes Don the thing about that though what you haven't said if I do something like that to you I don't want to lose your friendship and that might be happening if I do this to you so I ignore it yeah yeah I think that's part of the big thing it is it is it's a way it's a way it's a cop out it's a way of avoiding our responsibility and it's also a way of not suffering a loss like you talked about in the friendship you know and it's it's a devious kind of thing but it's it's an important principle that is one that is virtually ignored or overlooked by the Christian community today and it's too bad and another reason we've got a cultural difference here because you've got to keep in mind that in the biblical setting in almost all of these congregations these people not only worshiped and fellowshiped together on a weekly basis but they lived together all week long they were in the same community nobody was driving 15 miles to get the church they all lived in the same area they interacted with each other all week long saw each other to marketplace children all played together it was a real community thing but today with our culture and transportation being what it is we're just flung and scattered all over the place and we very often never even see each other except on a weekly basis at church and then it's just hi how are you doing shake hands and goodbye and that's the extent of it and we are the poorer of it for it too yeah okay and then verse 13 come now you who say today or tomorrow this is a different principle altogether we shall go to such and such a city spend a year there engage in business and make a profit yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow you are just like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away instead what you ought to say is if the Lord wills we shall live and also do this or that and out of this principle here

I have capitalized on a little saying it's not original with me I don't know who said it originally probably probably a couple thousand years ago but it's true nonetheless and it's this disappointments are his appointments can you believe that disappointments are his appointments

it's nothing but the Romans 828 principle worked out in one statement God does work all things together for good for those who love him you as a believer are in a win-win situation but we so often don't believe that we lose sight of that and it turns into a pity party why me what did I do to deserve this how come God isn't looking out for me like he does for others where's my miracle when I need it and on and on and on and we lose sight of the fact that God really does know what he's doing even when it hurts and hurts a lot just about all of us here can speak some kind of experience from that and when the going gets tough it's very very hard to believe that God is in control certainly this thing has gotten by him

God's not aware of what's going on in my little corner of the world I don't deserve this and I've prayed and why hasn't God answered and why hasn't he done thus and so and these are all typical human responses and they are all from the flesh and we lose sight of the fact that Job's dear wife she reached her breaking point early and she she couldn't there's no indication there's no indication that she was personally suffering except through her husband Job who was suffering a lot but there's no indication that she was afflicted with boils or anything like that and yet the woman being the wife that she was being a caring mate that she was she couldn't stand seeing her husband like that going through that and she retaliated to God just Job just get it over with curse God and die and she thought she was offering a palliative for him and this man had the spiritual moxie to come back and say you're speaking like a foolish woman ought not we who have received good things from the Lord also receive adversity from the

[45 : 01] Lord honey the Lord has given and the Lord has taken away blessed be the name of the Lord can we do that if you can do that and you know it's not a first reaction the first reaction is the pity party what did I do to deserve this why does where is God when you need him why doesn't he come through for me where is my miracle and we read about miraculous instances that other people have but it doesn't happen to me God has forgotten about me this is the typical response and it's just our fallen humanity that is speaking but if we can collect our thoughts and remember what we already know and recall it when Barbara was dying I was cradling her in my arms nurse says you can get right up there in the bed and hold her if you want and boy

I did and you know something I could not bring myself to ask God to spare her don't you think for a moment that wasn't what I wanted but I just could not do it all I could think of was wow God gave me this incredible woman for almost 50 years now I'm just giving her back to him with thanksgiving and some of you can identify with what I'm talking about and those of you who can't just wait just wait because these times are coming for all of us appointed unto man once to die and that's true of all of us and here is where perspective means everything everything if you can see if you can see your adversity through being filtered through loving fingers of your heavenly father who really does know what he's doing and he really does understand what you're feeling and what you're experiencing and it really does matter to him if you can just collect yourself to believe that it'll strengthen your confidence and your faith in him and it will increase your appreciation index for who God is and what he does and he does all things well does all things well Dan my life struggle with this in this respect it's much lighter than what we talked about here but for example I'm going to buy a new car I'm looking for a car different car but God will bring the car to me and then you use the term volition God gives us to make these decisions like you should guide the decisions I have I'm having trouble with distinguishing that does that make sense is that you know where does God come in or where is our decision utilizing us okay that's a good question and it's a good situation to discuss and I think what it boils down to is from a human standpoint we ought to exhaust our efforts to bring to pass the thing that we think needs to be done we ought to do all that is within our power to do it and when you've done that then you just back off and say alright

Lord I've done all that I know to do rest is up to you and we can do that and I saw this played out with our daughter Dawn Elizabeth she was a special needs child and she sometimes had 15 seizures in one day grand mall seizures and as a parent you just stand by absolutely helpless you just here is this child thrashing around and you've got to get your finger in her mouth and get her tongue in place so that she doesn't cut off her air supply with her tongue and this could be in a public place like she had seizures right here the colliers when we were having a meal and of course everybody is excited people are ready to call the squad and everything and they don't know we've been through this so many times you know and Barbara and I were faced with the response what do we do well we do everything that we responsibility as parents to do what we can to resolve the situation and when you've done that then that's the time when you realize you cannot go any

further there's nothing more you've exhausted all the avenues and if you hear of a new one you take it but when you no longer hear of new avenues it is just a rest a trust a commitment and God will have to do what he knows is best because you've exhausted all of your options and you don't know what else to do so it's kind of like it's kind of like you you take responsibility for what you are responsible for you you don't shirk it you you exhaust all of your avenues you take responsibility and when you fulfilled your responsibility then you just rest in it relax in it trust the Lord he really knows what he's doing and and you know there is there is real spiritual growth and stability to be realized through that and that's really that's that's the end game it is what what God wants to do is to conform us to the image of his son and he doesn't do that mainly in the sunshine he does it in the shadows and that's where it hurts but that's where the benefit is and question is can you believe that is God worthy of your trust is he worthy of believing that's the difference hey guys enjoy your breakfast thank you for being here this morning

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