
Aaron

Alright. He's not leaving, so you can breathe a sigh of relief. That was fun though. Hey, good morning to everyone. I want to welcome everyone across all of our campuses and those of you online.

For those of you who may not know, this is Ryan Bramlett. Ryan is our Downtown campus pastor. Give it up for Ryan. And Ryan we, here at the beginning of the year, have made an adjustment to his title and his role here that we just are excited about. We wanted to make the entire church aware of it as well.

Ryan is going to continue to lead our Downtown campus, but in addition to that we're also tacking on to his job description the title of Teaching Pastor. And that just means that he's going to continue to share the preaching load around here. He's going to be working with content development across all of our teams. And this really affirms Ryan's calling, Ryan's gifting—but even more importantly, his character. This is the first time we've ever had a teaching pastor position in our church and Ryan has the character for it.

And I just want you to know how much I love this guy. It's been amazing for me to watch the work that God has done in his life. Many of you know his story because he's shared it from this platform before. But he came at the invitation of his wife. He was not a follower of Jesus. He came somewhat skeptically, a little bit guarded. I can remember in his first few years he sat right over there.

I have a tendency to find the people who listen really well, or at least pretend like they are listening really well. And I just look at them. And Ryan would sit over there, and he would nod his head a lot, and he would take notes and I was like, "Man, who is that guy?" And I got the privilege of crossing paths and getting to know him. And just to see the work that God is doing in his life is just simply remarkable.

I've said this to Ryan in private and I want to say it publicly. He has a gift that you just can't teach, but he's teachable and that's pretty special. And so I'm excited for him and I want to pray over Ryan and then I'm going turn him loose to rip it here today.

Father, we come to you right now and I thank you for this man. I thank you for the work that you've done in his life. It's remarkable. And it's humbling. And it's exciting. And I'm even more excited about the future ahead, to be able to run with Ryan, to be able to do this with him—it's just really exciting.

God, I thank you for the health of our church, that there is no competition, we know who we are—we're flawed human beings and you've chosen to use us as your mouthpiece and that's

all that we are. We give you all of the glory for it. We pray that your name would be exalted higher through our proclamation. And, God, I pray that you would be with Ryan's family—his wife, Stephanie and their beautiful children Kampbell, Rhys, and Vaeda. God, we just thank you so much for them. And we just pray that today they would feel the love from our church family as he steps into this new role and calling, that he's equipped and gifted for. And so we ask this right now in Jesus' name: Amen.

Hey, could you give it up for our Teaching Pastor, Ryan Bramlett?

Ryan

Second time, but when we rehearse it you guys aren't here. That makes it a whole lot different. But, thank you so much. Some of you know—he told a little bit of my story, but just to know how many things had to happen for today to happen is just wild. And Aaron is right. I did use to sit right over there and then he baptized me right over there and my life was completely and forever changed.

There are so many moments that we could go back to, but I just want to circle back to one, just to give you an idea of how wild this really is. It was 2012—eight years ago. It was before I was ever on staff here. I sent Aaron an email. I sent Aaron an email that I almost did not send. I wrote it and then I just put it down. I saved it in my drafts. I was like, "I don't know." And all I wanted to do is to just encourage him and let him know that his teaching was completely wrecking me.

And I went back and forth and finally I just sent the email. And me sending the email and what he did with the email completely changed the rest of my life. So I just want to show you this clip. Take a look at the screen.

Aaron on Video

Revelation is the revealing of Jesus Christ. I can't say that enough. I got this email a couple of weeks ago from somebody in our church and I wanted to read it to you because he communicates this thought so well, just in his own words.

He said, "Hey, Aaron. Reading Revelation, or least attempting to, before we jumped into this sermon series has been eye opening, to say the least, as I see a clear picture of the imagery that explodes from the pages of Revelation.

"I think that a lot of people label Revelation with the same stereotype that I certainly gave to the church as a whole before I ever attended one. Simply put, I saw the church as not worth it. I didn't see the relevance of it. All I could see from the outside in was the craziness. I couldn't see past the warfare and the bias and the misinterpreted descriptions that had been leaked into my brain." He's talking just about the reputation of the church at large.

"Nothing outside the church could have ever shown me what the church was. I believe the same thing could be said of Revelation. Looking from the outside in, things seemed blurred

and distorted. But reading through the entire book of Revelation has enabled me to focus on Jesus.

“I saw this connection, here recently, becoming clear as my wife was telling me about a conversation that she had with another woman in town who attends another church regularly. She told her that our church was currently going through a series on Revelation, and she said, ‘Why would they do a series on Revelation before Christmas?’” Because that’s how we roll is why. No, that’s stupid.

Okay, “So her reaction to Revelation was one of death, destruction, dark imagery and the end of the world, not a revelation of Jesus, not a revelation of his control and plan of the ending of the world, not a revelation of the beautiful description of heaven.”

Listen to this, I love how he said this. I wish I would have said it this way, “Somehow the negative is enhanced, and the message is missed. Our focus is taken off of Jesus before he ever gets a chance to be revealed.”

End Video

Ryan

One—can we celebrate how well this man has aged? He’s really moving in the right direction.

The fact that I wrote that email and that he read it from this stage, that was unbelievable. But there was a line in that, and you probably didn’t catch it, but I’ll never forget it. As he was reading that email, he said, “I love the way he said this. I wish I would have said it like this.”

That moment eight years ago was the first time in my life that I ever thought maybe God could use me to preach, maybe God had given me something that was worth saying. And it completely changed the trajectory of my life.

Aaron, I just want to thank you, man, for believing that I had something to say that was worth sharing and for believing that I still do. Can we just give it up for that man right now? For the man that he is, the leader that he is, the preacher that he is?

Where do we go from here?

So today, today we’re in this series called *FOBO*. And what that stands for is:

Fear Of Better Options

And maybe you’ve heard the term FOMO, fear of missing out, so the same guy coined both phrases.

And here’s the big idea behind FOBO. It’s where we get locked into a world of maybes where nothing seems clear and we’re constantly searching for that perfect answer or that perfect way

or that perfect spouse, and in the meantime, instead of just making a decision or moving, making a little bit of progress, we just stop and halt everything. And everything stops, we become paralyzed by fear.

And what we're going to look at today is kind of how those fears of better options find their way into our relationships, specifically around two big things. One: How do I find the one? And then: How do I keep the one? How do I find this one person who I'm going to spend the rest of my life with and then how do I stay committed to them even in the midst of all of the fears and the worries and questioning if they are the one?

And before we get jumping into the text and rolling today, I just want to take a moment and just acknowledge the room. There are so many people here in different places, from everyone here at Northwest and all of the campuses, who are in different spots when it comes to relationships.

Some of us are in the best relationships of our lives. You walked in here holding hands with your girlfriend or your spouse or you just looked at your boyfriend and you said, "I love you." No reason, just I love you. And then you guys got up there and you were pouring each other's coffee and you were putting the sugar in for each other and you were rubbing noses and we saw you and we didn't like you out there and we don't like you in here.

No. There are people all over the place. There are people who just came in here after a break up, after a divorce. There are people here today who are here because of an ultimatum, as a last-ditch effort to keep your relationship together. There are so many things going on and with so many open wounds and fresh wounds any talk on relationships...

Maybe right now you've already started to sit back in your seat and you're like, "This one is not for me." Can I ask you to lean in though instead? Even in the pain, even when you're thinking, "I don't know if this has anything for me." And it's not because I believe that I have something incredible to say, it's because God's word is powerful, and God usually speaks at the times when we least expect him to show up. So would you lean in and give me grace as I walk through some really tough situations? You guys with me on that?

Alright, so let's dive right in. How do I find the one? And we're going to kick this off by looking at Ephesians, chapter 5, starting in verse 31. This is kind of like a big summary of marriage from a Christian worldview. Look at this.

It says, "As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.'"

So that's kind of like the big umbrella of when we get to this idea of how do I find the one? How do I find the one who I'm going to spend the rest of my life with? Over the years, especially in our culture today, we've kind of shifted that to this idea of a soul mate. How do I

find this perfect person for me who is out there? Where we would just match up perfectly and everything is going to be great, how do I find that person?

And where we are right now, with technology and dating apps and social media, it can really feel like maybe we can find this perfect person. We scan thousands of people and we either swipe left or right—like, “Nope, don’t like you,” mostly base upon their face. Like, “You’re not the one.” Or, “You might be the one.” Or, “Definitely not the one.” And we go through this idea thinking that if we just look hard enough, and we wait long enough, then we will find this perfect person.

And maybe that’s where you are right now. Maybe you’re sitting there going, “How do I find this perfect person, can you tell me?” I’m going to tell you. And I know it’s early in the sermon and you’re like, “Wow, this is really good. All the way—just getting right to it.”

Here it is. And don’t go sharing it with people. This is from me to you, alright? Here it is though: How do I find the one? How do I find my soul mate? Are you ready?

You can’t
You won’t
You haven’t

You can’t. There is no perfect person out there for you. You won’t. It doesn’t matter how long you wait. And you haven’t, and you don’t need to nudge the person next you and let them know how not perfect they are right now.

Let’s just process for a moment and show all of the fears that this idea can even bring into your life, this idea of a soul mate, that there is one person out of the more than 7 billion people on this planet and it’s your job to find him or her. Like somehow you’re just going to be going through life, you’re on the subway, and then out of nowhere music starts and you just start drifting toward him or her, and then you find yourself leaned up against him or her, “How are you?” It’s not going to happen. We live in Indiana. We don’t even have a subway system, for one.

So just let go of this idea and think about what it’s like to be on the other side of those eyes, when you feel like you’re competing against 7 billion other people. There are all of these better options out there. No wonder first dates are filled with lies and dating profiles are filled with lies. You feel like you’re competing against everyone.

And this idea of a soul mate, it’s not from the Bible. The idea of a soul mate goes back to at least the ancient Greeks. And the idea was that the gods created man and woman as one, but then right before they were born the split them in half and it was your job to find your other half to make you whole.

But that’s not the picture that we get from Ephesians. In Ephesians it says that two become one, not two halves become whole, which is a very different thing. It’s one that we need to start with and just be foundational, because if we’re looking for someone to be our soul mate,

meaning you are going to fulfill me, you are going to complete me—that weight, giving someone the weight of carrying your soul, it will crush them. No one is able to sign up for that. No one can hold on to that weight—at least not here on this planet.

Maybe your thinking, “Okay, if there is no soul mate, if there is no perfect person, then what chance do I have?” You have Jesus. You have Jesus and he has this crazy idea called marriage and it’s this process where two messed up people get together.

And it’s not about being perfect, but it’s about saying, “I’m committing myself to you and I’m going to love you through it, no matter what, because we’re going to be running together, we’re committed to one another,” that’s what makes them the one. It’s when I’m saying “Yes,” to you and I’m saying “No,” to everyone else.

And it’s when I decide to love you every single day, like Jesus loves you, which means, “I wake up on the good days—I’m loving you.” I wake up on the bad days, “I’m loving you.” I wake up when you’re ugly and I still say, “I love you.” It’s every single day in and day out.

Is there anyone in the room today who is in a relationship like that? Where you know the person is fighting for you. You know the person loves you. There’s nothing like it. If we can get to this spot of, “No, I’m in,” that’s what marriage is all about, that’s what finding the one is about—not finding someone who’s perfectly compatible with you, but finding someone you know loves you without a shadow of a doubt.

And that’s what we’re going to be looking at today. It’s not so much how do I find this one person out there, but how do we stay committed to them? Because we know that it is a tough road ahead to say, “To death do us part,” and to go day in and day out to choose him or her even though you feel like there are some better options out there.

Maybe you have a good couple of dates and you’re like, “Maybe they are the one for me. This is great.” And then you look over and he’s picking his teeth with his car keys, and you’re like, “He’s definitely not the one. My mom was right. But here we are. I’m going to love you through it. You and your toothpick for keys.”

But seriously, what we’re going to be looking at today is in Proverbs, chapter 7, verse 6. And what we’re going to be looking is King Solomon, and he’s writing this letter to kind of put us in perspective of what it looks like to go into a relationship and then to come face to face with what we can think are better options. When we get into our relationships and we’re committed but then the hard days come and the tough situations come, how do we stay committed to this person on the other side of us?

If you have a Bible, we’re going to be in Proverbs, chapter 7, starting in verse 6. Take a look at this. “While I was at the window of my house, looking through the curtain, I saw some naive young men, and one in particular who lacked common sense. He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman, strolling down the path by her house. It was at twilight, in the evening, as deep darkness fell.”

So what Solomon is doing here is he is using this story to kind of show us what it looks like to be met with temptation as we go into our relationships. So he just has us set up here. And what we know is that there is this man looking out the window and he's doing what we all do. He's people watching.

If you think you have windows in your house for anything other than that... It's not so the sun can come in, it's so that we can see what's going on outside. And there he is. He's just looking through the window and he can tell something is not right. One of the guys is standing out to him.

It reminds me of a couple of months ago. My wife called me and there was somebody out in front of our house and she said, "This looks a little... I don't know what's going on out here." But she noticed this guy and he was walking up and down the street and he was looking over his shoulder, left and right, looking back this way and he would look that way. He was his own lookout man.

If you want to know you're in a bad spot. It's when you don't even have a lookout man. Then you should not go through with what you are about to go through with. But he's walking and he gets to the end of the road and then he stops, and he gives it one more. He looks left, he looks right and then he reaches down, and he grabs a metal fence post, rips it from the ground and then takes off running down the street.

I didn't expect that either. But that's the feeling you get of what's going on here. He's looking out the window and he just knows it in his bones. Something is different about this guy, because it says that there is a bunch of men and they are going this way, but he starts drifting back. He starts straying away from the pack and it's getting darker. It's night. So he's trying to do it in secret. And then he crosses the road right where this immoral woman lives.

Look what happens next. It says, "The woman approached him, seductively dressed and sly of heart. She was the brash, rebellious type, never content to stay at home. She is often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner. She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and with a brazen look she said, 'I've just made my peace offerings and fulfilled my vows. You're the one I was looking for! I came out to find you, and here you are!'"

You may not have heard it here, but what she just laid down was maybe the greatest pick up line of her time. I'm going to translate it for you. Basically she said: You will not believe this. I was just in there praying God would send me a hunk of a man and I promise you, no lie, I open my eyes—boom, there you are standing right in front of me.

That's an incredible line. It's better than the lines I use, which are mostly recycled lines that I picked up from *Fresh Prince* like 10 years ago. Seriously, I'll give you one. I'll come home sometimes, and I'll be like, "Hey, Steph. Do your feet hurt?" And she's like, "No. Why?" "Because you've been running through my mind all day. Come here. Come here." You take that one with you. You use it this week. Just give me credit.

But he's in a tough spot. He was not prepared for this level of flirting. My man is lost in the sauce and she's just going to lay it on thicker and thicker and thicker.

Keep reading. She said, "My bed is spread with beautiful blankets, with colored sheets of Egyptian linen. I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning. Let's enjoy each other's caresses, for my husband is not home. He's away on a long trip. He has taken a wallet full of money with him and won't return until later this month.

"So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with her flattery. He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life."

Not exactly the Disney ending with this one. There is not last moment of clarity or integrity where they just kind of shake out of it. Oh, my goodness we almost did something here. Good night my lady. Good day kind sir.

No it says that they are in a trap. The back-peddled too far into it and there is no way out. But it wasn't just this one moment at the very end to walk away. There were so many little decisions before that moment happened. And we all have them, whether on a daily basis, on a weekly basis, we have these fork in the road decisions where we come to these spots and we make decisions little by little either to move in this direction or that direction. And maybe you know what I'm talking about. They can come at any time.

Maybe you're at work and you're going through and you're doing your thing and you get up to get a drink of water. And as you're walking to get a drink you notice her. And you see her just kind of sitting there in her cubicle and you think, "Wow, she's kind of cute." But then you don't think much of it and you just keep going. And you get your drink of water and you go back.

But then the next time you notice that she looks up at you. And now it moves from, "Well, I thought she was cute, but I think she might think that I'm cute." And that makes you feel a certain way. And then you run into her in the break room. And she's not only good looking but she's kind of funny. She makes you laugh.

And then it moves to, "Hey, do you want to just grab lunch some time? Just here, at work." And then it escalates from lunch to dinner, and then you're standing on that doorstep trying to understand how you got to this moment. It's these little decisions, these little forks in the road choices that we have to make.

It can happen on our screens all of the time. Maybe this week you were just sitting there thinking, "I wonder what my ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend is up to these days. I don't even care, but I'm just going to look." If you don't care, why would you look? Nothing good is going to come from this idea of, "I'm just going to look."

And you look and then you think, “Huh, I wonder if she is doing okay. You know what? I’m going to reach out just to make sure. You know, it’s the Christian thing to do, make sure we’re all good.” Or, “I’m going to take her to lunch, make sure she knows that I’m a different person now. You know, I just want to make sure.”

And there are these little decisions, little thoughts, little... And I know that there are some in the room right now maybe you’re living through this right now. This is still one of those fresh wounds that we were just talking about. So you know how real this is. That we get into these spots little by little.

We don’t know a lot about what’s going on here between the woman and the man, their back stories. But chances are that there are these little things that they were going through that brought them to this space of, “How did we get here?” Like, as they are going through this,

Solomon, the guy who wrote this, had to be thinking about his dad. His dad, David, fell into this same trap that he’s talking about in this story. His dad was on a roof that he shouldn’t have been standing on, looking at a woman who he should not have been looking at. And then he called for her. And he slept with her, and she ended up getting pregnant. And he had to actually have this man, her husband, killed so that he could walk away from all of it.

And so Solomon is writing this knowing that this not okay. Please stop. That’s what this is. It’s a warning to say: As you go through life, as you have these split decisions: stop, focus, pay attention. Every little decision matters. Every little moment that we don’t think about or downplay matters, and it’s either moving us closer toward where we want to be or farther away.

And at the end of the story Solomon gets very direct on what we need to do. Look at how he closes out this story. He says, “So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words. Don’t let your **hearts stray** away toward her. **Don’t wander** down her wayward path.” “Don’t let your hearts stray toward her. Don’t wander down her wayward path.”

Don’t **stray**.

What does it look like for your heart to stray? It’s to leave your heart unchecked. You see, the Bible says that out of everything in the world, out of everything in the universe, our hearts are deceitful above all else.

Think about that for a second. How dark and messed up your heart is. Your heart is the one that is constantly whispering in your ear about better options. Like, “Oh, no, no. It’s not that big of a deal. No, it’s fine if you just send a message. It’s fine if you just go there.” Your heart will allow you to justify whatever emotion that you are going through.

Your heart will even bring in extra people on its side. Your heart will say stuff like this, “Just trust your gut,” knowing good and well that your heart and your gut are the same thing. But now it’s got numbers. Like, “Just trust, it will be fine. Don’t get caught up in it. It’s no big deal. Just keep going.”

And that's what we see here. I think that woman in that story had to have so many whispers going on in her mind. And we get kind of a back story of it. As the story is being unfolded it says that she goes out to meet him and the first thing that she says is that her husband is away. And not that he's just away, he's on a business trip, but he's going to be gone for a good, long time.

So you can already begin to hear the whispers that are in her mind, where her heart is kind of leading, being unchecked. And the maybes kind of begin to circle through her mind. Maybe there is a better option out there. Maybe my husband doesn't love me like he once did. Maybe he cares more about work than he cares about me. Why does he leave me here all alone, anyway? I feel so lonely. I just want to deal with this feeling of being alone.

Then eventually you get to this spot of believing all those lies in your head and you think, "Maybe this is it. Maybe this will be the thing that fulfills me." That's why over and over and over again the Bible says to protect your heart.

Protect your heart.

It's the most dangerous thing if it's left unchecked. But how do you do that? Look at what it says in Psalm 119. It says, "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

There is a translation for this. I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't do dumb stuff. That's what it is saying. It's this idea that the heart, left unchecked, will stray constantly. It will move you to places that you never thought that you would find yourself in.

So it says: No, no. Don't do that. Instead store in your heart the word of God, so that when you find yourself face to face in different situations, instead of just the one voice, instead of that internal dialogue that says, "Go for it. Just do it. It's not that big of a deal," you now have God's word speaking out of the overflow of your heart to combat all of the things that begin to be whispered into your ear.

We know how practical this is and how true it is and how words can stick with us and they just come out all of the time. Like maybe between you or a group of your friends there's a movie that you constantly quote, or a TV show. That no matter what situation you find yourself in you can bring a line from that show or that movie into play.

For me, it's from *Remember the Titans*. We can be in any conversation, something can happen, and I can bring it back to *Remember the Titans*, "Attitude reflects leadership." "You're over cooking my grits." It doesn't matter what is going on, there will be something that sparks a *Remember the Titans* reference.

In the same way, God is saying: Your heart is gross. It's deceitful. It can't be trusted. But the good news is that I have an answer to it. I have something that is stronger. I sent something

that is more powerful than even your heart, and it is my word. That's why I want you to store it up.

And to store it up, you have to be putting into it. You have to be putting investment into your heart. This is why we talk so much about reading your Bible every single day, subscribing to DBR, our Daily Bible Reading, so that when you wake up that's what you're putting into your heart. It's not just lies. It's not just whispers. Now you have something to go with whenever those situations come up, whenever you're tempted to do this thing or that thing, no—Scripture just kind of pours out, like: No, no. You can't do that. Like in Ephesians 5. No, I can't do that because I've been called to respect my spouse. I can't

Whenever those situations begin to come up in your heart, you begin to think, "No, no, no. I've been called to love you like I love myself." And in all of these, now you have the second voice that is so much stronger and so much more powerful than that one voice that seemed to be so loud, now you have the word of God in your heart. Is anyone else excited about reading your Bible this week? You know that there's a response there. You know that there is an answer there, no matter what you find yourself in.

And the final thing that Solomon leaves us with is:

Don't wander.

Don't wander. This might be the most practical, life saving advice that you will ever get. Don't wander. If you don't believe me that wandering is a problem, when you leave here, go to Target. I dare you. Just go. No list, you don't even need a cart. Just start walking aisle to aisle. You will black out. You'll come to. You'll be at the cash register and the cashier will say, "One hundred and forty dollars and sixty-seven cents." And you'll be like, "What happened? I didn't even come here for anything." Exactly. You were wandering.

I just want to make it clear. That was not just at women, I love Target. If I can't get it at Target, I don't know if I need it. I mean... And the Bass Pro Shop, that's where I spend a lot of my time too. Just hunting stuff—I'm not fooling anybody. I'm at Target a lot. I love it so much.

But it's this same idea that if we begin to wander in our relationships, if we just wander through life, wandering aimlessly, it's just a matter of time before we end up with things that we were never looking for and we never wanted in the first place. Don't wander.

That's why the biggest and best thing that we can do, as we go through life just wandering... No one wakes up and makes an intentional decision like today is the day, today is the day that I'm going to move a little bit farther in that direction, where I'm going to find myself in that trap. No one thinks today is the day that I'm going to blow up my life. But it was just wandering and wandering and wandering.

That's why we need a plan. We need to have a plan in every aspect of our lives, especially in our relationships. It's wild to me the things that we put plans around and things that we don't.

Sometimes some of us, we put plans around our finances, we put plans around our workout routines—that's a good example.

If you want to see someone and know the difference about the problem of wandering, go to the gym. You will see people who are wandering. They have no idea what they are doing. And the reason I know these people is because I'm those people, just wandering around looking at the machines, leaning on stuff like, "Huh, that's how you use that. I wonder what I'm going to do today. Maybe biceps? No, try-sera-tops. No, that's not it. That's a dinosaur for sure."

No, the people who are in shape, the men and women who are in shape, they have a plan and they are committed to it. They know what they are going to do. They know what they are going to say yes to. They know what they are going to say no to.

Have a plan

It's the same in every aspect of your life. When it comes to your relationships, set up a plan, "These are the things that I know that I'm going to say yes to. These are the things that I know that I'm going to say no to. I'm going to remove the possibility of me being in a situation where I'm unable to say, no. I'm going to protect myself and my relationships, and I'm not even going to go there."

It works in every aspect of your life: your phone, social media—there is an explorer page... You have no business on an explorer page—you're not an explorer. You're not Dora, you've got nothing, you're not searching for a cure of something. You're looking for things that you have no business looking for. Don't even go there. Stay on the home page. Have a plan.

It's like from the *Book of Lyrics* by TLC, "Don't go chasing waterfalls." "...stick to the rivers and the lakes that" you know, alright? We can't celebrate TLC, can we? There are young people in the room who have no idea and you have no business knowing. Don't even go and search or google that.

But, have a plan. Have a plan. And as you begin to kind of go through life, if we can just do these two things that Solomon points out, if we can make it a daily habit, a daily part of our routine that, "I'm going to open up God's word and I'm going to let it speak to me. I'm going to store it up in my heart so that I have a response no matter what comes my way."

And then, "I'm not going to wander. I'm not going to leave any wiggle room for me to find myself in a spot that I don't want to be in. I'm committed. And it's not only just me saying that I'm going to have these plans, I'm going to say yes to this no to this, I'm going to share it with the person who I'm in a relationship with so now she can hold me accountable. This is what I'm saying yes to, this is what I am saying no to."

I'm telling you; the beauty of the Christian marriage just keeps shining and shining through. It completely destroys this idea of there's a better option out there for me somewhere. Because, here's what it does. If you are in a marriage, you guys are both loving Jesus, here's what you get to do—"When I think of a better option, I think of a better you."

When I think of a better option, I think of a better you.

I don't think of someone down the street. I don't think of someone at work. No, I believe God is committed to doing a life-changing work in you and I'm going to see him do it. So when I think of a deeper love and a stronger love, I see it coming from you and I'm praying that God would do it. When I think of more safety, more security—when I think of anything, I think of God giving it to you, because I know that he started a work in you. There's no way that I'm looking away from this. I'm committed to see it, because I believe God started a miracle in you. No way I'm looking away."

Is there anyone in the room today who is with someone and there's no way that you're looking away because you can't wait to see what God is going to do in his or her life and how he or she is going to grow and how he or she is going to change?

When you think of a better option, you just think of a better you, because you get glimpses of it on this side, but you know that this is just a little taste and day by day, month by month, and year by year this thing is just getting better and better and better, "I'm committed to you."

And here's the unbelievable, just over the top thing that comes with following Jesus and being in a Jesus, gospel centered relationship. It's that I can be for you, I can root for you, I can cheer for you, I can pray for you, I can believe that God is going to do an incredible work within you, but I'm not dependent upon you. I'm not dependent on you to fulfil me. I'm not looking for you to carry the weight of my soul. I've already found someone. His name is Jesus. He's decided that he's the one who can and will carry the weight of my soul."

I love the way Tim Keller says it. Look at this. It says, "The gospel can fill our hearts with God's love so that you can handle it when your spouse fails to love you as he or she should."

This is the gospel. The good news of Jesus that is so heavy and so powerful that it can take something as deceitful and broken and wicked as your heart and purify it from the inside out. And it can only happen with this kind of love.

This is the good news. Jesus, the Son of God, would leave heaven and he would come here for me and you. And he would live this perfect life, and then he would go to a cross, and he would die for us, but then he would come back three days later. And when he did, he defeated sin and death, but also what he did was restore and remove everything that was in the way between me and you and him having a relationship.

He said: Now that you have this, let your soul feel its worth. Know that there is a God who loves you, there's a God who came for you, there's a God who is here for you and that nothing can take that from you.

And when we get to this spot where we know that we are worth dying for, we're completely content. No matter what relationship we find ourselves in, what relationship we find ourselves out of: single, divorced—we can come to this spot and know, "I am worth dying for. I am worth

dying for. I am the one that he left heaven for.” I don’t think that you guys are getting it. Say this:

I am the one

Say it with me. Say it out loud. I am the one. One more time. We’re going to keep going. I am the one. I’m the one that he left heaven for. I’m the one that he went to the cross for. I’m the one whose sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west. I’m the one who he knows by name. I’m the one, he’s counted every hair on my head. I’m the one who he chose before this world started spinning. I’m the one who has a relationship with God the Father. I’m the one who is his son. I’m the one who is his daughter. I’m the one who has been adopted.

You’re the one. When it moves past this idea of just general, it becomes personal and you know that God died not just for the world but for you and when God looks at you and he says that you are enough, you are loved, you are forgiven—let that just flow on top of you today. There is a Creator who loves you so much and he loves you like a father loves his son, he loves you like he loves his daughter.

I’ve got three kids at home. And parents in the room, we get a glimpse of the kind of love we’re talking about here with God our Father. I’ve got three of them: Kampbell, Rhys, and Vaeda and there is never a time when they’ve been growing up that I thought of them as different people or that I wish they were like someone else or I thought of someone else’s kids—not for a second. When I think of better, I think of them being better. I think of them growing up and maturing, because I can catch glimpses of it here on this side.

I think of my daughter, Kampbell, and how beautiful she is and how perfect she is. She’s the most creative person I’ve ever met in my life. She’s so focused on justice and fairness that it brings her to this spot of being overwhelmed at times. But I see a day when God just works in her and her heart becomes just blown up and she has this passion for justice, and she goes out and she changes the world. And I can’t wait to see it. I can’t wait to be there to cheer her on every step of the way and encourage her, never looking away. I believe God is going to do a work.

And when I think of my son, King Rhys, and how he is right now and the fears that he has and the anxiety that he works through—I see him struggling. Oh man, I know that there is a day where he begins to walk in confidence because he knows that he has a Father in heaven who loves him, who owns the place, and has given him the keys and says: Go. And I love to see glimpses of it—from Rhys to beast—because I know that it’s in there. And I know, one day he’s going to have a voice and one day he’s going to speak from that spot of knowing what it is like.

And I think of our youngest, Vaeda—she’s fire. Just all passion all of the time. And it’s amazing and dangerous and it gets the best of other people through her violence, but I see a day when that love, that fierceness, that leadership that God gets ahold of and then as it grows and as it matures, it’ll be like nothing I’ve ever seen before.

There’s no way I’m looking away from that. There’s no way I’m not committed to those three. There’s no way I’m not cheering them on. Not for a second, I’m not thinking of anybody else. I

just want to help them become all that they've been created to be, because I see greatness in them.

That is the way that God looks at you. You are his. His son. His daughter. When he looks at you, he doesn't look away for a second. He doesn't try to turn you around like: Could you just do it like they do? No, he looks at you and he says: I see it. I see your pain right now that you're going through in that relationship. I see your broken heart. I see your loneliness.

I see everything that you are struggling with, but if you could just turn a little bit my way you would know that I have something here that is so much greater. I have something for you that will carry you through not just this world but for all of eternity. I've got something for you that can overpower any situation and I want to give it to you.

God, our Father, there's no fear of a better option right now. Jesus is the best option we will ever find and he's far more than we ever deserve. And it's on the table right now. We can respond. We can choose him, and we already know that he chose us. Today can be that day. I just want to pray right now. I pray over all of us. And I believe that God is still at work.

Would you pray with me?

God, we thank you so much for today. God, thank you for who you say we are. God, allow that to be the voice that is the loudest. Allow that to be what goes toe to toe and then overtakes the whispers, the ideas, the things that try to move us away from what you have for us.

And, God, we believe that you started this, you started a good work and you're going to see it until it's complete. So, God, give us the confidence today to walk in that newness of life. God, give us the courage to take the step. Give us the courage to respond to you.

And, God, I pray today is like a day of no other, where your love just overwhelms us and wrecks us and we can walk in confidence knowing that we are yours and there is nothing, no one, nothing that can take us from you. There is nothing that can define us, because you already have.

God, fill us with your love. Meet us with your grace. Pour all of it out onto us. We love you. It's in Jesus' name we pray: Amen.