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I want to welcome everybody across all of our campuses. How are we doing today? You guys doing good? Good.

I just want to take this quick minute and look right into the camera and say hello to our North campus. How are you doing guys? Downtown, hope you're doing well. And anybody watching online—I know we have a number of people who are on Facebook live.

I know that we have a number of people who are hosting watch parties around the country. We've actually heard from you. We have watch parties in Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina, Colorado, Texas, and Missouri just to name a few. That's amazing. So good to have you guys.

Those of you here at Northwest, you're looking good—so glad to see you.

And I saved our West campus for last because somebody has a birthday today. Our West campus turns 2 years old today. We're super excited for that. Give them a hand.

If you don't know anything about our West campus, we've got a few images that are just going to pop up on the monitor beside me to show you a little bit of what that campus feels like. They are our only portable campus right now, which means that they set up and tear down every weekend in a middle school. They are our fittest campus, they burn so many calories.

They are led by our campus pastor, David Cupp, who has just done an amazing job with that staff and team of volunteers over there. They cram over 900 people into a middle school auditorium every week. They've had 130 baptisms. It's amazing to see what God has done.

So I think it would only be fitting on their second birthday that as a church family we sing them happy birthday. What do you think? I think we should. So at all of our campuses I need you to lift up your voice. I'm going to get us started. Please do not leave me hanging because I cannot sing my way out of a brown paper bag, alright?

Here we go:

Happy Birthday to you. Happy Birthday to you. Happy Birthday dear West campus.  
Happy Birthday to you.

Love you guys.

I want you to know that two years portable, set up and tear down—none of our other campuses have gone that long. And I want you to know that we're with you, we're behind you and we already have land on the west side. We are working on the designs for a facility. I got a sneak peek at one of the renderings of it this last week. We'll be able to have something to show you sometime soon. So hold on. We can't wait to get you into your new digs and to see all that God is going to continue to do through you.

And as you saw through the video, being interviewed are our two newest campus pastors. Right now we're just in the middle of praying and planning to launch campus number five in the northeast Fishers area and campus number six in the mid-town Broad Ripple area. And we're just asking God to go ahead of us in this. Right now we've got about 350 people per campus who have signed up to be on the launch teams. So about 700 people total, which is amazing.

Maybe you don't have a frame of reference, but all of the other campuses we've started we've never had that many people on the launch teams so it's really encouraging. And if you live on the northeast side of town or maybe you live in mid-town or you just want more information about those campuses—maybe you'd like to be on a launch team—let me tell you what, man, if you want to go on an adventure of faith join a launch team of a campus.

If you're interested in that go to [tpcc.org/launchteam](http://tpcc.org/launchteam) and get all of the information there. They are having gatherings on August 18<sup>th</sup> and we'd love to see you there.

Finally, I don't know if you're the kind of person who is really sad to see summer go—it's gone so fast or if you're the kind of person who is like, "I'm so thankful that we're getting back into a routine and getting the kids out of the house," I don't know if you're that way—I'm a little bit of both.

But now that we're getting back into a routine, now would be a perfect time for you to jump in and begin to serve on a team somewhere. I met two people just this morning who are serving on teams. I've never met them before and I just had an opportunity to have a conversation with them. And immediately they just told me how much better their experience has gotten since they joined a team.

I'm just telling you that if you're just occasionally attending church it's not going to be nearly as good as if you jump in and serve on a team. We just want everybody to go one and serve one. And if you begin to do that I guarantee you that you're going to meet some people, you're going to feel connected to this great big place and God is going to use you in significant ways. I'd love for you to get on a team.

Well, this past Thursday I had one of those like milestone dad moments that I was not ready for. I stood in the driveway in my boxers with a cup of coffee and really messy hair (it's a disturbing image so don't hang out there too long) and I watched my two oldest

kids—they just went back to school on Thursday, my son is in junior high school, my daughter is starting her freshman year, and I stood there and watched them drive down the driveway to school all by themselves.

Yeah, that's a big moment and I was not ready for it. I know some of you have already been there, done that. Some of you have sent kids off to college and you're like, "Hey, that's nothing Brockett." But it was a big deal for me. And I was trying not to be a hovering, worrywart dad, because that guy is not cool so I'm trying to be like, "Be safe, bro."

And I'm praying for them, "God, please protect them." I go inside and immediately I'm refreshing the *find my friends* app every fifteen seconds just to make sure that they got there on time. The reason why is not because I don't trust them, it's because I don't trust you. There are a lot of crazies on the road.

I know any of you who have ever been in a car accident, one of the first things that you said as you're standing there in the median as the police are there to file a report or the fire truck gets there or whatever, you said, "Wow, that happened so fast, had hardly any time to react. I just took my eyes off of the road for a split second and I ended up in the ditch."

And what is true when we're in a car is very true when it comes to life. There are many of us, me included—we've had some moments where our lives, maybe certain aspects of our lives, maybe it was a certain relationship, maybe it was some finances, maybe it was our career, maybe it was our spiritual life and it ended up in a ditch. We're standing there scratching our heads thinking, "Man that happened so fast." Like, "What happened? I took my eyes off of the road for a split second."

And today, if you're here at one of our campuses, if you're watching online, if you're brand new to church you came on a really, really good day because we're starting a brand new series of messages that we're going to be in for this whole month. It's called *Rumble Strip*.

And we've all probably had that experience, maybe it's on a long road trip, maybe you're driving through the night and everybody else in the car fell asleep and you've already slammed your third Red Bull and you've worked your way through that giant bag of Skittles and you're smacking yourself trying to stay awake. Or maybe it's the middle of the day and you just take your eyes off of the road for a second, you adjust the air-conditioning, your radio, or whatever and all of a sudden you hear that sound and you feel that vibration called a rumble strip.

It sounds a little bit like this: [sound of a car tire going over rumble strip].

Now, here's the technical definition of a rumble strip. I just thought it was like bumps along the road, but here's the technical definition of one:

*“Rumble strips, also known as sleeper lines, alert strips, audible lines, sleep bumps, wake up calls, growlers, drift lines, and drunk bumps,” I might add one more: tummy tickler, alright? That’s a good one, “are a road safety feature to alert inattentive drivers of potential danger, by causing a tactile vibration and audible rumbling transmitted through the wheels into the vehicle interior. A rumble strip is applied along the direction of travel following an edgeline or centerline, to alert drivers when they drift from their lane.”*

Wow! I had no idea that there was a definition that technical, but apparently there is. And that’s what we want to talk about over the next four weeks together. And one of the things that I already love about this series is that it is chock full of real-life, practical application.

So what I want you to know is that today, regardless of who you are, regardless of what you believe, regardless of where you would be in your own spiritual journey—maybe you believe in God or you don’t believe in God, maybe there are days that you do and days that you wonder—regardless of the season of life that you are in, whether you’re young or you’re older, this series is going to have practical application for you wherever you might stand with God or if you fully believe that his word can be trusted.

Now one of the things that you need to know about me is that I hate wasting people’s time, primarily because I don’t like my time to be wasted. So even if you don’t believe just yet, I want you to walk out of here every single week of going, “I don’t know if I’m there yet with Jesus, I don’t know that I believe what they believe just yet, but man that was helpful. That last hour was really helpful.”

And what I hope that you will begin to see is that God’s word has wisdom that really works in real life, and maybe that might just begin the journey for you to begin to trust Jesus.

So if you have a Bible or a Bible app, would you go to Proverbs, chapter 4? If you don’t have either one of those, I’m going to have this on the monitor beside me as I kind of teach through this. I want to start in Proverbs, chapter 4, beginning in verse 10. And I want you to see how tender these words start out.

He says, “My child...” Now this is like a father communicating some things to his kids. That’s how we need to read it. He says, “...listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life.”

Now how many of you want to have a long, good life like I do? I know some people who have had a long life but not necessarily a good life. And I know some people who have had a good life but not necessarily a long one. The key is we want to put those things together.

You ever met somebody who has been around for a long time, they are very seasoned, very mature, getting up there in years and they are mean? Yeah. Or bitter, because they didn't live a good life. It was a long one.

So the key is a long, good life, which means that we're not going to get there by accident. It's going to actually be very intentional.

He says, "I will teach you wisdom's ways..." He doesn't say, "I'm going to teach you life hacks, I'm going to teach you secrets, I'm going to teach you the short cut." No, he says: I'm going to teach you something way better, "wisdom's ways."

Now, there are a lot of smart people who are not happy people. You can learn a lot of stuff and know a lot of stuff but that's not necessarily the secret to life. There is a difference between knowledge and wisdom.

See, knowledge is sort of like knowing that a tomato is a fruit. How many of you knew that a tomato is a fruit? Yeah, that's knowledge. Wisdom is knowing to never, ever put that in a salad, alright? That's a corny example but I guarantee that you'll remember it. That's the difference between the two.

He says: I want to teach you wisdom's ways, and I want to "...lead you in straight paths." This path is going to come up a couple of times in Proverbs. It says the timeline from your birth to your expiration date here on this earth—that's the path, that's the road. "When you walk, you won't be held back; when you run, you won't stumble. Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go. Guard them..."

That's interesting that he would say it that way. He doesn't say remember them, he doesn't say to write it down, don't forget. He says guard them. That's like a defensive posture. That means that there is something coming to take those things away, "...for they are the key to life."

Now look at verse 20. He begins with this affectionate term again, "My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words." I've said that to my kids over and over and over again. My wife has said that to me over and over and over again.

"Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate..." Let them really sink in, "...deep into your heart..." Now he's not talking about the muscle in your chest. He's talking about the core of who you are. He's talking about the essence of who you are—your hopes, your dreams, your aspirations. Let them really sink into the core of your motivations, "for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body."

Now he puts this together, "Guard your heart above all else..." That's like priority number one. If you get everything else wrong, make sure you don't get that one wrong, "for it determines the course of your life." There's that path again, there's that road.

“Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech.” All that means is any talk that comes out of our mouth that isn’t kind, it doesn’t build up, it’s destructive, it’s twisted, “Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don’t get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.”

In other words we could say that Proverbs, chapter 4 is talking about placing rumble strips in our lives so that we stay on the path to live a long and good life. Now there are three things that I want you to know about rumble strips.

Number one (rumble strips along the road do three primary things):

They wake you up, alerting you to danger

The second thing that they do is:

They are still inside the safety zone

That’s important to understand. The rumble strip gives you enough margin that when you hit it and you accidentally go beyond it, you’re still on pavement. It would do us no good to put a rumble strip in the grass or in the ditch. By that time it’s too late.

In fact here along our Northwest campus, along I 65 this summer there has been a lot of road construction—have you noticed? And it’s been sort of inconvenient over the summer. However, they’ve finished a lot of it and, man, it looks really, really good. So I don’t know if there is anybody here that worked on that but way to go. It’s incredible.

I got out on it Friday, I was like, “Man, this is so smooth. This is great.” And I noticed the rumble strip. It is fresh. And it isn’t all the way over to the side of the road, there is enough margin there that when I hit it I’m still in safety. That’s important to understand. Hold onto that.

Number three:

They assist us in our destination

They are there to help us arrive safely.

As it turns out, the road isn’t the only place where we need them. Every single one of us needs rumble strips in our lives. And you know what? God knew this. That’s why he gave us lots of them, primarily in the Old Testament. The Old Testament Law can be thought of as rumble strips.

If you don’t know a whole lot about the Bible, there are 613 laws found in the Old Testament that God gives to his people. And the Old Testament Law doesn’t really have

a great rap. We're not too excited about it, because most of us don't like rules. In fact, if you like rules chances are the only rules that you like are the ones that you came up with, the ones that you are imposing on other people.

Most of us don't like them, especially if we don't understand them. If you don't understand a rule, some of you are like, "Well, I'm going to break that rule, because I don't understand it. It's stupid." Or we're confused by it or maybe it feels as if the person imposing the rule upon us is doing it to make them feel better about themselves.

Now, within the church world there's a word for what I just described and it's called legalism. And if you've had a bad church experience, maybe so bad that you got beat up or you got fed up or you left the church, chances are legalism probably had something to do with it.

However, God's rumble strips were never meant to be legalistic. What we need to understand is that God is our Heavenly Father. And I realize that many of us listening to this right now, maybe we didn't have a very good example of an earthly father so it is somewhat difficult for us to get there in our thinking.

But we need to know that God is a good Heavenly Father. And in the Old Testament he laid down some rumble strips, or some laws, not as a condition of relationship, meaning if you abide by these rules then I'll love you—that's not what that means. He gave the laws as confirmation of relationship: You're already my kids and I'm trying to benefit you. I'm trying to keep you from danger. I'm trying to warn you before you get in a ditch. And I'm trying to help assist you in reaching your destination. And what I need you to see... I want to reframe some of our thinking when it comes to the way in which we visualize God.

Here's a really good example. In Exodus, chapter 20, verse 3 God says this. I don't know how it hits you. He said, "You must not have any other god but me." And I don't know how you receive that. Maybe some of you today are like, "Yeah, of course. I'm in with that." Others of you, maybe you're like, "I don't like that at all. It sounds exclusive. It sounds sort of possessive. It sounds arrogant. It sounds like he's got some self-esteem problems and I don't like that."

But what if you were to read this in a different way? What if you were to read this as a daddy talking to his kids? Let me give you an example of what I mean. Several years ago I was at a soccer field watching a game. I sat down on this blanket on the ground and this cute, adorable little three or four girl comes running up to me. And she never looked directly at me. She just ran up to me, gave me this giant sized hug, plopped right next to me and then she grabbed ahold of my hand. It was like the sweetest thing ever.

I really needed a hug that day. So I just let her do it. I was like, "Man, that's awesome. I'm having a way better day now." But I realized that I didn't know this little girl. And she's

holding my hand. So I kind of looked at her and I smiled and I said, “Sweetheart, what’s your name?”

And she did not recognize my voice, she jolted around and looked right at me and she gave me this look like I had a third eye and horns. She thought I was her daddy until she looked at me. And then she screamed, which is not an uncommon way in which females have responded to me. But she runs—takes off. And I’m, in that moment going, “I didn’t do anything. Did not do a thing.” It’s like, “Local pastor gets arrested.” Ahh!

So I’ve told my kids that since they were really little. Like, “Don’t go with strangers. You don’t know them. You don’t actually trust them until I say it’s okay.” In other words, “Have no other daddy above me.” Sounds like really good council.

But then God says it and we think he’s an egomaniac. This is actually a really good thing that he’s saying to his kids. In fact, it’s the most loving thing that he could say to his kids.

Do you know that many of the Old Testament laws were rumble strips like we’re talking about and actually had to do with human cleanliness and hygiene? Aren’t we thankful for good hygiene? Like say Amen... Turn to the person sitting next to you and say, “Thank you for wearing deodorant today.” And if the essence of B O is in the air, sorry I made that awkward for you.

There are 613 rumbles strips in the Old Testament. Scholars tell us that nearly one third of them had to do with human hygiene and cleanliness. God has always been into clean.

Now here’s why that is significant and important. They lived in an era in which they didn’t have information that we take for granted today. All of us—we know that washing our hands is a good thing. It’s like the number one thing you can do to stay healthy and prevent disease. They didn’t know that. They didn’t even know about germs, let alone how they spread.

Look at an example of this in Deuteronomy, chapter 23. Here’s God laying down a rumble strip and to us it’s kind of gross. To them it would not have made any sense. Listen, “You must have a designated area outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself.” That’s good counsel. “Each of you must have a spade as part of your equipment.” your tool belt. “Whenever you relieve yourself, dig a hole with the spade and cover the excrement.”

I’m just guaranteeing that none of you are going to do your devotions to that passage this next week. I would actually love to preach a whole sermon series on those two verses. That would be awesome.

So we read that and we think, “That’s disgusting. Why is that in the Bible?”



I don't know if any of you have been to a third world country that doesn't have septic systems and toilets and running water. I have. And you know it because you can smell it. People just relieve themselves right outside their shanties. Human waste just runs down the street. I've seen children, little kids, playing in it. In some parts of the world they will do their business in a plastic bag, tie it in a knot, and throw it into a pile. They call it flying toilets.

So what we need to understand is that in this day they didn't have septic systems, they didn't have toilets, they didn't have running water, they didn't have any of that stuff so God lays down this rumble strip. Why?

Well you know in the Middle Ages in Europe—Europe was nearly wiped out because they weren't aware of how disease spread through human excrement and that was a contributing factor to the Black Plague. See, germs wouldn't be discovered for hundreds of years. Science hadn't given us that information yet.

But God knew. This was Dad looking out for us. Then those rumble strips would have sounded unnecessary and crazy and they didn't make sense and God's like: No, I have your best interests in mind.

So here's a question that we need to ask each of ourselves today. We need to ask this of ourselves. Right now in your life—I'm not talking about the person sitting beside you. I'm not talking to the person you wish would have come today. I'm talking to you and I'm talking to me:

Am I paying attention to the rumble strips in my life?

I promise you that they are there. For some of us, we've just been riding on the rumble strip for so long that it's become white noise and we've tuned it out. Some of us—we're not aware of them. Some of us are ignoring them. And maybe in some part of our lives there is some regret that we are experiencing because we've avoided the rumble strip in a certain portion of our life, a part of our life ended up in the ditch.

Maybe you got into some money trouble because you ignored some financial rumble strips. Maybe you're dealing with some health issues because you stopped paying attention to the physical rumble strips. Maybe you're dealing with a lot of conflict right now because you overlooked some relational rumble strips. Maybe you're facing some issues with your reputation; it's been damaged because you've neglected some moral rumble strips. Maybe you're feeling stagnant in your spiritual growth or disconnected from God over the summer because you're dismissing a few spiritual rumble strips in your life.

And if that's the case, I just want you to know—look at me—you're not alone. And I'm not saying that to make you feel bad about yourself. I'm not saying that so the conviction feels so heavy that you can't walk. Every single one of us can look into the rearview

mirror of our lives, back to a moment that we've just driven through, and cringe. Like, man, "Why did I say that?" Or, "Why didn't I say that?" Or, "Why did I go there?" Or, "Why did I do that? I should know better by now."

And I just want you to know, man, if you're feeling beat up by some of those moments, there is a loving and gracious Heavenly Father who has given us these incredible gifts called mercy and grace. I don't know why anyone would turn them down. It's an amazing deal. He's always standing there ready to give them to you.

With that said, there is a word for something that we keep doing over and over again even though we've ended up in the ditch, even though we've paid the price, even though we've made the mistake—we keep doing it. It's called a habit or a pattern or an addiction. It's like that old quote, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results."

So doing the same thing over and over again, when we never learn our lesson so we keep swerving off of the road into the ditch is just called:

## REGRET

And regret is a really lonely, frustrating, discouraging place to be. Nobody is perfect. We're all going to make mistakes, but God wants to get us back onto the road. And one of the keys to learning and growing through these experiences is to really understand where the battle is fought and won. And it's mentioned in Proverbs a couple of times. It's right here—it's your heart. Not the muscle beating in your chest, but the ruling center of who you are.

Jeremiah, chapter 17 says, "The heart is the most deceitful of all things." Meaning that it will deceive even you, the only thing that deceives you is you. Your heart will deceive you.

This is why rumble strips are so important. Some of you are like, "Why are they necessary?" They're so necessary because your heart will deceive you and you need rumble strips to rumble so that you know when you are getting close to danger.

I want you to know that this concept of a rumble strip is way more than just avoiding a disastrous crash. That can't be all that it is. You would never get out on the road today and go, "Don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash, don't crash." Eventually you'd get sick of that and you would just pull off at the next exit and just sit there. And, honestly, that's where some of you are. You're just like, "I'm tired of crashing. I don't want to crash anymore. I don't want to do that anymore," so you're not traveling anywhere.

The rumble strips aren't just there to avoid a crash, the rumble strips are there to assist us in getting to the right destination. The author of Proverbs gives us this concept of straight paths.

And so here's a question that I really want you to wrestle to the ground today. It's simply this question:

*How do I get from where I am...to where I want to be?*

That might be one of the most important questions that you'll ever spend time wrestling with. And you can lay this question down over every area of your life. Here's the thing. Where are you now? How do you get from where you are in your relationships, in your marriage, in your career, in your finances, in your spiritual life to where you want to be?

It's not just going to happen because there is actually an enemy who is coming against us. All through Proverbs it says to guard what you've learned. Guard what you know because there are actually some things advancing against you. And if you are not intentional about getting from where you are to where you want to be, you'll never get there.

So let me give you three really important principles. These are something you might just want to write down so you can reflect on them later. Or maybe talk about them in your groups.

Here's principle number one:

**DIRECTION always, always, always determines my DESTINATION**

Not my intentions. It's always the direction that I'm traveling that determines my destination. Intention is something that I mean to do. It's something I plan to carry out, I plan to go there, it's my purpose is my aim.

Now listen, I think good intentions are great. They're just not enough. It's kind of like this. If you were to come to me today and say, "I have every intention of taking a vacation to the Caribbean and I am so excited about it that I've already got my plane ticket, I've already bought my Chacos, and I've got my Ray Bans. I've got my straw hat. You know, I am ready to go. I can already feel the sand between my toes and the little umbrella drinks in my hand. I believe it in my heart. I'm going to get there. I have every intention of going to the Caribbean.

But if you go to the airport and you sit at the gate and you never board the plane, you're not going to the Caribbean. Or worse yet, what if you get on a plane that's going to Alaska and you're sitting there in your seat reading a magazine on the Caribbean. Like, "Ah, I can't wait to get there. It's going to be so amazing." You're not going to get to the Caribbean no matter how well intentioned you are.

And I know that sounds like a crazy, absurd, example, and it is, but for many of us that's the way that we've been living our lives, because there are some of us here today who have been saying, "I fully intend in getting out of debt. I believe it in my heart. I've been through Financial Peace three times. Dave Ramsey is my Yoda. I am going to get out of debt. I am going to do it. I've got every intention but we still haven't gotten the job and we haven't established a budget, we're living beyond our means and we're not even tithing. And when we are generous, we're not joyful. We're not going to get there.

Some of us have been saying, "I want to have a good marriage. I want to have a healthy marriage. I believe it in my heart." But you're not willing to go to counseling, you're not willing to go to church with your spouse, you're not willing to have the hard conversations, you're not willing to carve out a time for date night, you're not willing to stop being selfish. You are on the wrong plane.

Some of us here today are like, "I am going to grow in my relationship with Jesus. I have every intention of growing in my relationship with Jesus, but you're not doing daily Bible reading, you've not gotten into a group, you're not serving on a team, and last time you were here was Memorial Day. Welcome back.

I'm not saying that you do any of those things to get right with God. Please don't hear me say that. You do those things to stay on the right path to get you to where you want to be.

So many are headed in the wrong direction with good intentions, and that's a way to ruin your life, because you'll get to the end of your life and you'll be filled with regret.

Here's principle number two:

#### DECISIONS determine my DIRECTION

So how do I know that I'm headed in the right direction? Well, what decisions are you making? And you've got to ask somebody else to speak into that. Why? Because your heart will deceive you. You've got to have a third party, objective... Not everybody should be speaking into your decisions. That would be hell. Don't do that. But who is?

Here's the thing. It's not the big decisions that turn the direction, it's the small ones. It's small accumulated decisions, it's the daily disciplines, the daily practices, the things that nobody else will ever see and you likely won't get credit for them. That's where the battle is fought and won.

Look at what it says in Jeremiah 6:16. It says, "This is what the Lord says: 'Stop at the crossroads,' in other words that's decision-making time, crossroads "and look around. Ask for the old, godly way," That doesn't sound too exciting.

What that means is that wisdom's way, the proven way, the trustworthy way, dad's way because he loves you, and maybe the three most important words in the passage. Let's say them out loud together. Lift up your voices, all of our campuses, "...and walk in it." It doesn't just say know it, read it, it says walk in it. Put your foot to the path, "Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls..."

Many of us are frantically looking for rest for our souls because we're restless and we're anxious and we're frustrated and—just hold us. For some of us maybe we need to stop contemplating some things and we just need to start taking some steps of faith.

And if that whole principle of the one degree thing—you start off and maybe you're just off one degree, not such a big deal at the beginning, but the greater the distance traveled, the further off you'll be by the time you arrive at that destination.

Here's the third principle:

### What I DOWNLOAD determines my DECISIONS

What I download—and what I'm talking about is your thought life. I'm talking about what are the things that inform your thought life? So what is it that you are looking at? What is it that you are reading? What is it that you watch? What is it that you are thinking about?

Here's why this is so important. We know this—you are what you eat. But we're also... We fail to see—you are what you think. So our thought life is maybe the most important things about us. And it is also the most private thing about us, because there isn't anybody who knows 100 percent of what you think.

There might be someone in your life who knows some of what you think, but there isn't anyone who knows everything that you think. And I'm not saying that that should be the case. There are probably some things that we think that should not come out of our mouths.

But because it's such a private thing, it's so easy to hide, isn't it? And maybe some of us are little by little fighting a battle and we're losing, because we're losing the battle in our mind.

How many of you have ever read something or maybe heard on the news of a public figure of some kind who has been exposed in some massive scandal. There are lots of examples to choose from. Or maybe you know somebody in your own personal life who, from the outside looking in looks like he has everything together and then all of a sudden something went public and his life blew up in some significant way and you said to yourself, "How did that happen?"

Well, that didn't just happen. It's been happening. And it probably started in his thought life. He hit the rumble strip and just ignored it and kept drifting and drifting and drifting. And then he ended up in a ditch and that's how you found out about it.

Now our culture and society at large—I just want to warn you—do not encourage rumble strips. And I think it's primarily because of number two, what we talked about a few moments ago, the rumble strips are well inside the safety zone. And our culture and society are always asking—not the question of: Is this wise? We very rarely ask that. As a society, generally speaking, we ask the question: Is it allowed?

Like is the allowed? Is this right or wrong? I get that question all of the time. People email me and say, "Can you tell me is this allowed? Does God allow this? Is this right? Or is this wrong?" That's what we're always asking instead of where the rumble strip is. I'm just telling you, the culture is not too excited about rumble strips. Instead culture offers painted lines. And painted lines are okay, but you can't necessarily feel them. It's easy to go over them.

Let me give you a couple of examples of this. Here's one painted line that we hear all of the time in our culture:

*Drink alcohol responsibly*

Now I'm not saying that I disagree with that, but I am saying that this principle has been around for decades, as long as I can remember, and yet there are still DUIs every day. There are still people who die in drunk driving accidents all of the time. And there are some people who get addicted to alcohol all of the time. So it's not working. It's a painted line.

See, the Bible offers us something better. God's word offers us a rumble strip and it says that alcohol isn't prohibited, just don't get drunk. That's a very clear rumble strip. Why? Because people do stupid things when they get drunk.

If it's drink responsibly, whose definition of responsible are we talking about? Isn't it like after two or three drinks then that part of your brain that is responsible takes a nap? How do you know?

Here's another one, another painted line:

*Consolidate your debt*

Now once again, I'm not saying that this is a bad thing. I'm not saying that you shouldn't do this. Maybe there is a time when you should consolidate some debts, but it's a painted line. How much debt should you take? What interest rate?

The Bible actually offers us a rumble strip. In Proverbs it says that the borrower is a slave to the lender. So do everything that you can to put God first in your life and trust him with the tithe and live responsibly and get out of debt as responsibly and as quickly as you can.

Here's another painted line that we hear all of the time in culture:

*Listen to your heart*

Quite possibly the stupidest advice I've ever heard in my entire life. Now hear me. Hear me. I get it. I get it. If you like that statement, if I just offended you by what I said, I get it. Like if we're saying... We live in a culture where people have been abused and they have been bullied and they've been made to feel bad about themselves. So if you're saying, "Listen, you have worth and value and God loves you and there's a plan for you," man, absolutely. I'm just saying that's a painted line because of Jeremiah 9:17. Our hearts can deceive us.

See, here's the better thing. Instead of listen to your heart the Bible offers us this rumble strip. Surrender it. And once you surrender your heart to the Holy Spirit and he takes up residence in there, he starts to do some transformational work. And then, by all means, listen. By all means.

Let me give you one more:

*Wait until you're ready*

How many of us have heard that? They are talking about sexual intimacy. Wait until you're ready. Now here's the big, big problem with this painted line. Is that every young, adolescent boy that I've ever known was born ready, alright?

God's word offers us a rumble strip. It says: Hey, listen. Sex isn't dirty. We can talk about sex. God invented it. Let's give him credit for it. But it's an illustration or an analogy maybe you've heard—there's a lot of truth to it—sex is a lot like fire. Fire is amazing when it's in a fire pit. And God said: Listen, I want to warn you with that fire, I want to bless you with that fire, just enjoy it within a covenant promise of marriage that I've designed for you. Not to ruin your fun, but to enhance it.

I'm telling you, the minute that you begin to live your life by some rumble strips, you might have some people walk out on you. You might have some friends disown you. You might have some people label you, call you a goody-two-shoes, tell you you're holier-than-thou, "Oh, man. You think you're all that because you're going to church now." It's not going to be very popular.

And culture will just suggest painted lines until somebody ends up in a ditch and then it mocks and shames him.

Romans, chapter 12, verse 2 says this, “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person...” How? “...by changing the way you think.” You want to change who you are. You start here. “Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

God’s will for your life is good and it’s actually pleasing to you. You’re not going to do it begrudgingly. God knows how you are wired. He knows how he created you. He wants to enhance it all. And if you choose to start living your life by some rumble strips, you’re not going to win any popularity contests, I promise you that. But eventually you will learn the respect of those who see how you live your life.

When I was a sophomore in high school I was traveling with my high school soccer team and a group of us boys were in a hotel room by ourselves—no adult supervision. And it was getting late. We shut off the lights. We had the TV on and it was one of those movie channels. We were watching a movie. It was totally fine. It was a PG movie. But as soon as that movie ended, we were all starting to drift off to sleep. The remote was on top of the TV. And the very next movie that came on was an adult movie.

It was one of those moments where it was like: Who’s going to get up and change the channel, turn it off, whatever. We all just sort of laid there pretending that we were asleep with one eye closed kind of a thing.

And I will never forget, it wasn’t very long, it was a few seconds, few moments, one of my friends jumped up, grabbed the remote and turned the TV off. And right then somebody across the room said this, “Ah, man.” And I will never forget what my friend said, standing there in the darkness of the room, he said, “Turn it back on if you want. It’s your marriage.” And it was about as quiet in the room as it is in here.

We were sophomores in high school. No one was married. Why did he say that? Because those of you who are married know that the time to begin working on your marriage is long before you ever meet that person.

Because many of us... I say this to young, single people all of the time—if you’re here today and you’re single and maybe one day you want to be married or if you’re here today and you’re single and you never want to be married (I just want you to know that’s totally fine, you can be a whole, complete person as a single adult. Jesus never got married and he did pretty well for himself, you’re good) but if you’re single and one day you want to be married, the time to start working on your marriage is not when you meet that person, it’s now. And many of us have drug trash into our marriages and then we sort it out then and there. The time to begin working on it is now.

So let me leave you with this principle:



Establishing rumble strips is how not to ruin your life. They keep us on the path from where we are, to where we want to be.

And what I want you to know today is that, right now you can believe and accept everything that I just taught, or maybe not, but I'm telling you that the principles that we just walked through are at work in your life right now regardless of whether you would call yourself a Jesus follower or not. Regardless of whether you believe there is a God, regardless of whether you trust God's word or not. Those principles are still at work in your life and in your friendships and in your marriage.

And none of us ever plan on wrecking our car, but we still do from time to time. And none of us ever plan on wrecking our life. The problem is that we never plan not to. So today, how's your thought life? Right now, what direction are you headed in? And will it take you to the destination that you desire. And maybe the most important question is: how do you know? And the rumbling of the rumble strips is a pretty good place to start.

I'll never forget. About 20 years ago I went to this leadership conference at a church that I really, really respected. And the pastor of that church has since retired but he served well in ministry for over 40 years. No scandals, no affairs, he ran the race well and with integrity.

I'll never forget one afternoon we were sitting in a session and he was talking about the importance of character and integrity and who you are behind the scenes. I'll never forget him sharing a personal story about himself. He said that decades before, there was a woman who was working on their church staff and he just really enjoyed her company. They got along really well. They had all of these great conversations. She would always laugh at his jokes.

And from time to time they might be walking out to the parking lot together at 5 o'clock on the way home. She'd be walking the same direction and they just had some small talk about their day. And he found himself enjoying being around her probably a little bit too much. He hadn't done anything wrong. He hadn't crossed any lines, but there was a rumble strip that was starting to rumble.

And he said one Sunday night he and his wife had driven separately to church and as they were leaving, walking to the parking lot, he had forgotten something in his office. So he told his wife, "Hey, go ahead and head home. I'm right behind you. I've just got to go in and grab something."

He went into the office, dark hallways, nobody was there. He walks around the corner and he literally bumped into this lady who was on his staff. She was just standing there in the dark. And she reached out her hand, she grabbed his hand, and she said these words, "No one will ever know." And in that moment, he said that his heart was about ready to beat out of his chest. And the rumble strip was rumbling.

And he said, “I knew if I stood there for one more second, I might have done something that I would regret for the rest of my life.” He said that he did the only thing that he knew to do. He didn’t say a word, he just turned and ran. And he went home and he told his wife everything.

You could have heard a pin drop in the room. And that left a deep impression on me.

See, here’s the deal. Right now, regardless of who you are, you likely know when you’re playing with fire. You likely know when you’re pushing it to the edge. You likely know when you hear the whirring of the rumble strips and you decide to ignore them anyway. And I just want to ask you, right now, to stop before you do something that you might regret for the rest of your life. Ask God to give you the courage and conviction to course correct. And then learn to be grateful for the gift—because that’s what it is—of a rumble strip.

Father, we come to you today and we thank you that you’re a good Dad. You don’t get enough credit for that. We thank you that you desire things for us that are so good, we’re not even aware of it. So you’ve laid down these rumble strips. We may not understand them, we may be confused by them, but you’re a good Father and you have more wisdom than we do. So we thank you for the gift of a rumble strip. I pray that we would be people who would heed them and course correct if we need to—stay on the path so that we can live a long, good life. More importantly, a life that would be pleasing to you, a life where you could honestly look us in the eyes one day and say: Well done. Well done.

And for those who may be in the ditch right now because we didn’t pay attention to the rumble strip, I pray that your Holy Spirit, that same Holy Spirit, would comfort them and bind up their wounds, would overcome their shame and let them know that there is still hope and that hope can be found in and through a relationship with your Son, Jesus Christ.

So, Father, meet us in this place right now. I pray that your Holy Spirit would just be present in the room where we are right now. We ask this in Jesus’ name. And everyone says: Amen.