

Three Kinds of Blindness

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Date: 04 October 2009

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[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles to 2 Peter 1. With your family.

Maybe you'd like to kick the smoking habit or the addiction to pornography. Maybe you'd simply like to see your faith permeate your entire life instead of it just being something that you do on Sunday or when you have your devotions.

Some feel the need to change their cold, dry, dull hearts. We all have something about ourselves that needs changing. Who among us is perfect?

Of course, no one is. And so we all have change and growth to undergo. If that's the case, and we know that it is, that we should be changing, then the question comes, why aren't we changing as we should be?

Why aren't we growing more in grace, becoming more like our Savior Jesus? Why aren't we making those needed adjustments, changes in our lives? What's the shortcoming?

[1:22] Maybe you haven't memorized a verse on that particular area yet, and so you haven't gotten to it. Or maybe there hasn't been a sermon series on the particular thing you need work on in your life. Or maybe you just haven't found a good book yet that addresses your particular struggle.

Or maybe for some, and I hope this isn't the case, but maybe you just don't care. You know something needs to change, but you'd rather not bother. The status quo is much easier.

You'd rather go with that. And it's just how I've always done it. And I'd rather just keep on going that way, because change makes me uncomfortable. It's going to require work, and some pain, and some agony along the way, so I'm not going to bother with it.

If that's the case, how can we break the cycle of knowing that we need to change, but not really wanting to change? Or maybe you really do want to change, and maybe you've tried, and maybe you've tried lots of times and lots of ways, and none of it has worked.

What then? How do you change? How do you get out of that rut? Do you change that sinful behavior, that damaging pattern in your life? Maybe you're sitting there thinking, well, I don't need to change so much, but my inconsiderate spouse sure does.

[2:31] I hope that they're listening, and that they'll learn something about change. Or my kids, my lazy and disrespectful kids, well, they're not in here, but I'll be able to take this home and teach it to them.

Well, that no doubt is true. Your inconsiderate spouse does need to change, and your children do need work. But so do you.

So how do people change? I'm glad you asked. I have a book here. It's called *How People Change*. It's written by two men, Tim Lane and Paul Tripp.

And from what I have read or skimmed so far, which is about 30 or 40% of the book, I believe that this material has the potential to be life-changing. Well, that may be sort of obvious if it's a book about change, that it could change your life.

But I think if we separately as individuals and together as a church take some of these principles and begin to apply them in our personal and in our corporate life, I think God could do wonderful things with us.

[3:37] Now, don't misunderstand. I think He is doing wonderful things in and through and with us here. But couldn't there be more? I think this book will provide some helpful reminders and help that could prove beneficial in our lives, again, as individuals and together as a congregation.

The two men that wrote it, Tim Lane and Paul Tripp, took a class, a counseling class from a man named David Powlison. Powlison is an excellent counselor. He's done some great thinking and writing on what biblical counseling should look like.

And they took his class. One of them took it in the early 80s and one took it in the year 2000 on the dynamics of biblical change. And they thought that it was so good and so profitable that more people needed to know about it, not just the people that took his class.

And so sometimes we're so blind and forgetful that we are ineffective and unproductive in our lives. There's often a gap in our application of the Gospel.

We're good at applying it to the past. Okay, here's where we're good at applying the Gospel. And then you see what's missing. We're good at applying it in the past. Jesus died for my sins. My sins are forgiven.

[4:42] And we're good at applying it to the future. I know that He has secured my eternity. I'm going to heaven. And there I'll never struggle with sin and temptation. I've got that.

I've got my sins forgiven. I'm going to heaven. And we're good at applying the Gospel on those two ends of life. Not always so good at applying it right now in the present. Right here.

In the here and now. What does the Gospel have to say to me today? How does it help me as a father, a husband, a worker, and a member of the body of Christ?

How does it help me respond to the difficulty and make decisions? How does it give me meaning, purpose, and identity? How does it motivate my ministry to others? We need to see that the Gospel isn't just for the forgiveness of sins in the past, heaven in the future, but it belongs in your workplace, kitchen, school, bedroom, backyard, and van.

The Gospel makes a connection between what you are doing and what God is doing. And so, sometimes it seems as though we miss that present application of the Gospel to our lives.

[5:48] Well, why is that? Why don't we always take the glorious promises of the truth of God's world? We've got Christ Himself dwelling in us. Why don't we remember that for the present?

Well, the authors talk about three kinds of blindness. Three kinds of blindness that prevent us from seeing what we could have right now. The first is blindness of identity, and that could take two very different forms.

One is that we don't see how serious our sinfulness is. We're saved by grace, yes, but we're sinners saved by grace, and we still have indwelling sin to deal with in our lives.

And we must live by that grace by which we're saved. Some can tend to think, I'm a Christian after all, so I'm okay. But we easily underestimate that power of the sin that remains in our heart that's pulling us back to what we once were.

And if the problem doesn't seem that bad, we don't see the sin, we don't see our proneness to go back to it, our proneness to become ensnared by it again, we don't see that. Then we don't see our need for the radical remedy for sin, which is the Gospel.

[6:58] It's not just for passing, it's for your present struggle with sin. So if you forget that you're a sinner who's saved by grace, you might not think that you need the Gospel. Others are blind to their identity who they are in Christ.

They're a sinner, yes, but saved by grace. Some forget that aspect of it, that they have a new Gospel identity. They don't remember that they're children of God with all of its rights and privileges. If who I am in Christ, these are our authors, if who I am in Christ does not shape the way I think about myself and the things I face, then I will live out of some other identity. How do you think of yourself?

If I ask you today, who are you? What would you say? What's your identity? I'm a divorcee. I'm a mom. I'm a widow. I'm a wife.

I'm a person with depression. Some people, that's their identity. I'm a person with depression. I'm a person without a job. I'm a factory worker.

[7:59] I'm a single parent. I'm a farmer. I'm a truck driver. I'm a teacher. Those things are important aspects of our experience in this life, but they are not who we are. And so they write, for too many of us, our sense of identity is more rooted in our performance than it is in God's grace.

We define ourselves by our circumstances instead of by what Christ has done for us. Who we are in Him. And so when we forget who we are, that we're sinners saved by grace, we tend to forget how to apply the Gospel right in the present, in the here and now.

So we're blind to who we are. Second, we can be blind to God's provision for us. We have everything we need for life and godliness. Do you really believe that?

Right now that you have what you need to live a godly, holy life in this present world. You say, you don't know my life. You don't know the struggles I face. You don't know how much homework I have

every day.

You don't know how crazy my kids are. You don't know how difficult it is to live with my wife or with my husband. You're right. I don't know.

[9:06] But God does. And He's given you everything you need for life and to be godly in this life. Not just to barely get by, yelling and screaming at everybody every day and depressed and discouraged, but everything you need to be godly in this life.

He's given it to you. You have that. And His provision is not just the Bible. It is that. But it's more than that. It's the incarnate Word.

It's Christ Himself. Again, many people, yeah, I've got Christ. I've got my sins forgiven. He's going to get me to heaven. But then they doubt Him for present grace and strength. But Galatians 2.20 says, I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live.

But Christ lives in me. Right now, if you are a believer, you have Christ living in you. And that's the power that you need to live in this life.

The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. Jesus, who lived a perfect life, is living in you. That's good news to me. Because I need to live a perfect and holy life.

[10:12] And I can't. But I've got Jesus in me. God has provided that for me. And if we are blind to that, then we tend to despair and forget to apply the Gospel in the present.

To forget that we have Christ in the present. Without an awareness of Christ's presence, we tend to live anxiously. We avoid hard things and are easily overwhelmed.

But a clear sense of identity and provision gives us hope and courage to face the struggles and temptations that come our way. So if we don't realize there's something for us in the present, we'll despair.

We won't know how to live this life. But then, blind to God's progress, this also prevents us from applying the Gospel in the present. God has not called us to a life of I have spiritually arrived or I am just waiting for heaven.

He's calling us to a life of growth. A life of change. A life of becoming more and more like our Savior Jesus. Anybody here can say that you're perfectly like Jesus today?

[11:15] Well, of course not. But we should all be able to say that that's our goal. And if our goal is up here and we're down here, then that means that there's growth to be done. There's change to be done in our lives.

And God's intention for us is to be growing and to be changing. We need to be aware of that process. And that process will not always be smooth and easy. To get from here to here, there are going to be bumps along the way.

There's going to be pain. There's going to be trial. And we may think, well, the Christian life should be all about happiness and joy and everything going well for me. What happened to that part of it? Well, part of the process that God uses to get us from point A to point B is trials.

And difficulty. And pain. And suffering even. It takes that to open our eyes to our flaws and our needs. God is not working for our comfort and ease.

He is working on our growth. And so, we need to be aware of God's process that He's trying to grow us to make us more holy. That means that we're in for a process of frequent confession and repentance as God shows us our sin and our need for change.

[12:22] And so, if you're blind to these things, we need our eyes open to who we are to what God has provided for us and to what He's doing in us. So, that's something of the gap.

We forget how to live in the here and now sometimes. If that's the case, if there's this void, this empty space here, in science, nature abhors a vacuum.

If there's an empty space, something will rush to fill it. Now, that's not just a scientific truth. You know that to be true in your home. You finally get the counter cleaned off or the junk drawer straightened and cleaned out and what happens?

Well, nature abhors a vacuum. Everything rushes to fill that space and two days later it looks like it did before you cleaned it. If there's a gap, something's going to run in and fill that space.

Well, that's true. I don't know who I am. I don't know what God has provided and so I'm going to try to make my own way. And so, we've got these substitute, these counterfeit gap fillers, things that try to fill that space in our lives.

[13:23] And there could be all sorts of things. What are here are those that are most plausible to us, that have an element of truth in them. And so, we might see, oh, that's a good idea and grasp it. I'm not giving you all the more sinful gap fillers like some people, they don't know how to live and so they drown their sorrows in alcohol.

They get drunk and they can forget about it. Those aren't the gap fillers that we're talking about. We're going to give you ones that have an air of plausibility, of reality about them that people tend to fill that space with.

We're struggling with this and we see it so we try to fix it. Well, here's some things that we use to try to fix our lives instead of remembering the gospel. How do you cope with the daily grind of working, parenting, and marriage and the challenges that come from those things?

Well, here's some things. And just a note about their danger. They're dangerous because they're plausible. They're believable. We look at them and we see, oh, there's something there and then we chase after it wholeheartedly to the neglect of the rest of the gospel.

And so, they may have elements of helpful truth in them but it's not the whole truth. And many of them are external things that don't deal with the heart. And they appeal to our self-righteousness and to our independence and to our selfishness without ever getting at the root of the problem.

[14:40] And so, look for yourselves in these things. I'm going to challenge you like the authors do. Look for yourselves in these descriptions. Is it possible that you have a gap in your gospel and it has been filled in ways you didn't realize?

Now, it's going to be easy as we look at these things to think, oh, I know somebody like that. I know somebody that's a formalist or an activist. That's okay if that serves to illustrate it but you think about yourself and which one of these or which ones of these you are prone to.

Formalism. Some fill the gap with church attendance and activity. They are at every service. They are active in ministry whether teaching or practical hands-on sorts of things.

They come to the prayer meeting but all of those activities have little effect on the heart. Formalism doesn't see the seriousness of my spiritual condition and my constant need for God's grace to rescue me.

Church attendance and all of these things are just part of a healthy, well-rounded life for you.

People think that we're good people because we go to church and we do too. We're pretty pleased with ourselves.

[15:49] The problem is that Jesus condemned this very thing in the Pharisees. The Pharisees were involved in ministry. They were faithful church attenders.

Every time the door of the church was open they were there. The synagogue. They were present. They were meticulous about how they tithed even. But they neglected justice and mercy and faithfulness and their hearts were not dealt with on the inside.

And you know what Jesus calls them. He doesn't call them faithful people. He calls them hypocrites. They do much but there's little or no change of heart.

Formalism reduces the gospel to participation in the meetings and ministry of the church. That's one way people try to fill the gap.

And they make themselves feel better because they go to church. A second one is legalism. Some people fill the gap with a list of do's and don'ts replacing the gospel with the law.

[16:48] Whatever problem I've got I can fix it by behaving a certain way. By doing this, this, this, and this and not doing this list of things over here. They evaluate not only themselves but everyone around them on the basis of their lists.

there's little or no grace and so there's little joy and of course it misses the fact that no one can merit favor with God by all of their obedience and supposed good behavior.

It forgets the need for our hearts to be transformed by God's grace. Often goes beyond God's law adding their own thoughts and traditions. They begin essentially to unchurch other people at least in their minds who don't meet their standard.

word. This substitute doesn't reduce the gospel. It is a counterfeit gospel. You can look at Galatians 1 and see what Paul thinks of people who add anything to Jesus.

These people are trying to get to heaven to fix all their problems by their good works. It is a miserable way to live. So legalism. Then mysticism.

[17:54] This is the person that goes from one spiritual emotional high to another. It is all about the experience. And when they are in the valley in between they begin to doubt God's goodness and

they even often doubt their own salvation when they are in those valleys.

Often there is not growth but only excitement. Or what little growth was obtained on the mountaintop they lose once they are back in the valley. So when they are facing difficulty and trouble they say I need another experience.

I need another retreat. I need another ladies weekend. I need another this. Experience to experience to experience. And those things are good and they have their place.

But if that is all you have got then you have reduced the gospel to dynamic emotional and spiritual experiences. That is how some try to fill. Others activism is their gap filler.

This person is all about protecting or excuse me protesting the wickedness in the world around us. They cry the loudest against evil in society and those who perpetrate it.

[18:55] You find them at rallies on picket lines. You find them calling their senators and working the phones at election time. We admire them because of their devotion to good Christian causes.

But on closer examination their Christianity is more a defense of what's right than a joyful pursuit of Christ. So quote from the authors, whenever you believe that the evil outside you is greater than the evil inside you, a heartfelt pursuit of Christ will be replaced by a zealous fighting of the evil around you.

Celebration of the grace that rescues you from your own sin will be replaced by a crusade to rescue the church from the ills of the surrounding culture. Christian maturity becomes defined as a willingness to defend right from wrong.

The gospel is reduced to participation in Christian causes. And so activism is something that people try to really good at seeing evil in other people and in society but not so good at seeing that they're blind to their own identity, that they still struggle with sin.

So they're good at pointing out everyone else's. Biblicism. Here's something with a certain air of plausibility about it. This is the expert in Bible and theology.

[20:11] They pour their time into reading their excellent, extensive, personal library that they have acquired. They love to know and to talk about what they know.

They know a lot about the Bible but they don't always seem to live it out very well. They're known more for knowledge than for faithfulness to God. They tend to be proud and critical of others who don't have as fine-tuned a theology as they do.

Theological expert but he is unable to live by the grace he can define with such technical precision.

The gospel is reduced to a mastery of biblical content and theology. I've got a problem.

I'm going to study God's Word and they learn all about what God's Word says but they never apply it to their life but they know a lot. Biblicism. Psychologism. Another dangerous substitute.

Gap filler. These types are often reading self-help books. Even Christian ones. To find the solution to their many painful problems. They're always looking for other people to minister to them.

[21:13] They do seek help in Christ but tend to view them more like a therapist than a redeemer or a savior. Instead of seeing their biggest problem as sin, they tend to think their problems come from their circumstances.

What other people have done to them. They come from neglect, rejection, a poor upbringing, not having enough money, not having a good enough spouse, and so on. It's always someone else's fault.

They're a victim of their circumstances, an inconsiderate spouse, hyperactive children, terrible work conditions. So they redefine the problem that the gospel addresses. Rather than seeing our problem as moral and relational, a problem with sin, they see our problem as a whole catalog of unmet needs.

I've got all these needs and nobody's meeting them. Christianity becomes a pursuit of healing rather than a pursuit of forgiveness and godliness. The gospel is reduced to the healing of emotional needs.

And then the last counterfeit socialism. This person tends to fill the gospel gap with relationships and relationships with the great people around them at church.

[22:21] They tend to focus on their particular age group. And I'm going to pick on some, not because I think you're doing this, but take a college and career group. And it's vibrant. They've got great activities and they love going to those things.

And then they love being together on the Lord's Day and having the opportunity to fellowship. And that could be true of the senior citizens group or the young people or whatever. But take your pick.

They begin to focus on that particular group.

But then when some in the group graduate and move on, the group isn't quite as vibrant as it once was and the church begins to emphasize something else and the person that led the college and career moves away.

I'm not suggesting that you do that. And the group sort of crumbles and this person who has filled the gap with that, then they don't have it anymore.

They begin to sort of, what's the point of going to church if those people aren't there? What's the point of Christianity as all? It was a source of joy because it was a source of relationships and social interaction.

[23 : 23] And when that fades, so does their faith. So does Christianity. Fellowship, acceptance, respect, and position in the body of Christ replace dependence on communion with Christ.

The gospel is reduced to a network of fulfilling Christian relationships. You see how all of these flow out of one of these aspects of blindness. If we don't know who we are in Christ, then we're going to try to be formalists.

We'll do all of these things. If we are blind to God's process, how He's working for change, then we'll change in this way. We'll fill the gap with these things. You might be surprised that I would include or that the authors would include some of these things under counterfeit ways to fill the here and now.

Because the gospel does call us to obey God's rules. The gospel does call us to gather together with God's people on the Lord's day. It does call us to stand for truth against evil.

It does call us to love and to study His word. It does call us to seek comfort from God in our sorrow and to enjoy a close relationship with God and fellowship with His people.

[24 : 31] The gospel calls us to all of those things. That's why any one of these things on their own is so dangerous. Because we say, the Bible tells me to do this. But if you isolate them down to just one or two of these things instead of seeing the whole gospel, then it becomes a substitute and a poor one at best.

We're to be daily walking with Christ, reveling in His grace that He shows to us. And these things are a means to that end. When they become ends in themselves, they become cheap substitutes for the gospel of God's grace shown to us in Jesus Christ.

So don't take any one of these things as the answer to all of your problems. It's a collection of these things, but it's still missing the most important thing, and so we come to the real gap filler.

And we're not going to spend a lot of time on it today. That's what the rest of the book is about. It's how to live in the present. So we're going to spend several weeks fleshing all of this out, but very simply or briefly, it is the gospel of Christ's grace.

The gospel of God's grace shown to us in Christ. The gap filler is the same as the answer to the problem of our sins that need forgiveness and our eternity that is secured in heaven.

[25 : 49] He has given us also not just forgiveness, not just heaven, but everything we need to make it right now in the present. The authors say it is not enough to embrace Christ's promise of life after death.

We must also embrace His promise of life before death, which is only possible because of Christ's grace at work in our hearts today. Our intention in this book, our intention is to take the gospel of Christ's grace into all the specific places where you live your life.

And so they give us five gospel perspectives that they're going to be writing this book from, that we'll be taking with us through our study on how people change. And the first, and they flow again out of our blindness, you have to know who you are.

You have to know the extent and the gravity of your sin. This is the T in TULIP. Total depravity. It affects every part of us. But unless you believe that there's a problem, you won't be committed to pursuing the only solution to that problem, which is Christ.

The present grace of Christ. You watch people on TV, maybe, and Biggest Loser radically change their appearance. But do you know that those people have to wake up to one reality before they'll ever be motivated to go through that kind of strict exercise and diet?

[27 : 08] They have to believe, to put it bluntly, that they are fat. And that that needs to change. And if they don't believe it, they won't seek a radical solution. And if you don't believe that your indwelling sin is very real and powerful, you won't see what the big deal about change is.

You won't think that you need much change. And so they write, only when you accept the bad news of the gospel, does the good news make any sense? The grace, restoration, reconciliation, forgiveness, mercy, patience, and so on, hope of the gospel are for sinners.

They are only meaningful to you if you admit that you have the disease and realize that it's terminal. Again, we're good at seeing other people sin, but we think that we're okay. And as long as you think that you're okay and that you don't need to fight against sin, then you're not going to see the point of this book at all.

That you need the gospel right here and now. Paul Tripp is writing this section and he gives this fabulous example about himself, about how we tend to fail to minimize our own sin.

We don't see it. He says, Early in our marriage, my wife Luella graciously pointed out many failures in my love for her. She wasn't being overly critical. She had seen real areas of sin rooted in wrong attitudes in my heart.

[28 : 26] I knew she loved me and I knew she wasn't crazy, but I simply couldn't believe that I was as bad as she was making me out to be. I look back and cringe at how self-righteous I was.

Self-righteousness is your own personal defense attorney. In a scary moment of self-defense, I said to her, 95% of the women in our church would love to be married to me.

How's that for humility? Luella sweetly informed me that she was in the 5%. I was good at helping other people see and own their sin.

He was a pastor, a counselor. I was good at helping other people see and own their sin. But I was not willing to believe that my need was just as desperate. Maybe I was blinded by my theological knowledge or my pastoral skill, but one thing is sure, I had forgotten who I was.

And I was offended that Luella had such a low opinion of me. If you don't see your sin, then you're not going to see your need for the gospel and the need for it right here and right now.

[29 : 35] We're good at seeing it at others, not so much in ourselves. It's easier for us to look at somebody else and say, you're fat. It's harder to look in the mirror and say the same thing about yourself. So we need to see our sin.

Another gospel perspective, the centrality of the heart. Many times we define godliness solely in terms of our behavior, our outward actions, the things that we do, the things that we say.

We want good behavior for our children. We want it even for ourselves. But there's a battle for the heart going underneath all of those outward actions. What goals, hopes, dreams do you have?

What is motivating you? What is producing that outward behavior? What are you worshiping? What idol is in your heart that will cause you to do whatever it takes to serve that idol?

You've got to get underneath the outward behavior to see what's in the heart. Is your good behavior just to get you the praise and favor of other people in the church?

[30 : 36] Then it's not really good. And so change has to be dealt with from the heart. It's not just outward performance. Our greatest problem, they write, our greatest problem is the sin that resides in our hearts.

That is why the message of the gospel is that God transforms our lives by transforming our hearts. Proverbs 4.23, Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

Your heart is the wellspring of life. That's the NIV. Above all else, guard your heart. It's the wellspring of life. If that's true, then you've got to deal at a heart level, not just an outward behavior level with your sin.

A lot of these substitute gap fillers deal with outward behavior, but they don't get at the heart, which is why we need the gospel. Don't forget also the third perspective there, present, the now, the present benefits of Christ.

Our hope for this life and next is a person. It's Jesus. Our hope for the here and now is Jesus. He is the wisdom behind every biblical principle and the power that we need to live them out.

[31 : 44] See, we're blind to our provision, but we need to see it, that it's Christ. Don't forget Galatians 2.20, I've been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

The life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God, by faith in the One who's living in me and gave Himself for me. Christ is our supply and we need to recognize it.

Fourth perspective is God's call to growth and change. This is the process that we're all too often blind to. Following Christ is not just a complacent coasting until we get to heaven.

We're called to godliness here and now. And that will require change where we're not holy. It will require growth where we're not holy enough and not for the right reasons.

What's the goal of this change? It is more than better marriage, well-adjusted children, professional success, or freedom from a few nagging sins. God's goal is that we would actually become like Him. [32:43] His goal is to free us from our slavery to sin, our bondage to self, and our functional idolatry so that we can actually take on His character. In 2 Peter, look at verse 4.

2 Peter 1.4 Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature. Escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

He's given you everything you need for life and godliness so that you can be like He is. So that you can participate in that divine nature. You say, I can't do that. I can't be like Christ. You're right. But He's given you everything that you need to be able to do it. That's what He wants for you. And then if that's true, He wants you to be like Him, then that will lead to a better marriage and better parenting and freedom from sin.

So the aim is to be like Christ. And then a lifestyle of repentance and faith. It means as God reveals to us more of our sin, more of our shortcomings, more of our need for change and growth, that means we'll have to repent of that sin.

[33:43] We're going to need faith in Christ to help us to be growing in the graces and the areas where we fall short. And that's possible only in His grace. Titus 2, 11 and 12.

The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It, that grace of God, teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

So that's going to take repentance where we come short and faith for grace to live. The just shall live by faith. Not just saved by faith, but that's how we live. Faith in Christ who's dwelling in us right now.

So again, does anyone have some part of their life that needs work? That needs change? That needs growth? Or do some here simply need encouragement about the power for living life in this present evil age?

You're tired. You're worn down. Don't feel like you can do it. Well, I trust that God will use the truths of His Word as they're helpfully expressed in this book to help us down that path, the holiness to greater likeness to our Savior Jesus.

[34:47] It's only by that Savior dwelling in us that we can do it. Don't fill that gap with all sorts of lame alternatives. Fill it with Christ. The truth of His Gospel. And again, this book will help to show us how to do that.

I know I haven't left time for comments or questions this week. We'll hopefully slow down the pace a little bit as we go and have time for more interaction.

But may God help us with these things and we're dismissed.