

Gospel Living for Younger Women (part 2)

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[0 : 00] Proverbs 31, verses 10 to the end of the chapter. A wife of noble character, who can find?
! She is worth far more than rubies.! Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.
She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She's like the merchant's ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it's still dark.
She provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it, and out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She sets about her work vigorously. Her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

[1 : 00] In her hands she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

When it snows, she has no fear for her household, for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed.

She is clothed in fine linen and purple. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies the merchants with sashes.

She is clothed with strength and dignity. She can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praises her.

[2 : 06] Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. One afternoon, a man came home from work to find total mayhem in his house.

His three children were outside, and they're still in their pajamas, fighting over a basketball. Empty food boxes and snack packages, wrappers were strewn throughout the yard.

The wife's car door was hanging open, and the front door was too, and inside was even a bigger mess. A lamp was knocked over, the TV's blaring, the cartoon network, toys everywhere, three bowls of cereal with the milk still in the bottom of them, sitting there on the TV stand, dishes covering the countertops, half-drunk cans of pop soda everywhere here and there, a broken glass under the table, a little pile of sand by the back door.

So this man, he quickly heads up the stairs. He's just afraid of what might have happened. He's stepping over toys and clothes as he goes up.

[3 : 39] He's looking for his wife, thinking that she might be sick, thinking that something maybe worse happened. And he found her curled up in her bed, in her pajamas, reading a book.

And she looked at him and smiled. Well, how did your day go, honey? I hope it went well. And it's so good to see you.

He looked at her just absolutely befuddled and asked, What happened today? What happened here today?

And she smiled and she answered and she said, You know, every day when you come home from work and you ask me what I did today? Yeah? Yeah?

Well, today I didn't do it. Ladies, the work you do is amazing. It's wonderful.

[4 : 45] And I know sometimes it goes unnoticed and unthanked, but you really are the wall between household chaos and household order.

So, men, if your wife is a Proverbs 31 woman, children, if your mother is a Proverbs 31 woman, then you be sure to say thank you to her tonight because she is working hard for you every day. I'm sure in the last day, in the last judgment, when awards and places of honor are being handed out, there are going to be a lot of pastors and elders taking some lower spots. And there are going to be a lot of mothers taking the higher spots. Lord, Lord, what did we do? Oh, you raised children for me. You showed hospitality to strangers for my sake. You washed the feet of my saints. You devoted to doing good.

[5 : 53] And no one noticed you. And they said you wasted your talents. You wasted your time, your life. You had to fight your own pride to keep serving. You had to fight and resist your own desires to keep serving, to take the lower place, but come and see what your work has achieved for you.

See what your humility has gained. Ladies, I want to encourage you to keep clinging to that promise that God will repay each person for what they have done.

That's not just a threat. It is a threat to the wicked, but it is a promise to the righteous. You can read it in Romans. It's a promise.

Repayment. You've been giving to God, and a time is coming when now he'll pay you back with interest. And so here we are in Titus chapter 2. Titus 2.

We're looking at verses 4 and 5, and tonight we're going to finish up talking to the younger ladies and asking, again, what, in the word of what we were just talking about, what is fitting?

[7 : 04] What is fitting for younger ladies who believe in the gospel, who have been saved? What is the kind of life that reflects the gospel? What kind of life is in harmony with the gospel for younger women?

And if you're talking about 1 Timothy or looking at it from that perspective, we're talking to anyone in childbearing years, childrearing years, and maybe just a little bit older.

So the line is 60 in 1 Timothy. What is it when you are in that stage of your life? What does a gospel-reflected life look like?

What is fitting for you? We looked at four so far, and they are each one word in the Greek. It's be a husband lover. Husband lover. Children lover.

Sober. That means discreet, emotionally self-controlled, thoughtful. Sober. And pure. Today we're going to talk about three more.

[8 : 05] And a great motivation. So three more and a great motivation. The next virtue that matches the gospel is another one word in the Greek. And it literally means house worker or house keeper, house protector.

It's not just being a maid. It's not an English house keeper where you just cleaned all day. It's much more comprehensive. It's sort of the idea that we just read in Proverbs 31.

She oversees her house. She manages her household. And so it's overseeing. It's managing. It's orchestrating. It's organizing. It's protecting.

The main ideas. It's Paul's main, I think, thrust behind this. And this word to these ladies in Crete is that they need to be productive in the sphere where they are at.

They need to be productive in this sphere. And so we've talked about what it was like or what was going on in Crete back when Paul is writing to Titus.

[9 : 12] There was this new wave of women who were being busybodies. They weren't doing anything particularly useful with their lives. There was a lot of idleness.

Paul told Timothy to have the younger widows to marry. Why? Why was that his real emphasis? Why would he say, if they can marry, make sure that they're marrying?

And he gives the reason. They get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. Not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies saying things they ought not to. In other words, idle hands are the devil's workshop. And so in order to prevent this kind of gossiping and busybody and just sitting around being idle or getting into other people's affairs, they need to get married and start doing something useful with their life.

And generally, getting useful in your life meant getting married and taking care of a family. And so that's Paul's primary concern here. Gospel living isn't being idle.

[10 : 30] It's not sitting around. It's not idle, busybodiness. It's not going around on your feet, in your car, on your phone, on your keyboard, Facebook, Instagram, getting into other people's

business.

So in that day, you went from house to house. In our day, with phones and computers, we can get into each other's houses and into each other's business right from our kitchen or our living room or wherever.

And so the key here is it's getting to work doing what God has called you to do. The Proverbs 31 woman doesn't eat the bread of idleness. She isn't idly chatting away, wasting her time.

So that's the main thrust. Be productive in the sphere where God has placed you, being a mother. Now, I don't think based on all that we know that that is all that God calls some women to.

All some women to do. We talked about this last week. The housekeeping business of a single woman is going to be quite different and probably quite less demanding than a mother with five young children or something like that.

[11:46] God calls women to different places at different times. And so I think as we look at all of Scripture, we can say that this is not all that God calls women to do, just to be managing the house.

And that's the only thing that they do. Home is a priority, but home is not a prison. It's a priority. It's not a prison. The Proverbs 31 woman isn't fluffing the pillows for the third time.

She isn't vacuuming a floor that doesn't need vacuuming. She isn't stuck in the house. She has a business. She's dealing with the merchants.

She's buying land. She's overseeing a vineyard. But it says that all of these things, that she's doing her husband good. She brings him good all the days of her life.

So all of this business that is taking place outside of the home, it doesn't take away from her husband and her family. Instead, she's adding to it.

[12:48] You'll notice in Proverbs 31, we've read it a couple of times. I'm sure you're very familiar with it. She's getting up early. The food is provided for. The future is taken care of. The clothes are already made.

The covers are already on the bed, so to speak. So all this, she's bringing her husband good. She's providing food for her family. Her servant girls are taken care of.

The food and clothes are taken care of. And now she's asking, okay, I have some time here. What else can I do? How else can I be productive? How else can I maybe bring some money in for the family?

And so she starts a business that says her trading is profitable. And so this, the sort of the feminist stereotype or the feminist way of looking at God's word where women are oppressed and confined and stilted and their gifts and their talents all are suppressed.

I don't think you can look at the word of God and say that that is the picture at all. Home is the Proverbs 31 woman's priority, but it's certainly not her prison in any way.

[14:01] You can think of other biblical women that show us that being a house worker is not all that a woman can do. It's pretty certain that Phoebe and Romans 16, 1, who are Phoebes named after, but Phoebe is 16, 1 was the carrier of the letter to the Romans.

So she was living near Corinth and she was going to visit Rome and Paul gave her the letter to take with her. Now, it's almost certain that she was a wealthy, prominent woman in her own right.

Now, a woman carrying a letter all by herself in the ancient world is going hundreds of miles is unthinkable. It's unimaginable. And so probably what was going on was she already had business in Rome and she was going.

And Paul took that opportunity to send Romans, the letter of Romans with her. And so she traveled with her companions, her family, her household or whoever she took along this letter.

Lydia was a dealer in purple cloth and axe. And purple cloth is high end merchandise. It wasn't Walmart. It was the high end stuff of the ancient world.

[15:12] And so she's not running a little shop to sell the other ladies on the street, so to speak. She's having dealings with the wealthiest of the wealthy. She's acting as a middleman between the guild, the Dyer's Guilds and Thyatira, where she is from, and all these aristocrats in Greece and Rome.

And she's this woman of great skill and gift. And so she did so well that when she was saved, she had a nice big home in which the church in Philippi could meet.

Now, that's just to say that the Bible doesn't hedge women into this tight spot, as it's imagined, where that's all they can do is to stay at home and do housework.

So loving your husband, loving your children, doing them good, overseeing the house, that is the priority. That's the first thing. That's the emphasis. That's sort of the grid, the filter that you say, okay, now what else can I do?

Or how else do these other things fit into that? It's a priority, but it's not just a prison to combine that to. And so, ladies, if that is your priority, then I want to encourage you to see it as that and to say, is that where my heart is?

[16:28] Am I giving it the emphasis that it needs to have, to deserve? Is that in the proper place? Now, that's going to look different for different people at different times and different places and different situations.

There is no cookie-cutter holiness. There's no cookie-cutter life. Husbands and children and homes and times and places and circumstances and situations.

There's different needs. There's different problems. There's different opportunities at different times. And so, but ladies, this is where God has called you to shine, to put your emphasis.

This is where you will bring great glory to God. This is where you sharpen those arrows. I love Psalm 127. It talks about that.

Psalm 127 talks about grown children as arrows in the hands of a warrior. That's what grown children can become. So when you're an elderly man or woman, and now your children are like sharpened arrows in your hand.

[17:43] That's what grown-up children can be. But, you know, sharp arrows don't just happen. Jesus himself in Isaiah, it says he was polished and hidden in God's hand.

Your arrows, ladies, your arrows need sharpened. Your arrows need polished. They aren't born that way. And they're sharpened when someone takes them and puts them on their lap and lovingly and carefully works, goes to work on them, focuses on them.

Iron sharpening iron. Moms, that's one reason why mothering is so difficult. Because it can be that iron versus iron.

And that means abrasion and exhaustion and grinding and confronting and pushing and pulling and teaching. It is a demanding thing.

Pulling and pushing, it's not easy. So parenting the devil's way is easy enough. You pop in the DVD and you hop onto the Instagram and you entertain the kids.

[18:57] Parenting God's way takes all the wisdom and the skill and the gifts and the thought and the thinking that you have. It's a work of art.

It's not easy. It's not demeaning. It's not beneath you. It is a work of art. And you pour your life into it and your skill into it.

And it's difficult. Michelangelo, the great Renaissance painter, he wasn't even a painter. He was a sculptor. And the Pope told him one time, I want you to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Michelangelo pleaded and he said, I don't know how to paint. And the Pope said, well, you'll do a good job. So Michelangelo had to learn how to paint fresco.

And then he started on the job. And so he learned how. And when he had learned, he painted over his head. So standing up like this with his head back, painting like this for four years every day.

[20:03] On top of scaffolding 60 feet in the air. So every day he had to mix his plaster and put it on the ceiling and then hurry up and paint before the plaster dried.

You can read how it was for him. His neck screamed in pain. His back hurt all the time. His shoulders ached. And at points he begged and he pleaded with the Pope to let him stop.

And the Pope refused. And so he labored on. And in the end, something that was just a blank nothing had become a wonder to behold.

That's what being a mom is like. That's what it is. You're called to it. And you quickly find out that it's harder than what you thought it was going to be.

And sometimes you want to stop. But you have to keep going. And God encourages you. And God encourages you. And God helps you. And day by day you climb that scaffolding.

[21:14] And you put the plaster on the ceiling. And you get to work. You reach for your paintbrush again. And your neck and your back. Screaming. And you get to work.

Well, let the world pity you. You know, let the world think what they're going to think. You aren't less. Because you work hard at home. And you aren't less. Because you serve. Michelangelo wasn't less. Because he didn't spend his days hanging out with princes and nobles.

And he wasn't less. Because he was sweating and laboring. And this was hard work. And so in obscurity and in work, he gained a place that the Pope never ever gained, did he? We don't know who that Pope is. I didn't even bother looking him up. Jesus served. He served with all his love.

[22 : 20] And all of his skill. He knew what it was like to sit at a well in the middle of the day, exhausted. But when his work was done, God highly exalted him.

That's the way it works in God's family. That's the way it works in God's kingdom. And so, mothers, are you in God's kingdom? Well, then this is the way it's going to work for you.

Serve now. Glory later. Sacrifice now. Gladness later. So you keep climbing the scaffolding. You keep caring. You keep pouring your energy and your life into this.

You keep serving. And what you are doing in your service is you are walking in the Savior's footsteps. This is the way that he walked. He walked in service.

He went around doing good. Isn't that what you do all day long? You're going around doing good. Well, that's what Jesus did.

[23 : 21] That's the path he took. So be encouraged. So house worker or housekeeper, the next virtue is kind. Kind.

It's easy to be, when you're overwhelmed with work, it's easy to be harsh. Isn't it? It's easy to be just tired and then you become harsh. Well, he says next, you want to be kind.

That's what the gospel life looks like. You're living in kindness. It means good. You're living in goodness to others. It means useful. And so you remember the widows in Acts 9?

Tabitha died. Was it Tabitha? I think it was. She died. She died. And the widows cried when she died.

And they showed Peter the robes and the other clothing that she had made when she was still with them. She was a woman that did good.

[24 : 27] What are some other feminine good deeds? 1 Timothy talks about faithful to her husband, bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints.

That's doing the menial work of the church, menial caring for others, helping those in trouble, devoting yourself to all kinds of good deeds.

And so here's Tabitha. She wants to do that. She sees a need, these widows, and so she starts, she has the ability.

She uses her skill. She uses her ability, and she makes them robes and other clothing. Tabitha was a Job. Job said, I made the widow's heart sing.

That was part of Job's righteousness, that he went around to those who were in need, and he did them good, and such good that their hearts sang when they saw Job.

[25 : 30] Tabitha loved, and she had skills, and she had the means, and she did good. Women in the early church were very well known for going out into the streets of the ancient Roman world and rescuing abandoned babies, generally little girls.

So, child abandonment, baby abandonment, was a common thing in the ancient world. It was a common thing in Rome, common thing in ancient Greece.

And so, why isn't that a part of our culture anymore? Why in the West, why in historically Christian countries, is that just totally unheard of?

It wasn't because some people made some laws, and there was some, you know, lobbying of the emperor, or anything like that. It was Christian ladies, 1900 years ago, were saying, no, we're going to take them.

And, they turned a culture of death, and that's what it was, into a culture of life, where you don't just abandon infants because you don't want them.

[26 : 42] a culture of life. And we see that, and even in our own time, there's this large, evangelical church movement towards adoption. That is a reflection of, of what the church has always done.

It's a reflection of ladies saying, I have home. I have love. I can help. And so that's kindness. That's goodness for the world to see.

James said, show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. Like what, James? What are you talking about? Oh, religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress.

That's just part of feminine godliness. It's not all, but it is a part. So last, what's, what's feminine godliness?

It's submission to your husband. Submission to your husband. Submission doesn't mean inferior. This is not misogyny.

[27 : 50] This is not woman hating. It's not slavery, and it's not oppression. This is not about the husband crushing his wife, dominating his wife, suppressing her gifts, suppressing her personality, suppressing her until she disappears behind him.

This is, this is not submission to every man. It's to her husband. And all this is a reflection of, our God is a God of order. There's, there's structures of authority.

There's structures of order. Even in the Trinity, there is a father and a son. They're, they're co-equal in glory. The same God, but they're different in roles.

One leads and one follows. One sins and one goes. The son is not less than the father. Not in any way, but he does the father's will.

Remember, Jesus is on the earth and he says, I do whatever my father tells me to do. This is what I do. I submit to him. And then in Gethsemane, this was his great, his righteousness was this.

[29 : 08] I will submit to you, father. Is there any other way that I, is there any other way? Can we make this cut pass? Nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done.

Wives, you are not less than your husbands because he takes the lead. So what does the submission look like? Well, it's, it's acts of submission, certainly, but it begins with a, the heart attitude.

Ephesians says, husbands love your wives and wives respect your husbands. First Peter talks about Sarah. She obeyed Abraham and called him her master.

She called him her Lord. And maybe you say of your husband, well, I would give him respect. If he earned it.

Well, Peter doesn't put it. If in there, you know, sometimes Abraham was worthy of that respect. You know, think of that time when he went out with his household and he took on those art, that army and he brought home the spoils.

[30 : 21] Sure. It was really easy for Sarah to respect Abraham when he's being brave and courageous and bold and taking action and taking initiative. And, you know, but sometimes he was chickening out, not even claiming that he was, she was his wife.

You know, that would be a hard day to respect your husband. Wouldn't it? You go into the party and he acts like you don't even exist, that you don't even belong to him. But the summary of Sarah was, she respected her husband.

Look over the whole of Sarah's life. She's respecting Abraham. She's saying, calling him Lord, calling him master. And, and this is just where if you struggle with this, I just want to say to the ladies, maybe if you gave him the respect you were commanded to do, he would act like the Lord that he was supposed to be.

treat him like a man and he'll live up to it. Treat him like a boy and he'll find a way to live down to that. Uh, there, that's, there is a gospel dynamic here of the way things work in God's kingdom. When does God give us the title saints? When we've earned it? No, he, he gives it to us at the beginning.

[31 : 48] When does he declare us righteous at the end? When we've somehow earned some righteousness? No, he does it at the beginning in grace. God gives us grace.

He gives us grace. He calls us saints. And then we learn how to be saints. He calls us children. And we just heard this morning.

Sometimes we can go days without even thinking about that. We're the children of God. We're not learning. We're not living like children, but, but I'm saying he gives us that title. And now he says, live up to it.

Live up to what I've done for you. Live up to what I've called you to do. Live up to who you are.

That's how grace works. And so ladies, if you really are struggling with this respect, I want to just encourage you.

Give your man that grace. And grace, submit yourself to him. And, and, and God's grace, he'll learn to live up to that respect.

[32 : 54] Treat him like a good leader. And he'll learn to be a good leader. And when it gets hard, ladies, think again of the mercy and the compassion that God has for you.

Let's be honest. You fail to, you feel God. And he doesn't say, that's it. You're not my daughter. You don't get the title anymore.

Yeah. I'm not going to treat you like a daughter anymore. You ever earned it. So you don't get it. No. When we fail, there's more grace. Isn't there? There's more. And men, shouldn't we make their submission sweet?

Shouldn't we be making their submission? An easy thing, a relieving thing. They don't want to be the first one through the door on everything. They don't want to have to take the initiative on everything in the family, in the marriage, in the relationship with the kids.

Ephesians says, fathers, bring up your children. It doesn't say mothers. It says, fathers, you bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord.

[34 : 06] So parenting, marriage, household management. Yes, they over, the ladies oversee it, but the buck stops with you. And so you got to own it.

You have to be a man. And let your woman be a woman. Lead and let them follow. And here's this big motivation for living this kind of way.

Even when it, when it could be fearful. I do, I do want to say it can be fearful. Ladies, can it, to submit to your husband? You don't, he's not God.

He's not all wise. He's not all good. He messes things up. Sarah herself knew that. But she trusted the Lord in that.

And I guess men, I want to say we, we should be mindful of that. Submitting to you should not be a fearful thing. You need to do a better job leading if it's a fearful thing.

[35 : 10] So, but what's the whole motivation for all of this? Ladies, why should you strive for all of this? And do this work.

It's hard. And it's demanding. And you're, you really have to live out what we talked about last week, where love is not self-seeking.

Well, Titus, the, Paul says this in verse five and how it ends is that, so no one will malign the word of God. No one will malign the word of God.

The world is watching. The world is weighing the gospel. What are they going to do? How are they acting?

What are they doing? Do their lives match up to what they say? Do they really love goodness? Or not? So your family is a testing ground for, the gospel.

[36 : 15] Your family is, is sort of like the laboratory for the gospel. So what are we going to see ladies? What are they going to see?

Are they going to see that there's nothing really to this gospel? Doesn't do anything good. Doesn't make any difference. Their lives are demonstrably no better than ours.

They have the same conflicts, the same fights. They're at each other's throats. It's no different. It's the same laziness, the same idleness, the same gossip, whatever.

There's nothing to this gospel. Or are they like the queen of Sheba when she came to see Solomon? Do you remember? Do you remember? She came and she's looking at everything and looking at how wisely he reigns and looking at how well he does everything and how everything is so beautiful and wisely arranged.

And she says, how happy your men must be. How, how happy your officials. She saw Solomon's kingdom and the wisdom God gave him.

[37 : 22] And, and she said with joy, what a, what a glory. Praise the Lord. Do our families do the same thing.

Do they speak of God's wisdom? Do they say, wow, look at his, this is a little outpost of his kingdom. And look at that. Look at how it is there. Do they, do our families speak of God's wisdom of God's glory?

Do they pour out this joy or this life and this light? Do they say the gospel is powerful? Powerful. It's powerful. Look at what it's doing. It's good.

You see, there's no arguing with results. You can't argue with joy. You can't argue with goodness. You can't malign the gospel when it's so clearly produces harmony and peace.

And so that's the great motive. The world is watching. They're weighing God's word. They're weighing the gospel. And they're going to, they're going to justify it or condemn it rightly or wrongly.

[38 : 35] They're going to justify it or condemn it, malign it or speak well of it by what they see in our families, by what they see in young women's lives.

That's what Paul was saying. So it's a lot riding on what we do. And so ladies and gentlemen, and I want to throw in older ladies, because you remember older ladies?

This is your syllabus. This is what you are to be teaching the younger ladies. They're there to learn these things. Not first or so much from pastors, but from the older women in the church.

The gospel witness depends upon us. You know, we can't do signs and wonders. We can't go out and do miracles and say, look at this, this, this is true.

But we can say to the watching world, look at what Jesus does. Look at what he's done for us. Look at how he's helped us. Look at this marriage. Look at what he can do for you.

[39 : 43] Our families can't save them. But our families can point to the savior. And our families can encourage them and say, you know what?

There is something to that gospel. It's not a waste of time. There is really a savior. And he really is making a difference.

In people's lives today. Well, let's pray. Heavenly father, we do first confess our sins.

We confess our sins as men. I'm not being good leaders. Of not being like Jesus. We've too often lived for ourselves and loved ourselves instead of laying down our lives for our wives.

We've been cowardly and unbelieving. And we haven't been good leaders. And we've put the weight on our wives' shoulders when it shouldn't have been.

[40 : 55] So forgive us, please. I cannot speak for the ladies. I'm sure that they could say that there's been times when they have not respected and loved and submitted.

There's not been times when their hearts were not synced up with what your priorities were. But they were in other things and in other places.

And so forgive them and help us all. The world is watching. We, our families can be these lampposts.

And so please help us to shine. Help us to shine brightly. Give us grace when we are discouraged.

Give us grace when we don't know what to do. Give us grace to deny ourselves.

And we do pray that, that they would see your wisdom. There's nothing wrong with your word.

[41 : 56] There's nothing wrong with the gospel. There's nothing wrong with any of your commands. They are completely perfect. The error, the sin is in us. And so please help us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Help us to walk closely and help us to have our hearts. Set on the things that you have for us and have commanded us. Bless us this week.

We'll be going to work. We'll be with our families. We'll be raising our children. And we need grace upon grace. So please pour it out upon us.

For all of our confusion, give us wisdom. For our impatience, give us patience and grace. And help us then to honor you in the way that we live.

We pray these things for Jesus' sake. That we might be a fitting bride for our groom. His name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[43 : 00] Amen. Amen.