



TAMPA LIFE CHURCH



YOUTH BIBLE STUDY SERIES

OFFLINE

CROSSING THE RIGHT LINE

Consecration Before God Does Wonders

TURN OFF THE NOISE. TUNE IN TO GOD.

TAMPA LIFE CHURCH // YOUTH MINISTRY

> SECTION 1

God Often Repeats His Miracles for Different Purposes

One of the beautiful patterns we discover throughout Scripture is that God often repeats His works, but He does so to reveal a deeper dimension of His character and His purpose. Every miracle is intentional. God never performs wonders simply to impress people; every miracle teaches a spiritual truth and moves His people one step closer to His eternal purpose. When we compare Israel's crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus with their crossing of the Jordan River in Joshua, we immediately notice striking similarities. In both events, God stopped the waters, made a dry path where there had been none, and led His people safely across. Yet although the miracle looked similar on the surface, God's purpose was entirely different.

The first crossing took place at the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses. Israel had just been delivered from more than four centuries of slavery in Egypt. Pharaoh's army was behind them, the sea was before them, and there appeared to be no escape. At that moment, God demonstrated His unmatched power by dividing the waters, allowing His people to cross on dry ground before destroying the Egyptian army that pursued them. This miracle was God's declaration that He alone was Israel's Deliverer. The crossing of the Red Sea marked the end of slavery and the beginning of a new life. It was a miracle of redemption.

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left."

EXODUS 14:21-22 (KJV)

Years later, another generation stood before another body of water. This time it was not the Red Sea but the Jordan River. Moses had died, and Joshua had become Israel's new leader. The people were no longer fleeing from Egypt; they were standing on the threshold of the land God had promised to Abraham centuries before. There was no Egyptian army pursuing them. Instead, there was an inheritance waiting on the other side. Once again, God stopped the waters. Once again, His people crossed on dry ground. Yet this miracle was not about escaping bondage, it was about entering promise. The God who delivers is also the God who establishes His people in the blessings He has prepared for them.

Brother Taylor Fairbanks highlights an important distinction from Joshua 3. Before the waters ever parted, Joshua gave the people a remarkable command: "Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." Unlike the Red Sea, where Israel was running from an enemy, the Jordan River required preparation before they could enter God's promise. The miracle was preceded by consecration.

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

JOSHUA 3:5 (KJV)

This reveals a powerful spiritual principle. God does not simply deliver us from something; He always desires to lead us into something. Too often we celebrate our salvation but fail to pursue our calling. Israel could not remain forever on the wilderness side of the Jordan. God's intention was never merely to rescue

them from Egypt but to establish them in Canaan. Likewise, our experience of repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost is not the finish line of our spiritual journey, it is the beginning of a life of continual growth, spiritual maturity, and kingdom purpose.

The New Testament reflects this same pattern. Jesus did not save His disciples merely to forgive them of their sins; He transformed them into apostles who would turn the world upside down. Paul reminded the believers in Ephesus that salvation was never God's final objective.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

EPHESIANS 2:10 (KJV)

Notice the progression. We are saved unto good works. Grace does not end with forgiveness; grace empowers purpose. God delivers us from sin so that we may become instruments through which His glory is revealed to the world.

Perhaps the greatest lesson from these two crossings is that every believer experiences both journeys. There is a Red Sea moment when God breaks the chains of our past, forgives our sins, and sets us free through His saving power. But there is also a Jordan moment when He calls us to leave spiritual complacency behind and step into deeper levels of faith, obedience, consecration, and usefulness in His Kingdom. The God who opened the first sea is faithful to open the second river as well. The question is not whether God is able to perform another miracle. The question is whether we are willing to prepare ourselves for the greater purpose He has waiting on the other side.

As we continue through this study, we will discover that the greatest obstacle between God's people and His promises is not always an enemy standing before them. Sometimes it is simply the need for a heart that is fully surrendered to Him. Before God performs wonders among His people, He often calls them to something that seems simple but is profoundly transformative: "Sanctify yourselves." That call to consecration becomes the doorway through which we enter everything God desires to do in our lives.

> SECTION 2

Deliverance Is Not the End of the Journey

One of the greatest misunderstandings in the Christian life is believing that salvation is the destination rather than the beginning. Many people rejoice when God delivers them from sin, breaks destructive habits, restores their lives, or fills them with the Holy Ghost, and rightly so. Heaven itself rejoices over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7). Yet if we stop there, we miss the greater purpose of God's redemption. God's intention has never been merely to bring His people out of bondage; His purpose is to bring them into His promises. Deliverance is not God's final goal, it is His starting point.

This truth is illustrated beautifully in Israel's history. The generation that crossed the Red Sea experienced one of the greatest miracles recorded in Scripture. They watched the waters divide before their eyes. They walked across on dry ground. They witnessed Pharaoh's mighty army swallowed by the sea. They sang songs of victory on the opposite shore because the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had delivered them from centuries of slavery. Yet despite witnessing such extraordinary power, many of those same people never entered the Promised Land.

The problem was never God's ability to fulfill His promise. The problem was that although Israel had left Egypt physically, Egypt had never fully left their hearts. They had been delivered from slavery, but they had not yet learned to live as God's covenant people. They continually looked backward instead of forward. When difficulties arose, they longed for the familiarity of Egypt instead of trusting the God who had already proven Himself faithful.

"And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron... And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

NUMBERS 14:2-4 (KJV)

How astonishing that a people who had seen the Red Sea split would still desire to return to the place of their bondage. Yet before we judge Israel too harshly, we must recognize that we often face the same temptation. There are times when God delivers us from sinful habits, unhealthy relationships, destructive thinking, or spiritual complacency, but when trials come, the flesh longs for what is familiar rather than what is holy. Freedom requires faith because God's promises often lie beyond our comfort zone.

Brother Taylor Fairbanks points out a significant difference between the first crossing and the second. At the Red Sea, Israel was escaping an enemy. At the Jordan River, there was no Egyptian army behind them. Instead, there was an inheritance before them. The obstacle was no longer bondage; it was believing God for the next step. Their greatest challenge was not leaving Egypt, it was trusting God enough to enter Canaan.

This distinction speaks directly to every believer. Many of us can testify of the day God saved us. We remember the peace that flooded our hearts after repentance. We remember the joy of baptism in Jesus' name and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. Those moments are precious and should never be forgotten. Yet the Lord continues to ask each of us, "Will you keep following Me?" Salvation is not merely an event to remember; it is the doorway into a lifelong relationship that continually transforms us into the image of Christ.

The apostle Paul expressed this progression in his own life. Although he had experienced a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus and had been used mightily by God, he refused to believe he had already arrived spiritually.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14 (KJV)

Notice Paul's language. He was not living in yesterday's victories. Neither was he imprisoned by yesterday's failures. His eyes remained fixed on the future God had prepared for him. Mature believers understand that every season with God opens the door to an even deeper season. The Christian life is a continual journey from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18), from faith to faith (Romans 1:17), and from strength to strength (Psalm 84:7).

This is one reason why spiritual growth sometimes feels uncomfortable. God rarely leaves us where we are. Just as Israel had to leave the wilderness behind to possess Canaan, we must continually leave behind old attitudes, old fears, old priorities, and old ways of thinking. Every new level of spiritual maturity requires greater trust, deeper surrender, and increased dependence upon the Lord. What brought us out of Egypt is the same God who now calls us to walk into our inheritance.

The tragedy of the wilderness generation was not that they lacked miracles. They experienced miracles almost daily. They ate manna from heaven. They drank water from the rock. Their clothes did not wear out. A pillar of cloud guided them by day, and a pillar of fire by night. Yet miracles alone could not produce maturity. God's supernatural provision was intended to develop their faith, but many allowed unbelief to harden their hearts instead.

The writer of Hebrews uses Israel's experience as a warning for the New Testament church.

"And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

HEBREWS 3:18-19 (KJV)

Notice carefully that Israel did not fail because God changed His mind. They failed because they refused to trust Him. The greatest barrier between them and the Promised Land was not the Jordan River, nor the fortified cities of Canaan, nor the giants who lived there. Their greatest obstacle was unbelief.

Perhaps the most encouraging truth in Joshua's generation is that they refused to repeat the mistakes of those who came before them. They stood before another impossible river, but instead of complaining, they obeyed. Instead of longing for the past, they prepared for the future. Instead of allowing fear to dictate their actions, they followed the presence of God wherever it led them. Their story reminds us that every generation has the opportunity to choose faith over fear and obedience over hesitation.

As believers today, we must continually ask ourselves an important question: Are we satisfied simply because God brought us out of Egypt, or are we willing to follow Him all the way into the promises He has prepared for our lives? The answer to that question will determine whether we spend our lives wandering in spiritual wilderness or walking in the fullness of God's purpose. And as Joshua reveals, the path into that promise always begins with one essential word: consecration.

> SECTION 3

Consecration Always Precedes God's Wonders

At the very heart of Joshua's message to Israel stands one of the most profound principles found in Scripture:

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

JOSHUA 3:5 (KJV)

Notice the order. Joshua did not begin by talking about the Jordan River. He did not discuss military strategy or explain how God intended to stop the waters. He simply gave one command: "Sanctify yourselves." Only after that command came the promise: "Tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." God intentionally placed consecration before the miracle because He was preparing His people not only to witness His power but also to steward what He was about to do.

This principle appears throughout the entire Bible. God often prepares His people internally before He changes their circumstances externally. We naturally focus on what God is going to do around us, but God is often far more interested in what He is doing within us. Before He changes our situation, He desires to transform our hearts. Before He opens a new door, He prepares the person who will walk through it.

The word "sanctify" or "consecrate" carries a much richer meaning than many people realize. In the Old Testament it literally means to set apart, to make holy, or to dedicate something exclusively to God's use. It was not merely the removal of impurity; it was the positive act of belonging completely to the Lord.

The priests were consecrated. The tabernacle was consecrated. The altar was consecrated. The sacrifices were consecrated.

Everything dedicated to God's service was first set apart before it could be used for His glory.

That same principle now applies to every believer.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

1 PETER 2:9 (KJV)

Under the New Covenant, God is no longer preparing a physical tabernacle. He is preparing His people. We have become the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19). Therefore, consecration is no longer merely about holy objects, it is about holy lives.

This helps us understand something very important. Consecration is not God's attempt to limit our freedom. It is God's invitation into His presence. Too often, we hear the word holiness and immediately think of restrictions, rules, or things we cannot do. Yet throughout Scripture, holiness is never presented as punishment. Holiness is the privilege of belonging to God.

Imagine a bride preparing herself for her wedding day. She gladly sets aside countless distractions, not because someone is forcing her to do so, but because her heart is fixed upon the one she loves. Her preparation is motivated by relationship. In the same way, biblical consecration flows from love, not legalism. We separate ourselves because we desire deeper fellowship with the Lord.

Jesus expressed this beautifully.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

JOHN 14:15 (KJV)

Notice He did not say, "Keep my commandments so that I will love you." His love comes first. Our obedience becomes the joyful response to His love. Consecration is simply love expressed through surrender.

Throughout Scripture we repeatedly see this pattern: preparation before manifestation.

Before Mount Sinai, the people washed themselves and prepared for the presence of God.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow... And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai."

EXODUS 19:10-11 (KJV)

Before Solomon dedicated the Temple, the priests sanctified themselves.

Before Pentecost, the disciples waited together in prayer and unity.

Before Paul's missionary journeys, there were seasons of prayer and fasting.

Again and again, God shows us that preparation is never wasted. Heaven often works quietly before it works visibly.

One of the greatest dangers in modern Christianity is that we often desire God's power more than God's process. We pray for revival, but sometimes resist repentance. We ask for miracles while neglecting prayer. We desire anointing without surrender. Yet throughout Scripture, God's greatest works are almost always preceded by seasons of preparation.

Consider Elijah on Mount Carmel. Before the fire fell from heaven, he first repaired the broken altar (1 Kings 18:30). The miracle was spectacular, but the preparation came first. God honored the restored altar before sending the fire.

Likewise, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He first commanded the people to remove the stone.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone..."

JOHN 11:39 (KJV)

Could Jesus have removed the stone Himself? Certainly. Yet He invited people to obey in what they could do before He performed what only He could do. That is often God's pattern. He asks us for obedience, while He provides the miracle.

Perhaps this is why Joshua's command is so simple. He did not ask Israel to stop the river. He did not ask them to defeat the Canaanites. He did not ask them to accomplish the impossible. He simply called them to prepare themselves. God would take care of the river.

The same remains true today. We cannot manufacture revival. We cannot produce miracles. We cannot force people to believe. Only God can do those things. But we can prepare our hearts. We can repent. We can pray. We can fast. We can forgive. We can remove the distractions that compete for God's rightful place in our lives. We can present ourselves as living sacrifices before Him.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

ROMANS 12:1 (KJV)

Notice that Paul does not describe sacrifice as extraordinary Christianity. He calls it our reasonable service. In other words, complete surrender is the normal response to extraordinary mercy.

The promise Joshua gave Israel still echoes into the lives of believers today: "Tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." Every generation longs to see God move in miraculous ways. We pray for revival in our churches, healing in our families, restoration in broken lives, and salvation for those we love. These are good prayers. But before the Jordan opens, God still speaks the same invitation He spoke thousands of years ago:

"Sanctify yourselves."

The doorway to God's wonders has never been human ability. It has always been hearts that are fully surrendered to Him.

> SECTION 4

Consecration Is More Than Saying “No”

If we are not careful, we can develop an incomplete understanding of consecration. We hear the word and immediately begin making a list of things we should stop doing. We think about habits we must abandon, temptations we must avoid, or worldly influences we should remove from our lives. While those things certainly have their place, they do not fully define biblical consecration. If our understanding of holiness consists only of saying “no,” we have missed the greater invitation God is extending to us.

Brother Taylor Fairbanks made a profound observation in his message. He explained that most people understand consecration as being set apart from something, but they fail to recognize that Scripture teaches we are set apart unto Someone. The emphasis is not merely on what we leave behind, but on the One to whom we now belong.

This distinction changes everything.

God never asks us to abandon something simply to create emptiness in our lives. Every act of separation creates room for a deeper relationship with Him. The Christian life is never about deprivation; it is about exchange. We lay down what is temporary so that we may receive what is eternal. We surrender what satisfies for a moment so that we may possess what satisfies forever.

Jesus illustrated this principle with remarkable clarity.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

MATTHEW 13:44 (KJV)

Notice why the man sold everything. He was not grieving what he lost. He was rejoicing over what he had found. His sacrifice was not motivated by obligation but by overwhelming joy. Compared to the treasure before him, everything else became insignificant.

That is the heart of consecration.

The apostles understood this as well. When Peter and Andrew left their fishing nets to follow Jesus, Scripture never records them complaining about what they gave up. Matthew left his tax collector’s table. Zacchaeus surrendered dishonest wealth. Paul considered his former accomplishments worthless compared to knowing Christ.

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-8 (KJV)

Paul was not describing a reluctant sacrifice. He had discovered something infinitely greater than everything he had left behind. That is the difference between religion and relationship. Religion focuses on what it must surrender. Relationship focuses on the One it has gained.

This helps explain why legalism and holiness are not the same thing.

Legalism asks, “How close can I get to the world without sinning?”

Consecration asks, “How close can I draw to Jesus?”

One is driven by rules. The other is driven by love.

The other is driven by love.

One constantly asks, “Is this allowed?”

The other asks, “Will this draw me closer to Christ?”

The goal of biblical holiness has never been merely to avoid evil. The goal is to pursue God so passionately that lesser things lose their attraction.

David expressed this longing beautifully.

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.”

PSALM 27:4 (KJV)

Notice David’s focus. He was not consumed with avoiding sin; he was consumed with pursuing God’s presence. The more captivated we become with God’s beauty, the less appealing the world’s substitutes become.

This is why Jesus summarized the greatest commandment in terms of love rather than regulation.

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”

MATTHEW 22:37-38 (KJV)

Everything else flows from this commandment. A heart that genuinely loves God will naturally desire to please Him. Holiness is not something forced upon a reluctant believer; it is the joyful response of someone who has fallen deeply in love with Christ.

Brother Fairbanks also reminds us that sin often appears attractive for a season. Scripture itself acknowledges this reality. Sin can promise pleasure, excitement, acceptance, or temporary relief, but it can never deliver lasting peace. Eventually it leaves the soul emptier than before. Consecration, therefore, is not God withholding something good from us. It is God protecting us from counterfeit joys while inviting us into pleasures that never fade.

The writer of Hebrews describes Moses making this very choice.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

HEBREWS 11:24-26 (KJV)

Notice the phrase "for a season." Sin always advertises the present but hides the future. It promises fulfillment but ultimately produces bondage. God's commands may require temporary sacrifice, but they always lead to abundant life.

Jesus declared:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

JOHN 10:10 (KJV)

The abundant life Jesus promises is not found by accumulating more of the world. It is found by surrendering more of ourselves to Him.

This truth also reshapes how we view spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, Bible reading, and worship. These are not religious obligations designed to earn God's approval. They are invitations into deeper communion with Him. Prayer is not merely speaking words; it is enjoying fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Fasting is not simply denying the body; it is reminding our souls that our deepest hunger can only be satisfied by God. Worship is not merely singing songs; it is the heart responding to the worthiness of Christ.

Consecration, then, becomes less about what our hands release and more about what our hearts embrace.

When we truly understand this, holiness ceases to feel burdensome. It becomes a privilege. We no longer obey because we fear losing God's love; we obey because we have already experienced it. Every act of surrender becomes another opportunity to know Him more deeply.

As Paul wrote:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

GALATIANS 2:20 (KJV)

That is the essence of consecration. The old life is not merely restrained, it is replaced. Our ambitions become His ambitions. Our desires begin to reflect His desires. Our lives become living testimonies that the greatest joy we can ever experience is not found in what we have left behind, but in the Savior to whom we now belong.

And when consecration is understood this way, it no longer feels like losing freedom. Instead, we discover what Jesus taught all along: true freedom is found only in Him.

> SECTION 5

There Are Two Lines

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One of the most memorable moments in Brother Taylor Fairbanks' message came through a simple visual illustration. He placed 2 chairs before the congregation and used it to represent a line. On one side was the life of the flesh. On the other side was the life of the Spirit. His point was both simple and profound: there is a line God continually calls us not to cross, and there is another line He continually invites us to cross. The Christian life is not merely about avoiding the wrong side; it is about intentionally living on the right side.

This illustration reflects one of the great themes of the New Testament. Scripture consistently presents two ways of living. Moses called them life and death. David described them as the way of the righteous and the way of the ungodly. Jesus spoke of the narrow way and the broad way. Paul referred to them as walking after the flesh or walking after the Spirit. While the terminology changes, the principle remains the same: every believer must choose which direction will govern his or her life.

Paul explains this conflict with remarkable honesty.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."

GALATIANS 5:16-17 (KJV)

Notice that Paul does not describe the flesh and the Spirit as peaceful neighbors. They are in constant opposition. Every believer experiences this internal battle. The moment we are born again, we receive a new nature that delights in the things of God, but the old sinful nature continues to resist the work of the Spirit. Spiritual maturity is not the absence of this conflict; it is learning which voice we will continually choose to obey.

This truth should encourage us. Many sincere believers become discouraged because they still experience temptation after conversion. They wonder whether something is wrong with their faith. Yet the struggle itself is evidence that the Spirit is at work. Before salvation, the flesh ruled without resistance. After salvation, a new King reigns within us, and the conflict begins because our hearts now desire what pleases God.

Paul himself testified of this struggle.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

ROMANS 7:22-25 (KJV)

Paul was not excusing sin; he was acknowledging the reality of spiritual warfare. Victory is not found in pretending the battle does not exist. Victory comes through continually yielding ourselves to the Spirit of God.

Brother Fairbanks emphasized that consecration and conviction function like loving boundaries. They keep us from crossing the line into the flesh. He reminded the students that these boundaries will look different from person to person because each believer faces different temptations and weaknesses. The goal is not comparison but honest surrender before God.

This is an important principle that deserves careful attention. Conviction is personal, but it is never arbitrary. The Holy Ghost knows exactly where each believer is vulnerable. What may be a harmless activity for one Christian could become a doorway to temptation for another. Because our heavenly Father knows us perfectly, He lovingly places convictions in our lives to protect our fellowship with Him.

Consider the wisdom of Proverbs.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

PROVERBS 4:23 (KJV)

The heart is the source from which our words, attitudes, decisions, and actions flow. Satan understands this, which is why he constantly seeks access to the heart through the mind, the eyes, the ears, and the desires of the flesh. God's convictions act like protective walls around what is most valuable.

Imagine a shepherd leading sheep through dangerous mountain paths. The fences are not there because the shepherd dislikes the sheep. They are there because he knows where the cliffs are. The sheep may not understand every boundary, but they can trust the shepherd's wisdom. Likewise, many of God's instructions only reveal their loving purpose after we have walked with Him for some time.

David understood this relationship between God's commands and true freedom.

"And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts."

PSALM 119:45 (KJV)

At first glance, that verse almost seems contradictory. How can obedience produce liberty? The world defines freedom as the absence of restraint. Scripture defines freedom as the ability to become everything God created us to be. A train is most free when it remains on its tracks. A fish is most free when it remains in the water. Human beings are most free when they live according to the design of their Creator.

Jesus affirmed this same truth.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

JOHN 8:31-32 (KJV)

Notice the progression. Continuing in His Word produces discipleship. Discipleship reveals truth. Truth produces freedom. Genuine liberty is always the fruit of abiding in Christ.

But Brother Fairbanks' illustration contains another beautiful insight. Much of Christianity focuses on the line we should never cross, the line into sin. Certainly, that line matters. Scripture repeatedly warns us to flee temptation, resist the devil, and abstain from every appearance of evil. Yet his greater emphasis was that there is another line God is continually inviting us to cross: the line into deeper life in the Spirit.

Far too many believers spend their lives asking, “How close can I get to the world without falling?” The better question is, “How close can I draw to Jesus?”

***One question is motivated by fear.
The other is motivated by love.
One seeks the edge of compromise.
The other seeks the fullness of God’s presence.***

Paul encourages believers to pursue this higher calling.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

ROMANS 8:5-6 (KJV)

Notice the contrast. Paul does not merely compare sinful actions with righteous actions. He compares two different mindsets. One life is governed by the flesh; the other is governed by the Spirit. One produces death; the other produces life and peace.

That is why consecration is not simply avoiding wrong behavior. It is intentionally cultivating spiritual desires. We cross into the life of the Spirit every time we choose prayer over distraction, worship over complaint, forgiveness over bitterness, humility over pride, generosity over selfishness, and obedience over convenience. Each decision strengthens our walk with God and weakens the influence of the flesh.

The beautiful promise of Scripture is that no one walks this journey alone. The Holy Ghost empowers what He commands. God never asks us to live a Spirit-filled life through human determination alone. The same Spirit who convicts us also comforts us, strengthens us, guides us, and produces His fruit within us.

As Paul concludes:

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

GALATIANS 5:25 (KJV)

That is the invitation before every believer. We have already received new life through the Spirit; now we are called to walk in that life every day. The question is no longer, “Where is the line I should avoid?” The greater question becomes, “How far into the presence of God am I willing to go?” That is where true joy, lasting peace, spiritual authority, and God’s purpose are found.

> SECTION 6

Boundaries Are Acts of Grace

One of the enemy's greatest deceptions is convincing us that God's boundaries exist to diminish our lives rather than to protect them. From the Garden of Eden until today, Satan has continually whispered the same lie: "God is withholding something good from you." He suggested to Eve that God's command was restrictive rather than loving, that obedience would keep her from experiencing something better. The tragedy is that this lie has not changed. It still echoes through our culture, encouraging people to view God's commandments as limitations instead of expressions of His love.

Yet when we study Scripture, we discover exactly the opposite. Every boundary God establishes flows from His perfect wisdom, His perfect holiness, and His perfect love. God never places a boundary between us and our joy; He places boundaries between us and our destruction.

Brother Taylor Fairbanks reminded the congregation that conviction is not God's way of making life miserable. Rather, conviction lovingly pushes us away from the things that would ultimately wound our souls. The purpose of consecration is not merely to keep us from crossing into the flesh, but to keep us positioned for everything God desires to accomplish through our lives.

This principle is seen from the very beginning of Scripture. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He filled their lives with abundance. They enjoyed unhindered fellowship with God. Every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food was available to them. Only one tree was forbidden.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it."

GENESIS 2:16-17 (KJV)

Notice God's generosity before His restriction. We often focus on the one tree they could not touch, but we forget the countless trees they were invited to enjoy. God's heart has always been one of abundance. The single prohibition was not evidence of His harshness; it was evidence of His fatherly care.

Every loving parent understands this principle. Parents establish rules because they understand dangers that their children cannot yet perceive. A father tells his child not to run into a busy street, not because he wants to rob the child of fun, but because he values the child's life. A mother warns her child not to touch a hot stove, not because she enjoys making rules, but because she understands the pain that would follow.

The child may only see the restriction. The parent sees the consequence.

Likewise, we often see God's commands through the limited perspective of the present, while God sees the end from the beginning.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways."

ISAIAH 55:8-9 (KJV)

Our heavenly Father knows every consequence before it unfolds. His commands are not reactions to our lives; they are loving provisions established long before we encounter temptation.

David understood that God's commandments were expressions of His goodness rather than burdens to bear.

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

PSALM 16:11 (KJV)

Notice where joy is found.

***Not outside God's will.
Not beyond His boundaries.
Not in rebellion against His commandments.
Joy is found in His presence.***

The world constantly promises happiness through unlimited freedom, yet generation after generation discovers that removing boundaries does not produce peace. Instead, it often produces confusion, brokenness, addiction, anxiety, and emptiness. Sin promises liberty while quietly constructing chains. God's truth sometimes feels restrictive at first, but it ultimately leads to life.

Jesus Himself declared:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love... These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

JOHN 15:10-11 (KJV)

This verse transforms the way we view obedience. Jesus did not say, "Obey Me so that your joy will disappear." He said exactly the opposite. Obedience becomes the pathway to fullness of joy. Every command Christ gives is intended to preserve, deepen, and multiply our joy in Him.

This truth becomes especially important when we think about personal convictions. Sometimes believers compare themselves to one another and wonder why God seems to be dealing differently with different people. Yet the Holy Ghost knows precisely where each of us is vulnerable. The convictions He develops in our lives are never random. They are carefully tailored by a loving Shepherd who knows exactly what each sheep needs.

Paul teaches this principle in his instructions to the Corinthian church.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23 (KJV)

Paul reminds us that the Christian life is not governed merely by asking whether something is permissible. A more mature question is whether something is beneficial. Does it strengthen my relationship with Christ? Does it help me become more useful in His Kingdom? Does it edify my spirit? These questions move us beyond the minimum standard of avoiding sin and toward the greater pursuit of spiritual maturity.

This is why consecration should never be viewed as a checklist. Holiness is not measured merely by the things we avoid but by the Christ we resemble. The goal is transformation, not simply behavior modification.

Paul expresses this beautifully.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

ROMANS 8:29 (KJV)

God's ultimate purpose is not simply that we become more disciplined people. His desire is that we become more like Jesus Christ.

The more we mature spiritually, the more we begin to appreciate God's boundaries. What once seemed restrictive becomes deeply comforting. We realize that every conviction, every correction, every prompting of the Holy Ghost has been another expression of our Father's grace. He has been quietly guarding our hearts, protecting our testimony, preserving our families, strengthening our faith, and preparing us for greater usefulness in His Kingdom.

Looking back over our lives, many of us can testify that the greatest blessings often came through prayers God did not answer, doors He did not open, relationships He did not allow, opportunities He closed, and paths He redirected. At the time, those moments felt disappointing. Today, we recognize them as evidence of His loving hand.

How many unseen dangers has God protected us from?

How many regrets has His Word spared us from?

How many wounds has His Spirit prevented simply because we chose to obey?

We may never know this side of eternity.

What we do know is this: every boundary God establishes is an act of grace.

***He is not building fences to keep us from abundant life.
He is lovingly leading us toward it.***

As our Shepherd, He always knows where the green pastures are, where the still waters flow, and where the dangerous cliffs begin. Because He is good, we can trust not only His promises, but also His boundaries. They are both expressions of the same unfailing love that leads us safely into the fullness of His purpose.

› SECTION 7

Consecration Positions Us for the Supernatural

Every believer desires to experience the supernatural work of God. We pray for healing, for prodigals to return home, for lives to be transformed, for revival to sweep through our churches, and for the power of the Holy Ghost to be evident in our generation. These desires are biblical because they reflect the very heart of God. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, we repeatedly see that God delights in revealing His power among His people. Yet Joshua 3 teaches us an important principle that must never be overlooked. Before Israel ever witnessed the waters of the Jordan River stand in a heap, Joshua gave them a command that seemed unrelated to the miracle itself: “Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you” (Joshua 3:5, KJV). The miracle was entirely God’s work, but consecration prepared the people to participate in what God was about to accomplish. This distinction is crucial. Consecration did not produce the miracle, nor did it earn God’s favor. Instead, it positioned God’s people to experience His power with hearts that were ready to receive it.

This principle protects us from two opposite errors. On one hand, we must reject the idea that our spiritual disciplines somehow place God in our debt. No amount of prayer, fasting, Bible reading, or personal holiness can ever earn a miracle, because every blessing we receive comes by the grace of God. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 2:8-9 that we are saved by grace through faith, “not of works, lest any man should boast.” The same grace that saves us is the grace that heals, restores, delivers, and performs miracles. On the other hand, grace should never become an excuse for spiritual complacency. While we cannot earn God’s power, Scripture consistently shows that God prepares His people before entrusting them with greater manifestations of His presence. Grace removes our guilt, but it also invites us into a life of deeper surrender.

This pattern appears throughout the entire Bible. Noah was chosen by grace, yet he still spent years building the ark in faithful obedience before the flood came. Abraham received God’s promises by grace, yet he had to leave everything familiar and follow wherever the Lord led him. David was anointed king while he was still a shepherd, but years of preparation, testing, and refinement preceded his coronation. Likewise, the disciples were promised the baptism of the Holy Ghost directly from Jesus Christ, yet they still obeyed His command to remain together in Jerusalem, praying with one accord until the promise was fulfilled. In every one of these examples, God’s grace initiated the miracle, but obedient faith prepared the vessel that would receive it.

Brother Taylor Fairbanks concluded his message by challenging the congregation to spend the next forty-eight hours in intentional consecration through prayer, fasting, and surrender before the upcoming services. His challenge was not presented as a formula to manipulate God or guarantee a miracle. Rather, it reflected the same biblical pattern Joshua gave Israel before crossing the Jordan. God’s people prepare themselves, not because preparation forces God’s hand, but because preparation opens their hearts to whatever God desires to do. It is an attitude that says, “Lord, I cannot create the miracle, but I want nothing in my life to hinder what You desire to accomplish.”

The history of revival consistently follows this same pattern. The Day of Pentecost did not begin when the sound of a rushing mighty wind filled the upper room. It began days earlier when one hundred and twenty believers chose to obey Jesus by remaining together in prayer and unity. Acts 1:14 tells us that they “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” Long before the fire fell, there was prayer. Long before three thousand souls were baptized, there was waiting. Long before miraculous signs accompanied the apostles’ ministry, there was humble dependence upon God. The supernatural outpouring of Acts 2 was

preceded by hearts that had already surrendered themselves completely to the will of God.

The same principle can be observed in Elijah's ministry. Before fire fell from heaven on Mount Carmel, Elijah first repaired the broken altar that had been neglected by the nation. The miracle did not begin with fire; it began with restoration. Likewise, Isaiah's prophetic ministry began only after the Lord cleansed his lips with a live coal from the altar. Peter preached with boldness only after he had been filled with the Holy Ghost, and the apostles ministered with extraordinary authority because they had first learned complete dependence upon Christ. Throughout Scripture, God demonstrates that He delights in using vessels that have been prepared for His purposes.

Paul expresses this truth beautifully in 2 Timothy 2:20-21, where he compares believers to vessels within a great house. Some vessels are reserved for common use, while others are prepared for honorable purposes. He concludes by saying that if a person cleanses himself from the things that dishonor God, he becomes "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." The emphasis is not that God loves one vessel more than another, but that consecration increases our usefulness in the hands of the Master.

God is never limited by His power; He is looking for hearts that are available, surrendered, and willing to be used.

This truth extends far beyond those who preach behind a pulpit. Every believer has been called to participate in the work of God's Kingdom. Some are called to preach, others to teach, others to disciple new believers, encourage the hurting, pray for the sick, raise godly families, or faithfully represent Christ in their workplaces and communities. The supernatural is not limited to dramatic miracles. Every time the Holy Ghost uses a believer to lead someone to repentance, restore a broken marriage, speak hope into a discouraged heart, or demonstrate the love of Christ through simple acts of obedience, Heaven is at work. Jesus reminded His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). That light shines brightest when our lives have first been surrendered to Him.

Ultimately, consecration is not about making ourselves worthy of God's power; it is about making ourselves available for God's purpose. Joshua never asked Israel to stop the Jordan River. That was God's responsibility. He simply called the people to sanctify themselves. In the same way, we are not responsible for producing miracles, creating revival, or changing hearts. Those things belong to God alone. Our responsibility is to remain yielded, obedient, and sensitive to His voice. When we place ourselves in His hands, we discover that He delights in doing extraordinary things through ordinary people whose greatest qualification is not their ability, but their complete surrender. That is why consecration always precedes God's wonders. It prepares the vessel so that, when the Lord chooses to move, nothing in our lives will prevent us from stepping into everything He has prepared for us.

> SECTION 8

Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders

Joshua's command ended with a promise that has encouraged the people of God for generations: "Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5, KJV). These words reveal the incredible balance between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Israel could not part the Jordan River, stop its overflowing waters, or secure their inheritance by their own strength. Those were works that only God could accomplish. Their responsibility was much simpler, yet equally important. They were called to consecrate themselves and trust that the God who had been faithful in the past would once again demonstrate His power in the present. Their obedience prepared them to witness what only the Lord could do.

The word "wonders" is significant. Joshua did not promise ordinary events or explain exactly how God would work. Instead, he declared that the Lord Himself would do wonders among them. Throughout Scripture, this word is often associated with the miraculous acts of God that leave people in awe of His greatness. When Israel looked back on their history, they remembered the plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, the manna from heaven, and the water flowing from the rock. These were not simply impressive events; they were visible demonstrations that God alone deserved the glory. The same God who had worked wonders in the past was about to perform another miracle before their eyes.

This reminds us of an important truth about the character of God. He is not merely the God of yesterday's miracles. He is the God of today's faithfulness and tomorrow's promises. Sometimes believers become discouraged because they spend more time remembering what God once did than believing what He is still able to do. Israel could have remained on the eastern side of the Jordan celebrating the miracle of the Red Sea for the rest of their lives. Instead, God called them to move forward because His work among them was not finished. Every miracle was intended to increase their faith for the next step of obedience.

The Christian life follows the same pattern. Our testimony should never become a museum that only displays what God did years ago. It should become a living testimony that continually proclaims what He is still doing today. The God who forgave us is still transforming us. The God who filled us with His Spirit is still sanctifying us. The God who opened doors in the past is still directing our steps today. We serve a living Savior who continues to work among His people, and because He never changes, His power has not diminished. Hebrews 13:8 reminds us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Our circumstances may change, but His faithfulness never does.

It is also worth noticing that Joshua said, "the Lord will do wonders among you." The miracle was not promised to one individual; it was promised to the entire nation. God was preparing to move in the midst of His covenant people. This highlights an important biblical principle that we sometimes overlook. While God certainly works in individual lives, He also delights in moving collectively among His Church. Throughout the Book of Acts, the greatest outpourings of the Holy Ghost occurred when believers gathered together in unity. Revival has always been more than a personal experience; it is a corporate visitation of God's presence among His people.

This is why unity and consecration often go hand in hand. A divided church cannot fully experience what a united church can. Pride, unforgiveness, jealousy, bitterness, and unresolved conflict grieve the Holy Spirit and hinder the fellowship God desires to build among His people. Before Pentecost, the disciples were "with

one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). Their unity did not create the outpouring, but it positioned them to receive it together. Likewise, Joshua called an entire nation to consecrate themselves because God intended to perform a miracle that every family, every tribe, and every generation would remember.

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons of Joshua 3 is that God’s wonders often begin before we can see them. While Israel was consecrating themselves, the Jordan River still looked exactly the same. The waters continued to overflow their banks. There was no visible evidence that a miracle was about to occur. From a human perspective, nothing had changed. Yet while the people were preparing their hearts, God was already preparing the miracle. This teaches us that God’s work often begins in places our eyes cannot yet perceive.

Heaven is never idle, even when earth appears unchanged.

How many times have we prayed for answers while seeing no immediate evidence that God was moving? How often have we wondered whether our prayers, fasting, and faithfulness were accomplishing anything at all? Joshua reminds us that God’s silence should never be mistaken for His absence. The Jordan did not begin to divide until the priests stepped forward in obedience. Sometimes God is working behind the scenes, arranging circumstances, preparing hearts, opening doors, and accomplishing His purposes long before we recognize what He is doing. Faith trusts God’s promises even when our eyes have not yet seen their fulfillment.

This truth reaches its climax when the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the overflowing Jordan. God did not stop the river while they remained safely on the shore. The waters parted only after they obeyed His command and placed their feet into what appeared to be an impossible situation. Faith is often demonstrated not by waiting until everything makes sense, but by obeying God’s Word before we see the outcome. The miracle did not remove the necessity of faith; rather, faith became the doorway through which the miracle was experienced.

The same invitation stands before the Church today. God is still calling His people to lives of consecration, not because He delights in demanding sacrifice, but because He desires to reveal His glory through surrendered vessels. We may not all stand before a flooded river, but each of us will encounter moments where God’s promises seem larger than our circumstances. In those moments, the question is not whether God is able. Scripture has already settled that question. The real question is whether we are willing to trust Him enough to step forward in obedience, believing that the God who has always been faithful will once again do wonders among His people.

Joshua’s message is therefore just as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago. Every generation must decide whether it will settle for remembering yesterday’s miracles or prepare itself for tomorrow’s. God still searches for people whose hearts are wholly devoted to Him. He still honors humble obedience. He still fills surrendered vessels. He still opens rivers that no human strength can cross. And He still delights in doing what only He can do, so that every miracle ultimately points people back to His greatness.

The promise remains unchanged: when God's people consecrate themselves and faithfully walk in obedience, they can confidently leave the impossible in His hands. Tomorrow belongs to the Lord, and the God who called Israel across the Jordan is still the God who does wonders among His people today.

> CONCLUSION

Preparing for God's Tomorrow

The story of Joshua 3 is much more than the account of a river that stopped flowing. It is the story of a people who learned that God's greatest miracles are often preceded by seasons of preparation. Israel stood on the edge of a promise that had been spoken generations earlier. Abraham had heard about it. Isaac believed in it. Jacob dreamed of it. Moses led the people toward it. Yet it was Joshua's generation that finally crossed into it. Their inheritance was not determined merely by God's promise but also by their willingness to trust Him enough to obey. Before the waters ever parted, before the priests stepped into the river, before one foot entered the Promised Land, Joshua gave a simple command that changed everything: "Sanctify yourselves."

As we have studied this passage, we have discovered that consecration is not about earning God's favor but responding to His grace. It is not a life defined by rules, but a relationship defined by surrender. It is far more than saying "no" to sin; it is saying "yes" to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Every act of consecration declares that we trust God's wisdom more than our own, His promises more than our circumstances, and His presence more than the temporary pleasures this world offers. The believer who consecrates his life is not attempting to convince God to work. Rather, he is placing himself in a position where nothing hinders God's work in and through him.

Joshua also reminds us that every generation must choose whether it will simply remember yesterday's miracles or prepare for tomorrow's. It would have been easy for Israel to spend the rest of their lives talking about the Red Sea. Instead, God called them to experience another miracle because His purpose for them had not yet been fulfilled. The same temptation exists for the Church today. We thank God for revivals of the past, for testimonies of healing, for stories of salvation, and for the faithfulness He has demonstrated throughout history. Yet our God is not only the God of yesterday. He is still writing testimonies. He is still filling believers with the Holy Ghost. He is still restoring broken homes. He is still calling prodigals home. He is still opening doors that no one else can open. The God of Joshua is still doing wonders among His people.

Perhaps the greatest lesson of this chapter is that the miracle began long before the Jordan River stopped flowing. It began when God's people humbled themselves in obedience. While the river looked unchanged, God was already preparing what no human eye could yet see. That truth should encourage every believer who is faithfully praying, serving, fasting, giving, and walking with God even when nothing appears to be changing. Heaven is never inactive. Our Father is always working behind the scenes, arranging circumstances, preparing hearts, and accomplishing His purposes according to His perfect timing. What appears to us as delay is often God's preparation.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are living on the edge of promises that are greater than anything Israel experienced at the Jordan. We have been called to proclaim the Gospel to every nation, make disciples, build His Church, and prepare for the glorious return of our Lord. These assignments cannot be accomplished through talent, personality, education, or human ability alone. They require the continual empowerment of the Holy Ghost. And while God's power can never be earned, Scripture repeatedly teaches that He delights in using hearts that are humble, surrendered, and fully available to Him.

May Joshua's words become our own prayer: "Lord, sanctify us." Remove anything that competes for Your place in our hearts. Teach us to love holiness, not as a burden, but as the joyful privilege of belonging

completely to You. Help us to value Your presence more than the approval of the world, Your truth more than our own opinions, and Your Kingdom more than our own ambitions. Prepare us to be vessels that are clean, useful, and ready for every good work.

Then, with hearts full of faith, may we step forward in obedience, believing that the God who parted the Jordan River has not changed. His promises remain true. His power remains unlimited. His grace remains sufficient. And His invitation still echoes across every generation:

"Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

JOSHUA 3:5, KJV

May we be the generation that answers that call.

> REFLECT

Reflection Questions

> QUESTION 1

Joshua told Israel to “sanctify yourselves” before they ever saw the miracle. Why do you think God often asks us to obey before He shows us what He is going to do? Can you think of a time when God asked you to trust Him without knowing the outcome?

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> QUESTION 2

We learned that consecration is not simply saying “no” to sin, but saying “yes” to a deeper relationship with Jesus. Looking at your current season of life, what is one area where God may be inviting you to draw closer to Him rather than simply avoid something wrong?

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> QUESTION 3

The Israelites had already experienced the Red Sea, yet God wanted them to trust Him again at the Jordan. Why do you think past experiences with God cannot replace a present relationship with Him? How are you intentionally building your walk with God today instead of living only on yesterday’s testimony?

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> QUESTION 4

God's boundaries are expressions of His love, not limitations on our freedom. Has there ever been a command, conviction, or season of waiting that you didn't understand at first but later recognized as God's protection? What did that experience teach you about trusting His wisdom?

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> QUESTION 5

Brother Fairbanks illustrated that there are two lines: the line that leads toward the flesh and the line that leads toward the Spirit. Which direction are your daily habits moving you? If someone observed your schedule, entertainment, conversations, and priorities this week, would they conclude that you are intentionally pursuing Jesus? Why or why not?

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> QUESTION 6

The Jordan River did not stop flowing until the priests stepped into it. What "Jordan" is in front of you today? Is there an area where God is asking you to take a step of faith before you see Him move? What is keeping you from taking that step?

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> QUESTION 7

Joshua’s promise was, “Tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” If God were preparing to do something extraordinary in your life, what would you want Him to find when He looks at your heart today? What practical changes can you begin making this week to become more available for His purpose?

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> CHALLENGE

Personal Challenge

This week, set aside one area of your life for intentional consecration. It may be fasting a meal, limiting social media, setting aside extra time for prayer, reconciling a broken relationship, or removing a distraction that competes for your attention. At next week’s discussion, be prepared to share, not what miracle you saw, but what God began doing in your heart through your obedience.

> THIS WEEK I WILL

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