**FOCUS Bible Study - December 14**

[**VIEW RECORDING - 65 mins (No highlights)**](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu)

[@2:00](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=120.0) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

minutes. Yes, some of our regulars like Mike and Cat and Mian. Now of course I know we're getting into the holiday season so maybe that is causing some people not to be able to today.

[@2:56](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=176.58) - **Luke**

you It looks like a small group today, huh?

[@3:15](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=195.62) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yeah, I don't know what's happened to our most of our regulars today, maybe, like I said, it could be the holidays that are, you know, they're spending time with friends and family, and I get that, that makes sense, but unusual.

We have somebody who's our here today, she said she should have said hi earlier, I'm sorry. Until that coffee kicks in, we understand.

[@3:40](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=220.84) - **Luke**

Well, I'll just give it one more minute, we'll just go ahead and get started, and then we'll just let people in if they come late, so it's not a big deal.

[@3:59](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=239.44) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

So it has We've been good. Anybody got a testimony or a praise report to offer? I can say that not much has happened in my week.

I've worked from home with this particular client, so it's been really kind of steady working on a new business that I'm putting together and hoped to release by the beginning of the year.

That's the biggest thing that I've been working on. It's going to be called Wisdom Well, Abundance Coaching, and it's going to be based on teaching people biblical financial principles, given that my CPA, CMA background over 30 years and my ministry combination coming together to teach people how to really take care of their finances from a biblical perspective.

So I'm excited about that. That's been coming together this week. And I'm even more excited that my son, who lives in Tampa, has been helping me with it, getting the website developed and all the automation is taken care of.

So that's been exciting.

[@4:58](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=298.68) - **Luke**

I love how you're you know, you take care of yourself, but you're also mindful of others, know, and helping others be able to do that same wisdom.

[@5:09](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=309.28) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Thank you. just know that all life has brought me through and, you know, when you have a testimony, in fact, I may switch our little Bible study here and refer to the description that talks about how we overcome through the word of our testimony, you know, that you can't help a chair, right, when you know how good God is.

So, I can tell you how early on when my wife and I first got married and I was at a job for 13 months, you know, we had to visit food pantries just to have food to eat, right?

but yet God has brought us a long way from there. So, we're very, we're very blessed. Well, with that, why don't we just go ahead and pray and we'll go ahead and get started, okay?

And I think I am going to switch up what I intended for Bible study this morning, but I'll explain that in just a minute.

So, let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank You for this opportunity. come together to study a word. And Lord, it doesn't matter if two, three, however many are gathered.

When we are gathered in your name, you're here. We thank you for your faithfulness. We thank you for your power to change lives.

We thank you for your holy word that just seeps into us God. Let it change us from within. Anoint our mouths, anoint our minds.

Use this God from your glory. I pray you and I give you glory in Jesus name. Amen. All right.

Oh, we got Wendy coming into. There we go. All right. So we'll give Wendy a chance to get connected here.

Good morning, Wendy. Thank you for joining us. We just prayed. We're just getting started here. I think we got Brian saying he's going to jump on shortly too.

So maybe we'll give it one minute as we discuss kind of overall things. So we meet biweekly but in two weeks from now would be

the December 28th and given the holiday season and the fact that we're going to be out of time visiting our son, we will not be meeting two weeks from now, okay?

So we'll meet a month from now on the 11th January. It would be the next time we'll be meeting, okay?

So I don't want anybody to be trying to jump on two weeks with everybody, kind of like we were this morning.

But don't panic two weeks from now. It's going to let you enjoy time with your family, celebrate Christmas, celebrate the birth of Jesus, and just join us again on January 11th.

Something else I wanted to quick mention, this is a ministry, so we pay for the meetup membership dues we pay for the Zoom workplace dues, all those things out of our pocket.

So if you feel it all left as you review your finances at the end of the year and you're feeling led to donate and support the ministry, you can do so.

I'll put a link in here to the website. It's it's on my website. And if you go to the focus page, that's where we host the Bible study videos.

So if you want to see the previous lessons that we've done, or you missed something in this particular lesson, and you want to go back and review it, you can do so on the Focus Bible Study page.

You'll see the videos, the transcripts, and the summaries. So, and you'll see a donation button on there if you feel it all led to donate.

Those who have donated in the past, we thank you for that. We appreciate the support. Okay, all that out of the way.

Now, let's talk about Bible study. Why we're here, right? So my wife and I were talking just beforehand, you know we've been in the book of Job, and I think we'll continue that going forward.

But we're not, study of book of Job is about a chapter by chapter study, like most Bible studies will be, like you dive into chapter one, you verse it, you analyze that, move on to the next set of verses, and you work your way through the entire book.

The book of Job, I'm approaching more from a higher level, like a summation, because I find once you get past the first

chapters, like we've talked about in depth, you're going to see a lot of repeat type of stuff in the back and forth dialogues of those chapters.

So we'll summarize that as we go. But today, as we were talking, it struck this idea. We visited a new church with some friends of ours, and we're talking to the pastor because we wanted to lay the land.

How does he approach things, what does he believe and those kinds of things. And I walked away from that conversation and my wife said, so what did you think?

And I said, well, I feel like it's plain vanilla. Have you ever gone to an event where something that you felt like was plain vanilla, right?

Nothing that really stood out to you, nothing that really moved you. And it was talking about prior churches we had gone to.

And one we had gone to for several years, while the kids were growing up teenage years, they had a great teenage program that they held in the lower level of the building.

And then we went up to the upper level where the adults were. that service was always what I'd call plain vanilla.

And finally, when we decided to leave that particular church, it was because I said they have a form of godliness, but no power thereof.

And when I said that, this idea struck me for today's Bible study. So I want to go to Acts chapter one.

Go to Acts chapter one. And let's read verse eight. take turns here. Andrew is coming on. We take turns here reading scripture.

And if you're not comfortable, if I call your name, just say pass, and I won't call on you again because we want everyone to feel comfortable and to absorb as much as they can.

And so that's fine. And if you're comfortable reading, just read from the scripture that we are going to look at.

And I usually just start on the screen and go around. So we're Acts chapter one. Welcome, Andrea and Jesse, I'm assuming is with you.

Welcome, we're going to start in chapter one, verse eight today. And I'll start with Julie here on my left, who's not on screen.

Whether you have the King James and IV or some other version, it probably says come upon you, right? That word upon if you dig into the Greek it actually means have charge of So when the Holy Spirit has charge of you and how does something have charge of you any idea?

How do you give somebody somebody charge Like you have a charge card, right? gonna pay for something. What do you have to do?

You Any ideas Yeah, you have to hand it over right you have to surrender it or you have to take it out and use it There's there's an action involved There's something you have to physically do right in order to like if you have a charge card And you're gonna buy something you have to get it out of your wallet the place that you safe keep it Right the place that you hold it close to so nobody else can have it nobody else can take it from you

It's something that's very private to you. It's got all your personal information, right? So you guard it. It's something that you guard.

You take it out and you have to expose it. You have to be willing to be vulnerable with it and you hand it over it either to the cashier or you use it.

Nowadays, you don't hand it over, but you tap it right to the screen. You have to expose it and you have to use it.

So there's something there's something here about when we receive power from God. We hold things so close to our hearts.

We hold things that are so personal to us. We hold things that are private to us, right? And we don't want to expose them.

And there's an issue there. Let's go to Matthew chapter 7. And I'm going to, because we're winging this Bible study a little bit, welcome Michael.

Thank you for joining us. Because we're winging this a little bit, don't have scriptures put up on the screen for you.

And you're going to to give me a second or two as these scriptures come to my mind. But in chapters

seven. I believe it's chapter seven, give me a second. Jesus is instructing the disciples in it, so I might actually have the chapter on one second here.

You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to do what I told Zara to do. I've got up on the screen, Bible gateway.

When I like about that tool, Bible gateway, is you can type up search words in the search bar, and it will bring up suggestions.

So actually what I'm looking for, I typed in the word sheep and goat, and we're going to Matthew 25.

I apologize. said Matthew 7. Let's go to Matthew 25. And there's a story there when Jesus is talking to the disciples.

[@16:00](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=960.0) - **Jamie Theis**

you from the foundation of the world, where I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

I was a stranger and you took me in. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me.

I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and gave you drink?

When did we see you stranger and take you in or naked and clothed you or when did we see you sick or in prison come to you?

[@16:34](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=994.84) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

And Jamie, do you mind reading the rest of the chapter for us please?

[@16:38](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=998.26) - **Jamie Theis**

And the king will answer them. Truly I say to you, as you did it to one at least of my brothers who did it to me.

Then he will say to those on his lap, the part from me you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and gave me not food.

I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and imprisoned and you did not visit me.

Then they will then they also will answer saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?

Then he will answer them saying, truly I say to you, as you did not do it to one of a least of these, you did not do it to me.

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteousness into eternal way.

[@17:38](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1058.78) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Okay, so we're talking about the power of God, right? Acts chapter one verse eight, are talking about, you know, he promised the Holy Spirit come upon them.

When the Holy Spirit comes, he brings power. And we talked about that power being in when it comes upon as charge of you, right?

So when, when we are holding on to something that we are afraid to expose. We tend to have this interview.

We only look on the inside. We're not looking outward. We're not looking at the needs of others, right? And isn't what the Holy Spirit does is prompt us to meet the needs of others?

Isn't it what it? Because when in Acts chapter eight, when Jesus said you would see the gift of the Holy Spirit, what was the purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit in chapter one verse eight?

What was it going to make you do? Yeah, to witness to others to become witnesses, right? A witness can't be somebody who's only looking internally.

A witness can't be just focused on themselves. witness takes what has happened within them and the change that has happened and wants to testify of it, wants to bring it out to other people, right?

So that's what Jesus was saying in Acts chapter one verse eight. the Spirit comes upon you, takes charge of you.

The power is to make you move outwardly. The power is to make you want to share what God has done for you outwardly.

so now in Matthew chapter 25, when Jesus says the end of the world comes, and we're gonna stand on the right or the left, we're gonna be counted sheep or goats.

are related to the kingdom if you will, right? Because Jesus is the shepherd. So those he's calling the sheep are those who are close to him, who have made that commitment to him and who are living the way he's asked them to live.

And how, and he gives us an example, those who are following him will be concerned about others. They'll give of themselves.

They'll reach people who are only in prisons. They'll give the food that they have to help sustain others. They'll give their clothing, clothe others when they're in cold weather and naked and such.

But the goats are the opposite. They are the ones who didn't do those things, right? We see that contrast very easily in here.

And so, I do actually want to go to chapter 7 of Matthew, and I just have to find the actual verse.

It's in verse 21, actually let's back up to verse 20, actually verse 19, now let's start with verse 15, 15 through 24, and so Luke, do mind reading 15 through 20, and we'll have someone else read the rest, 21 through 24.

[@20:45](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1245.9) - **Luke**

Okay, verse 15, the where of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep, what are really vicious rules, you can identify them by their fruit, that is by

the way they act. Can you pick grapes from a thorn bush or figs from a fizzle? A good tree produces good fruit and a bad tree produces bad fruit.

A good tree can't produce bad fruit and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire.

Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit so you can identify people by their actions.

[@21:32](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1292.48) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Okay, so I'm going to actually pause there. So we see the correlation here, I hope, between what Jesus is describing as the comparison of the fruit trees to the story in Matthew 25, this year in the goats, right?

How do we know we're not Jesus, we're not God who's going to make that separation of judgment, know, final judgment, but because we are his, we should be able to determine if somebody living for him or not, right?

And how do we associate with the right people? How do we link our of arms with people who want to live for God versus those who don't.

And that's why I started that this lesson that started talking about what God has to speak to us. Because when I went to that church, I wanted to know is this somebody I should lean arms with or not, right?

We have to have discernment. And not that we, because I don't know this person, I haven't examined them to know their fruit.

I start with some basic questions and that I believe is all right, right, to get a feel. Now, our verbiage will eventually line up, hopefully with our actions or our actions will reveal that we were deceiving by our words.

So the two eventually will be exposed, your words and your actions. they're in alignment, great. If they're in alignment for God, even better, right?

But eventually, people say and do things. And if they're not alignment, whoa, red flag. And so that's the starting point of like, if not the power of God in us, then our words and our actions have to line up, we have to

see that they are starting to line up. Now early on when we first become a Christian and we have some difficulty with that because we're babes in Christ.

We're starting to speak things we don't understand fully and our lives haven't fully been shaped to be changed into who we need to be.

So we're learning we're growing you know it takes development just like a fruit tree. It doesn't bear apples the minute you plant it the ground right if you plant that apple tree you got to give it time to grow and mature and develop but it's still a perfect apple tree all along its stages in its life.

So from the moment that it's planted as a seedling it's a perfect apple tree. From the moment that seedling grows up and starts to have some blossoms on it it's still a perfect apple tree but it hasn't produced any actual fruit yet.

That's okay when it actually matures and develops and now has apples on it it's a perfect apple tree right but now it has reached its maturity and it's producing fruit.

So as a Christian we don't need to beat ourselves up as we're growing and maturing and developing. That's why this whole walk with God is a progressive

We grow and grow and grow and grow, but if we stop growing along the way and we make a detour, then we need to be careful, right?

Because we need to get back on track. And hopefully that's what these Bible studies do is get us back on track, get us adjustments where we need to be and keep us growing.

Now those who are sheep understand that process, those who are goats, try to mimic the process. become wolves in sheep's clothing as Luke read, right?

And we can, we have to be careful. They're walking along with the sheep, but they're not all of a sudden producing fruit.

You're giving them some time, you're giving some space, but their lives are just not changing, right? make a mistake and you give them some correction and they don't change, right?

They don't heed the correction. That's when big red flag should be waving, right? Because now we're going to get into verse 21 through 24.

When do you mind reading that please? In Matthew chapter 7.

[@25:13](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1513.46) - **Wendy Chi**

I'm sorry, and verses chapter 7 verses 21 through 24. Okay. Not everyone who calls out to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Only those who actually do the will of my father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me Lord Lord will be prophesied in your name, pass out demons in your name, and perform any miracles in your name.

But I will reply, I never knew you, get away from me, you who break God's laws. Anyone who listened to my teaching and followed it is life, like a person who builds house on a solid rock.

[@25:55](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1555.36) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Okay. Thank you. Well, Jesus is talking about the fruit trees, he's talking about, you know them by the fruit, and now he's comparing those who will enter the kingdom of God are only those who do God's bill, okay?

So, those who didn't get to enter, they plead their case, they say, hey, didn't we prophesy, didn't we cast out devils, didn't we do these wonderful works, when you think that these works that they're listing, we tend to think of these things as powerful works, don't we?

So, when we tend to think of the power of God, we tend to think of miracles, signs, extraordinary things, right?

We think, man, if somebody's being used in healing, you know, you just see a minister lay hands on somebody, and that person got healed instantaneously, you tend to say, that was the power of God working through that person, right?

You tend to think of the power of God as being these miracles, these signs, these wonders, and we tend to think if somebody's doing that, they must be close to God.

But right here this scripture is saying that's not always the case What is the power of God in reality?

This is why we read Matthew 25 the power of God in reality is Recognizing the small things it's recognizing the heart of God.

Why do big things occur? Why do the miracles signs and wonders occur?

[@27:25](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1645.22) - **Michael Kane**

It's so that the people can have their needs met even to the deepest of levels Michael go ahead Also, I kind of studied this and what I came up with is when they were saying why they would be in Letting heaven They were talking about what we did.

[@27:45](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1665.16) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

They weren't talking about faith in Jesus Christ Yep, exactly and that that's a point. trying to drive to eventually here is saying what happens is People Want to know about God?

I think Everybody wants to know about God. There's something in us, we call it a God-shaped hole. There's a desire for us to want to know about God.

But when we don't yield ourselves completely, when we don't surrender, what is that intimate, deep thing that we're holding onto?

Like that charge card I used as an example, right? When we aren't willing to take it out and expose it to God and say, God, here everything is, that's in me.

And that's why Jesus says, I never knew you, that word, know you in the Jewish language was like an idiom for an intimate relationship between them, husband and a wife, connotation to it.

Like that's how much God wants to know you. Like when everything is stripped away, you're showing God your warts and all, right?

Just like you would with your spouse when you're married and you're totally exposed. The spouses know everything about each other.

There are no secrets, there are no hidden agendas, there are just, this is who I am. These are my faults, these are my strengths, these are, this is me.

Because everything that I am is made up of strength and false. Sorry, but it is. I'm just not all strengths.

I'm not just all false. There are, there's good and bad in all of us. But by willing to expose it and say, this is who I am, then we can know God even better.

Because when Jesus says, I never knew you. Is that a reality? How can that be? Mike, go ahead.

[@29:28](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1768.8) - **Michael Kane**

Yeah, to pretend I've read about that. To pretend we're not a mix like you'd say is really hypocrisy.

[@29:35](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=1775.82) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yes, and pride, right? Because the only reason we aren't willing to expose who we are is pride. We're prideful.

We don't want people to know that we have these weak areas in our lives. And so pride is what prevents us from really knowing God.

And that's what caused Satan to fall as pride, right? But when Jesus says, I never knew you, how can that really be?

Jesus This is God in flesh, as Colossians says, he's the fullness of the Godhead bodily, that means God fully dwelt in him, he's fully man and fully God.

So as God, would he not know everything? Scripture says, he's omnipresent, omnipotent, omnipresent, omnipresent, he knows everything. So if God knows everything, when he says that statement, I never knew you, he's either a lie or he's trying to imply something else.

And because he's God, I don't believe he's lying. So what's he trying to imply? He's trying to say, look, I know everything, but I need you to know who you are in me.

And if you're hiding something for me, you can't know me the way that I know you, right? And we can't be one.

The only way we can truly be one is if you know me the way that I know you, right?

The way a husband and wife can truly only be one is when they've exposed everything to each other. have no more.

secrets. They have nothing to hide. So, the real power of God is when we have exposed ourselves to God and said, God, this is who I am, better or worse.

I need you to help utilize my strengths, I need you to help overcome my weaknesses. And when we're willing to do that, that's when the power of God really moves in our hearts and lives that we fulfill Matthew 25, because we aren't so concerned about doing the miraculous so that when we're noticed, we're willing to do the miraculous, even in the small things, going to the jail to minister to those who are lonely, going to the food shelters and supplying food so people can eat, doing these little things so people can know God, because that's the whole purpose of anything we do in this life, is to be a witness.

The power of God causes us to want to be a witness in the little things and in the big things.

The reason we do the miraculous that healing comes to our lives is so people who are healed, have an experience with God, and they go share it with others.

So when the rains stop in Africa, because there's going to be a missionary coming through to tell the people, and they've got to walk miles and miles and miles just to get there, but the rain would keep them.

So the miraculous happens in the rainy season, also in the rain stop. It's so that they can get there and hear the Word of God and be changed.

The miracle signs for us, therefore the people who need God. That's why when James and Peter walked through the the temple after Jesus' resurrection and they saw the man begging, they'd seen him there for years, years and years.

They laid him there day after day after day in front of the gate, beautiful, and he would beg and people knew of him.

And I'm sure James and John saw him, but now they had the power of God realized this man had a need that even though they couldn't meet physically, because Peter says to him, silver and gold, I have none, but what I have, I give you, rise up and walk in the name of Jesus.

Now he realized what we're was really how he could meet that need through the power of God working through him and also met and stood up after 40 years of being lame and proclaimed the goodness of God.

He went running through the temple, proclaimed how good God was. So when we had that conversion like Peter and James, they walked three and a half years with Jesus.

They were learning, they were growing during that period. But when it finally clicked to them, they had the power of God now understanding, because that was after the day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit fell on them.

they had the true power of God. recognized the real needs. Is this all making sense? I hope this is because I know I'm winging it here a little bit, but I think there's a point to be made.

[@33:44](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2024.22) - **Wendy Chi**

Let's go to Romans 8. I have a question before we move on.

[@33:50](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2030.3) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yeah, Wendy, ahead.

[@33:52](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2032.5) - **Wendy Chi**

So, yeah, you just remath new 720 month, where it was very specific. to say anything, only those who actually do the well will enter.

some people could read it as a this is through works and not through Jesus' grace, the blood, and overcoming the death.

[@34:20](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2060.14) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yes.

[@34:22](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2062.24) - **Wendy Chi**

And so I want to go clarify, right? This is when we accept Jesus as our Lord. There's two things not just accept this out of our love of acceptance.

The result of it is to surrender our life to the Lord, right? So it is a result of it is not the cause.

You got it. You got it. Right. It is the order. So some people say, hey, you know, you're talking about no works and then, you know, thinking other people.

about pushing forward. This exact phrase, it could be misinterpreted.

[@35:07](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2107.16) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yes, and I often think that it is. Most people do get it backwards. They think I belong to a religious organization before I got to really know God that would promote works instead of the relationship.

They thought the works led into relationship. You had to do this. You had to say so many prayers. had to perform this ritual, perform that ritual, right, in order to have a real relationship with God.

That's not at all the case as you're pointing out. They got it backwards. When you have a real relationship with God and that power, that power connection of that relationship makes you, moves you, inspires your heart to want to do the right things.

It works the opposite. You have a relationship and then you do the works because you have love propelling you, not obligation demanding it of you.

Mike, go ahead. I read that Martin Luther, when he was working against the works based religion of the Catholic Church He really kind of stumbled over the James verse that said faith without works is dead Because he thought people would miss construe it to me and what you're talking about Yeah, you know a Proper relationship has both Right a marriage relationship that if I said to my wife honey, love you I love you and you know and we have good conversation all the time and and you know I can make her laugh and she makes me laugh or just you know all of that, but She's the one always washing the dishes.

She's the one always vacuuming the floor She's the one always taking out the garbage. She's gonna always do it in laundry She's she's the one doing doing doing and I never do a thing What kind of relationship is that?

It's not a very good one, is it? But if so that you live in fear again, rather the spirit you receive brought about your adoption to sonship and by him we cry, Abba, Father." So what Paul is writing to here in to the Romans is he's speaking mostly to Gentiles and Gentiles served all these different gods and even the Jews had a tendency to serve their God out of works, out of fear.

If I don't do these things, if I don't make these sacrifices, if I don't attend temple, if I don't memorize Scripture, if I don't do these things, my relationship is going to suffer, right?

Well, they got it backwards. They don't really have a relationship if they're doing these things out of obligation or fear that they're going to be cut off.

What Paul is saying is, look, when you see the Holy Spirit, when you receive the power of God in you, it's because now you realize who you are in God, that he has accepted you, loved you, works and all.

He loves you. As you are willing to expose everything to him. That's why we first come to him in repentance That's the what that's the only reason we can come to him is because we realize God.

I'm not perfect I've failed so many times. I've made a mess in my life And when you become and he accepts us because of that his blood washes over us to cleanse us of that We go wow our minds are spiritually blown right and so he says When that moment happens God has adopted you into his spirit family and I having been adopted at age seven I understand the scripture to say wait a minute before I was adopted I lived in an abusive foster home.

I was given up by Biological parents that didn't want me or you know, well, I thought didn't love me didn't want me I I all of a sudden have experienced a God when I walked out of catechism for the first time in my life at about seven or eight years old I went wow literally I went wow.

There's a God and he loves me compared to everybody else who's not Show me any love. That's amazing. That's literally what I thought as a seven year old, right?

And not and so now I've got this connection with God as we all do, but not just a connection knowing he's our father, but our Abba.

In other words, he's saying, Daddy, the reason he was repeating this, that word father is Abba. It's like saying Abba, Abba, or in other words, it's saying, Daddy, Daddy, such an intimacy that comes upon us, that we can call God, not just our Creator, but our Daddy, because he loves us.

He's going to take care of us. He's got our best interest at heart. That is the real power of God that motivates us, that changes us.

Let's go to 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy, we're going to find chapter 1. Mike, would you mind reading verse 7 for us?

2 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 7.

[@41:04](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2464.0) - **Michael Kane**

For God has not given us a spirit of sheer, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

[@41:12](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2472.08) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

And I believe this is the scripture that connects what we're talking about here. God doesn't give us a spirit of fear.

We, that fear of obligation, of having to be somebody to pretend we're not all of that stuff, anxiety driven, worry, fear, approval seeking, all of that, his garbage.

God doesn't place that upon us. That's not the way he wants us to live, but he gives us the power to break all that stuff off of us.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, that breaks all that and all of that connection. what motivates us and moves us what?

To love, that's the next part of this. And to love, and when we love now, we're thinking straight. Now we fully get it because the mind becomes clear in how we process.

who we are, what we do for God, why we do what we do for God, because we know he loves us.

Now, we express that love to others. Mike, go ahead.

[@42:09](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2529.36) - **Michael Kane**

Yeah, I think you talked about one of the first Bible studies I was on here. You talked about legalism, and that's basically what it is.

Keeping all the rules and make your peace and cues and all that.

[@42:22](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2542.62) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

And we don't have to do that anymore, not from a sense of obligation. Now, when you fully realize who you are that God loves you, and he wants to work with you to make you the best that you can be, now you love him back and you want to do the things he's asked of you, right?

You want to please him because you love him. We're still in 2 Timothy, but let's go to chapter 3.

And let's read verse 5. Timothy chapter 3, verse 5. And Julie, would you mind reading that, please? They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make their godly.

We must stay away from people like that. Wow, I actually liked that translation that she read versus the King James.

King James is simple. I mean, in the sense of what it says, having a former godliness, but denying the power they're of turn away from such.

That phrase, denying the power of reread it out your verse again. They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly.

You must stay away from people like that. They will reject the power that will make them godly. other words, like God, right?

That's what being godly means to be godly means to be like God, to behave the way God behaves, to act the way he has acts, to bear the fruit.

We're talking about trees who bear fruit, right? We're not going to produce that fruit. We're not going to be godly overnight, but we should be developing that fruit that we become more and more like God in the way that he behaves.

way that he acts. How does he act? Well, all we have to do is read his word. To figure that out.

See the example that he provides time after time in scripture. He loves people. He wants the best for people.

He speaks life. Everything he does is related to life and growth and development. And so if we want to be like that, we should be doing those things.

That's why Matthew 25 all pointed to those who are doing things that brought life to people, not a claim to themselves.

Those who were the goats were seeking a claim only for themselves. They weren't bringing real life, real transformation to those they were trying to interact with.

They were the sheep in wolves' clovings. They were the ones denying the power. There's that word power of the Holy Spirit to work in them, to motivate them, to love others.

They were doing it out of selfishness. There's a difference between genuine love and selfishness. When we find ourselves, and this is where it's hard,

We have to constantly assess our motivations. Am I doing this for me or am I doing this to bless somebody else?

God and reasons, right? And it's hard because Jeremiah 17 verse 9, I believe it is, says the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

Who can know it but God alone? Our heart is the seat of our emotions. It's everything that we say that we are, right?

It's everything we feel and express. It's us. And if we are lying to ourselves, how will we ever know our true motivation?

This is why daily repentance is important. This is why Paul said, I must die daily. I must examine myself.

And if there's anything in me that has this tendency to be selfish, to lean in towards the temptations of my life, then I need God's help in those areas.

That's why I need to realize who I am. He's weaknesses. I know my strengths. I, I can get off of my strengths very easily.

That's, that's where we get caught up in pride. But I, it's the weaknesses that I need help because I need balance in my life.

And so I often come to God in the morning and God, you know, there's too much pride in me, there's selfishness, there's things that I will listen to that I need help with, right?

Because I don't want those to get in the way of what he wants to do in my life through me to others.

Excuse me, having a form of godliness, the only way we will tell if somebody has a form, because they can see that sheep and wolves can seem like a sheep.

It's hard to discern. We need to pray for discernment, right? sheep and a sheep and wolves clothing standing next to each other, you might not be able to tell which is which.

Only God really knows. But that's why we ask questions. That's why we study scripture. We memorize. Is it so we can start examining when we ask people, you know, what they believe does it line up to scripture?

When we ask people what's the motivations of their hearts deal your actions support that all those things, right? When we examine someone's life and we're looking at it Are they living a godly life?

Are they living the way scripture says now when they aren't checking the boxes as a yes? yes, but instead a yes, no, yes, no, wait a minute Okay, then the next question is are they trying are they trying to live a godly life?

Well, if they are and we see the effort then we should be supporting them and helping them grow But if their effort is not there and they don't want it then we are scripture as scripture says throwing our pearls before swine Anything we're doing for them is not going to help anyway Mike go ahead.

[@47:51](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2871.92) - **Michael Kane**

I just wanted to say real quickly I used to struggle with that my up and down until I started reading Christian biographies and autobiographies

[@48:00](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2880.0) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Everybody has bad and hard times and goes Martin Luther kept going to the brothel and he kept praying to God and finally God delivered him But it went on and hard Yes, and I Have a friend who's deceased now that he was an associate pastor that at first I mean I looked up to him.

I mean he was a godly man I saw I saw fruit there, then realized he had this homosexual struggle.

He he You know his life crashed because of it, but I never saw him give up on trying to overcome that Taking it to God constantly constantly, you know praying praying Unfortunately, he passed away.

don't know what the state of his life was at the time he passed away And that's not up to me even though that's up to God in him, what I admired was his willingness to take it to be real before God and say this is my struggle And he would weep and cry and pray about it, right?

And I saw the sincerity of him wanting to overcome that that taught me a big lesson Like, man, I realize I've got these weaknesses, but I am not to give in to those weaknesses.

constantly bring them to God, bring it to God, bring it to God. I can't say that enough, right? Let's go to Revelation 12, I know we're hitting pretty close to the top of the hour.

I think this will be the last scripture I want to talk about. Revelation 12, and I know we've covered it before, but I think it's worth repeating.

In relation 12, verse 11. Brian, would you mind reading that for us, please?

[@49:43](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2983.4) - **Jamie Theis**

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb in the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives until death.

Until death.

[@49:54](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=2994.68) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

So there are two things identified that make somebody an overcome. What is the first thing?

[@50:08](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3008.44) - **Michael Kane**

Salvation Yeah, it's part of salvation.

[@50:13](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3013.62) - **Luke**

Let me put it that way.

[@50:14](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3014.66) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

What is the blood of the lamb? Okay, and when God chooses words and he puts things in the Bible He's not like randomly choosing to say something He is very ordered and very structured and very purposeful in the way he does things and we know that from the examples Of we see the instructions.

He gave no one to build the ark. He didn't just say to Noah Hey, gonna destroy the world with water go and build yourself a boat.

You'll be saved Now when he told Noah to build a boat, he said you're gonna make it out of this type of wood It's gonna have this many floors.

gonna be sealed within without it's gonna have this dimensions It's this is where you're gonna put the door. This is where you're gonna put the window We see he's a goddess specifics, right?

see the same thing when he told Moses build the temple from your tablet and go a place where I can dwell with the people.

He didn't just say, go build it and I'll show up. He said, nope, you're going to make it out of this material.

You're going to build it in these dimensions. Every piece of item in the temple was to a specific that God said.

So because God is specific, when he gives us his word, it's a reason. You see, we can't get it backwards.

The blood of the land must be first before the word of testimony. The blood of the land, as Mike pointed out, is related to our salvation.

We come into that relationship agreement with God. The only way that's going to happen is when we repent. That is where the blood of Jesus is applied to our lives.

There is a reason Jesus started his ministry in getting baptized first instead of at the end, right? He was setting the tone.

This is the example. He took, I personally believe, he took on the spin of the world at that point.

Because why? have to think about this. The tabernacle plan was such that the person came into the temple, into the area, through the one entrance.

carried their land. The first place they encountered was the altar of sacrifice. The land was slain. The blood was shed.

The blood is on the high priest. He goes to the labor, which is the next instrument. He washes the blood off of his hands.

He is now clean, but where did the blood go? The blood is in the water, right? The water was pure before the sacrifice.

He washes the blood off. The blood is now in the water, not on the high priest, right? The high priest continues into the holy place.

He lights the candles. He puts the show bread on the table. He puts the incense in there. There's the veil that separates him from the holy of holy, where the Ark of the Covenant is where God's presence is.

This is the way man made an approach to God. God made an approach to man. He was on the throne in heaven.

He put on flesh, came through veil, the scripture tells us the veil was the veil, the flesh of Jesus.

He, he proceeded to say to the world, I am the bread of life, the show bread, I am the light of the world, the light, he is speaking on behalf of God, he comes out, he is then baptized, what's in the water, the blood, the blood symbolizes the sin of the people, Jesus is baptized, he's carrying the sin of the world for the next three and a half years, until he takes it to the cross, the altar, where he shed his blood.

the sin of the world, and then it is brought out to the world. You see, man made his approach this way, God made his approach this way, so there's reason Jesus was baptized, was so that we could have the example and realize that's where we meet him, we carry our sin, our way to the altar, we repent, we say, God, this is the mess that I've carried in my life, and in baptism, that's where we meet him, and he washes our sins, he takes them from us, right, because he's made that sacrifice.

you. Thank you. first. So the blood has to come first. When the blood is applied first, we realize the great sacrifice that He made for us.

It motivates us by love. When we have that love in us, Revelation 12, 11, the second thing we are propelled into the word of our testimony, we are becoming witnesses because of the power of God.

It's connected through relationship. The power comes because of that relationship. And what does that power do? As 1st, X, chapter 1, verse 8 said, we become witnesses.

How do we witness? We share the testimony of our life. We say, this is what God has done for me.

And as Paul wrote with the same comfort that we are comforted, we comfort others, hey, because God did it for me, I know He can do it for Zara.

I know He can do it for Jamie. I know He can do it for Brian or Wendy or Luke or Mike or Andrew or Jesse or Cat or whomever that we're talking to.

Because if He did it for me, He can do it for you. And that's hard to deny. Amen. Thoughts, questions, about the power of God and how what it really means to make you a witness and to change you and to help you love others.

Any questions, thoughts, or comments?

[@55:18](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3318.64) - **Wendy Chi**

I think the second part of verse 11, they did not love their life so much that they were afraid to die.

Yeah, that's another good point to that. So I mean, you know, if you were in that situation right now, are you there?

[@55:41](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3341.14) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yeah, it's a good question. That love should motivate us so much that we are concerned about ourselves anymore. What happens to us?

We've gotten right with God because the blood's been applied to our lives. We are becoming godly, right? more like God, we aren't concerned about ourselves anymore, that it doesn't matter what happens to us anymore, right?

We are dead to the old life, as you can't hurt a dead man, right? Physically, you know, somebody dies, you go up and kick him and couldn't do anything to him, right?

You can take another stake and drive it right through him. They aren't going to feel any pain. dead man feels no pain.

When we have died to the old world, to this old self, and we know who we are in Christ, whatever the world does to us doesn't matter anymore.

Well, to piggyback on what Wendy said, you know, when you are completely sold out for God, and you are allowing us to hear His Holy Spirit to just completely penetrate you, consume you, lead you, and you are fully submitted to Him when you're faced with a situation like that.

In our weakness, we are made strong through Him, and He is going to give us the strength and just that peace, if you will.

I don't even know what the right word is. in a situation like that, when you know death is at your doorstep, you're dying a martyr's death, you're just submitted and sold out to God, and you know that God is going to work it all out.

And it's just such a humbling thing to think about that God loves you so much that he would be with you in a moment like that.

But he is there even more than just every day, his power would completely lead you and give you that peace that you need.

[@57:29](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3449.14) - **Michael Kane**

I tell myself, never give up and believe what God says about heaven. If everything's better, nothing's worse, and the best relationship you've had here will be there and new ones.

A new heaven and a new earth will rule and reign with him, he's just preparing us, and love will be nothing will stain anything good.

If you have that much faith, if you the Bible and print the ends and other places about heaven, that my faith, you believe him over your feelings and what you see in the world.

I knew when I was younger I didn't, but now that I'm older, I do.

[@58:17](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3497.7) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Well said, Mike. Anybody else thoughts or how this impacted you today? What thoughts has inspired in you? What are you going to walk away with today?

Okay. Well, I want to conclude with prayer like we always do, but before I do, I want to ask if anybody has any prayer requests, anything we can pray about for you?

[@58:56](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3536.12) - **Wendy Chi**

Soon. On the 28th, I'll be moving. from Fort Worth to to North Dallas with all the family landing for Christmas and celebrating my daughter's 21st birthday all on the same weekend.

[@59:15](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3555.1) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Wow, we got a lot going on. Yeah, and Wendy, I don't think you and some others were here at the very beginning.

We mentioned that we will not be meeting two weeks now on the 28th because of the holidays, but we want to allow the opportunity to celebrate or move.

So yeah, we'll pray for your move to Dallas.

[@59:35](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3575.38) - **Wendy Chi**

Our daughter happens to live in Dallas right now.

[@59:37](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3577.64) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yeah, we'll pray for that. Anybody else? Are there any prayer requests?

[@59:43](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3583.34) - **Michael Kane**

Yeah, I had a MRI. I have a tone rotator top on my left shoulder and they saw something in there that concerned them.

So I'm going to see an oncologist on the 20th. They think it might be cancer, so just pray for me.

[@59:58](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3598.96) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Yeah, yeah. I actually have been this past week, Mike, and I will totally continue to do so. Anybody else?

Okay, for our son-in-law, is an important meeting next week. Yeah, his name is Cameron. All right. Anybody else?

[@1:00:17](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3617.96) - **Luke**

Yeah, if we could pray for my father, Ron, he is a I'm morphing and he's in the step I can't remember my palliative care.

It's a step before hospice. So I'm planning on visiting him in the next couple of weeks because he's probably got weeks left.

[@1:00:39](https://fathom.video/share/5bS7NMuAGBsggLuXZPrR-zKssKrHDhBu?timestamp=3639.7) - **Rick Stephenson (wisdomwell.guru)**

Okay, thank you. Certainly, of course, we'll pray for Ronald. Yeah. Anybody else? Okay, well, let's conclude with prayer and pray for these things as well.

Lord Jesus, I thank you for the... Friends that you brought us here to the Bible study today, and I thank you for the word that you've given us unprepared.

Though it was, it still moved me. Still touched me Lord. Thank you for hopefully leaving your fingerprints all over us God.

We want to be changed by you. We want to be real. We want the power of God working in us that there would be true fruit of godliness in our lives.

God let us hide nothing from you God. We gain nothing when we hide things from you God. But let us count you in our weaknesses that you might be able to make strengths out of them God.

God, I thank you for your word for it is unchanging and it's powerful and it's it's life giving God.

I thank you for our new friends. I thank you God for bringing them and bringing power into their lives as well to motivate and encourage them to draw close to you.

Lord, we know that you hear us. We know that you move on our behalf because of prayer and so we lift up Wendy.

We pray God that you coordinate this move between her and her. family and all the holiday rush. Lord God that everything would be worked out, everything would go smoothly as planned as you desire.

God let there be peace, there be comfort, let there be guidance in this moon. Lord, let it bring joy as a result.

Lord, closeness to the family, closeness to you. We thank you God for coordinating and sending warrior angels on our behalf to clear the path and make it straight.

We thank you God for touching Mike in his rotator cuff, Lord his shoulder, removing any groats that do not belong there God, breaking apart, dissolving any abnormal cells Lord.

God, may you keep him healthy, may give him strength and give use of that shoulder Lord. I thank you Lord for giving him strength.

from head to toe, molding him Lord God to be a witness for you and giving him a grand testimony of what you've done not only in his shoulder but in his life, Lord.

Thank you God for Julian for bringing forth the Request for Cameron Lord. I just pray that you give him wisdom Give him discernment and favor on only doors that are of you and closed doors that are not of you Let whatever happens draw him close to you God and build the relationship with him God Save him Lord.

We pray God I also would lift up Iran God you know the battle. He's been fighting with cancer, and I just pray God that you give him strength That Lord you give him opportunity to meet with his loved ones God to be able to Reconcile where he needs to work inside to make things straight where he needs to make things straight To pass the wisdom that he needs to share Lord God whatever needs to be done that they have opportunity to meet and to share those stories and those that love Lord God that they have amongst each other Thank you for giving him favor.

Thank you for giving us. Thank you for giving me peace and removing pain from his body We thank you again for our friends.

pray that you'd be with him over the holiday seasons That Lord God they would draw Most family and close to you that you would bless them and keep them safe as they travel wherever they have to go or whatever they have to do And God that they always be mindful of you in Jesus name.

Amen. Well, thank you everyone. We appreciate you being here today. And again, not two weeks from today, but four weeks.

Okay, four weeks. So thank you. God bless you. Thank you very much. Bye bye. You