

Male: Good morning, everybody, and welcome and happy Sabbath to those here live with us at the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh-day Adventist Church, and those of you who are watching online, we want to welcome you to our program, our Sabbath School this morning. We have a very delightful and very enriching Sabbath School lesson. We are on lesson 7 of this particular quarter, and it's on "Jesus, Anchor of Our Soul."

Our teacher today is going to be Pastor Shawn Brummund, and we have a free offer for you, and the free offer is, "Can a Saved Man Choose to Be Lost?" And if you call 1-866-788-3966--that's 1-866-Study-More--ask for Offer 112. If you're in the US, you can also text "SH016" to number 40544. If you're outside the US, you can go to study.aftv.org/--or [backslash--SH016](https://www.facebook.com/SH016).

Once again, we want to welcome you, and I also want to welcome this group that's standing behind me, which is the Jefferson Christian Academy Bell Choir. I've known them for quite a while because, prior to coming to Amazing Facts, I was the pastor of that church, and my wife was a principal there. And they have a--beautiful music for you this morning. And then for the worship service, they'll have two numbers for you. So, at this time, Jefferson Christian Academy Bell Choir.

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Shawn Brummund: I love the book of Hebrews. Are you enjoying the book of Hebrews? Yes, the book of Hebrews is one of the deepest. You know, the book of Romans, it gets so much attention. And, you know, it is known and is famous for being the deepest gospel book that you can find in all of the New Testament. And it is one, by far, a champion of the gospel. But over the years, as I have studied the book of Hebrews, it has been my experience that Hebrews is a very even match. I have decided that there is a tie between those two books.

Hebrews is a powerful book on the gospel of Jesus Christ. And again, I put my vote in and say that Hebrews is just as powerful a gospel book in the New Testament as that of Hebrews. It is a book that lifts up Jesus as our hope, as our glory. It is Jesus who is the hope and strength and anchor of our soul. And it lifts up Jesus as our High Priest. It lifts Jesus up as our perfect sacrifice. These are the main themes that we find throughout the book of Hebrews, Jesus as the ultimate Priest and as the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus, when He died on the cross, paid the price and penalty in full for the guilt and sin of mankind. That includes your guilt, your sin, as well as mine. And that's the heart of the gospel, but the gospel doesn't stay at the cross, doesn't it?

Jesus accomplished something that was essential at the cross, that one and perfect sacrifice and penalty and price that He paid for us, but then He began to apply that to us as followers of Jesus Christ as our High Priest. He is the ultimate priesthood that God gives to us as well.

You know, one of my favorite summaries that really I believe kind of encapsulates the benefits and the good news that comes from Jesus as the High Priest is found in Hebrews chapter 7 and verse 25, where it says, "He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

And so, here we have that powerful gospel summary of Jesus as our High Priest, that He is able to save to the uttermost. That includes you and I again, friends, includes every single human being that ever lived and ever will live, that all of us can be saved. Even to the worst of us, if we come to God through Christ, can be saved. Even the worst of us, if we come to God through Christ, can be changed in Jesus Christ. And Jesus always lives to make intercession for them. Isn't it good to be able to know that?

Of course, John the Gospel writer also wrote in 1 John chapter 1--or chapter 2 and verse 1, he says, "My little children, I write these things that you may not sin; but if you do sin, then we have an advocate for us in heaven, Jesus Christ Himself." So, this is the main theme with Hebrews, but Hebrews also tells us something else very important, and this week's lesson study looks at that in lesson number 7, "Jesus,

The Anchor of Our Soul." We look at two of the most sober warnings that God gives to us in that book and perhaps, for sure, one of the most sober warnings that we can find in all of the Bible.

Hebrews tells us that once we accept, after we have discovered, and then, of course, as we experience gospel truth, as we experience Jesus Christ in our lives, after we experience the hope and power of Christ working in a powerful way, if we are not careful, we can find ourselves losing it all. Even as the entire Gospel of the book of John is what I believe one of the longest, is the longest and most comprehensive answer to the Bible question that's asked, "Is Jesus just as much God as the Father is God?" And even as the Gospel of John is the longest Bible answer, and answers with a resounding powerful yes, I believe also when we come to the book of Hebrews, the entire book of Hebrews is the longest and most comprehensive answer to the question of whether we can be lost after we have been saved, after we come to accept and experience Jesus Christ in our lives.

And again, the answer that we find in Hebrews is the same answer to the question of whether or not Jesus is God, and the answer is a resounding yes. And so, again, this week's study brings us to two of the most sober warnings. It brings us to the first of those in Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 4 through 6.

So, let's turn to that here this morning. I hope you are having a good morning so far and that as we open the Word of God, that your heart and mine is prepared to be able to accept and see these things that God has for us. For indeed we come to this particular chapter, as we come to the feet of Jesus, we come to God the Father as a loving God that has concern for your life, as well as mine, wants to know the truth on this particular question and how we can make sure that we stay on the straight and narrow. How we can be certain that when Jesus comes again, we will have eternal life with him, and that he will bring us home. And so, let's go to Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 4 to 6 to begin our study here today.

So, in chapter 6, in verses 4 to 6 it says this: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come--". Now, if you've looked at the quarterly lesson throughout the week, you have discovered indeed that God here is describing a very obvious, authentic, very real and powerful conversion experience.

Okay, verses 4 and 5 are describing a human being that has come to be fully born again, that has come to find himself experiencing Jesus in his heart, and to have eternal life and be part of the kingdom of God. And there's a number of ways that is describing that, "having been enlightened." Of course, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. He who follows after me shall no longer walk in darkness, but he shall have the light of life." And so when we are enlightened, we have Jesus. This is somebody that has been enlightened with the light of God and with Jesus Christ. "Have tasted the heavenly gift."

Now, there's a number of heavenly gifts that the Bible talks about. You know, Peter said to the crowd on the day of Pentecost, when they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do," as they were responding to the gospel preaching of Peter and the apostles. And Peter responds and says, "Repent and every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you too shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," as some of you know, don't you? The Holy Spirit, and so this is certainly a heavenly gift to have the Holy Spirit.

Okay, in the book of Romans, chapter 3 and verse 23 it tells us that, indeed, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And so, to have that assurance and to have that hope, that anchor for our soul, that we know that we have eternal life, that we are citizens of heaven when we walk and talk and have our faith in Jesus Christ. And so, we talk--it speaks of having tasted the heavenly gift, having tasted what it is to be a part of the eternal family of God and have the Holy Spirit, "and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit," even as it then expands on that, "and have tasted the good Word of the Lord. They have come to understand and hear and read and accept the Word of God and the truths and the powers that are found therein." And, of course, "the powers of the ages to come," which, of course, is the supernatural powers that we have in store for us in the age to come, but we get a taste of it even in the here and now.

Some that are watching either online today or are with us here in our church sanctuary today have experienced those powers in different ways. The most common one is that all of us have been changed. Our characters, our perspectives, our world views, our morals, our ethics have all been changed in a powerful and life-giving way. The old man has died, and behold, all things have become new. This is the greatest, most powerful taste of the powers of the age to come.

Some of us also have experienced what it is to be supernaturally healed, where you go into the doctor, and the doctors still arrange for the different tests and for the different procedures that they have lined up for you. Even though it doesn't look good, they still are trying their best, but when you go in, they do the test, and they're scratching their head and say, "I don't know how this happened. I can't explain it, but we no longer have to do anymore tests, and the procedures or surgeries are canceled because you are completely whole and healed."

Some of you either have experienced that personally or you know someone that has experienced that. And so, when we come to verses 4 and 5, God is very clearly--Paul is very clearly describing someone that is a genuine, born-again Christian. And then he goes on. "If you have had all this experience, but if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put him to an open shame."

And so, the perplexity and the discouragement that has come from misunderstanding what the Bible here is saying is something that I think that we need to talk about first, because some have come to read this and conclude that, you know, "Listen, I used to be a Christian. I fell away for different reasons. I made bad choices, different decisions. Circumstances came upon me, and I've heard a voice, and I've had a desire to come back to the Lord. But the Bible's here telling me that once I've been a Christian, once I've been with the family of God, and once I leave that family of God, it is impossible for me to ever have the hope of coming back again."

But that's not what the Bible is saying. We know that that would be contradictory to two of the most powerful and hope-filled parables that Jesus taught while He was on this planet. Jesus taught the parable of the prodigal son. Many of us are very familiar with it. The prodigal son was a son that represents a member of the family of the Father, and the Father represents God Himself. And the son one day decided that, you know what? As much of a blessing there might be in different measures to be here in my father's house, I've decided that it's probably better for me and more fun for me to be outside of the father's house." And so, he walks away from the Father, and he goes and he lives the prodigal life, but he comes to himself.

One day, when he hits rock bottom, he comes to himself and realizes, "What have I done? What have I given up? The servants of my Father are fed and have a better life than I do. And I was a son." And so, he comes back, and the Father runs and embrace--we all know the story, don't we?

And then we have the lost sheep, the one that unconsciously started to wander from the flock and was distracted from different things, the cares and the troubles of this world and so on, the temptations, and they found themselves slowly straying from the flock, until finally they looked around, and they didn't even realize it. But now they realize, "I'm not even with the sheep of God anymore." And so, what does the Shepherd do? He goes out and He leaves the 99 penned up and He searches far and wide for that sheep to bring him home.

And so, when we look at these two powerful parables that Jesus has shared with us, we know that God is not telling us that if we have an experience with God, fully and authentically, and then we find, for whatever reason, we stray, or we walk away in different measures--you know, some of us that are here today have experienced that, and have come back, and know that your experience is authentic today as well. And so, we know that God is not saying that once you have been saved and then you make decisions--now let's not mince words here because Jesus didn't either.

When He shared that parable, when the father saw the son coming back, he was thrilled. He threw the biggest party his house had ever seen. Why? "Because my son was dead. He was lost but now he's

found. He was dead but now he is alive."

So, let's not mince words. Once that prodigal son walked out of that house and down the street to the faraway city, he walked away from life. He became dead. He became a lost human being, but he still had the option, and he was wise enough and smart enough to be able to turn back one day and say, "What have I done?" and came to himself and found himself restored into the family of God. And so, it's important for us to understand that.

So, the question comes back to, then, what is God saying in Hebrews chapter 6, verses 4 through 6? Well, I believe that the context is absolutely essential, as it so often is in understanding, especially the more troublesome or difficult text for us to understand, the more the context of the verses before and after--and sometimes the whole book and sometimes the whole Bible--sometimes we need the whole context of the whole Bible to understand it. In this case, it really helps us because, first off, we need to go back to the gospel, the Gospel of Luke in that case, and look at the two prodigal--the two parables of Jesus I just spoke about.

So, having the context of the whole Bible helps us to understand what God is not saying in these verses, but then we want to look at the immediate context and help us to understand what God is saying in these verses at the same time.

Now, as we studied last week, we looked at Jesus as our Mediator, Jesus as the High Priest. You know, Paul was just starting to warm up as we go through the first 10 or 11 verses of chapter 5. He's introducing Jesus as the ultimate Priest, the fulfillment of the Aaronic or the earthly Israelite priesthood. Jesus is the fulfillment of it. And just as Paul is getting warmed up and he's just starting to get the juices flowing, and he's getting all excited about Jesus as the High Priest, now all of a sudden he stops, and he stops with a frustration. He begins to express some frustration, but that frustration very quickly moves into a loving rebuke.

Now, I don't know about you, but I'm not always excited about rebukes. But the bottom line is that the Bible says that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. And what is it given for? It's given for--it tells us in the same verse--for doctrine, for reproof, which is rebuke, and for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. And so, the Bible tells us that one of the blessings that comes from the Bible is that it rebukes us at times. It gives us reproofs, needed rebukes, needed reproofs. And this is one of those instances that Paul was giving to the Hebrew or Jewish believers back in the church of his day, and he gives to you and I as well. And so, he takes an intermission.

Paul takes an intermission in his exposition of Jesus as Priest, and he goes into rebuking the believers. In verse 11, it says, "Of whom we have much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." He says, "Listen, I want to go deeper. I want to continue to dig deeper into the beautiful truth of Jesus as our High Priest." Some of the great symbolism of Melchizedek and some of these other--the Aaronic priesthood and so on--and be able to expand and unpack that. "But I'm frustrated. I'm concerned because you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God. And you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who are partakers only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby. But solid foods belong to those who are full aged, those who are mature, grown up, that is those, who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

And so, Paul is saying, "Listen, we've got a problem, and I need to address you on this; because even though I should be able to go deeper into the theological truths and implications of Jesus as our High Priest, I'm a little bit held back because you've held yourself back. You've stymied your growth as a Christian. Instead of being fully mature and grown up as a Christian, like you should be at this point, you're still looking for the milk." In the following verses he talks about it. He says, "Listen, we need to be able to move on beyond the basics, beyond the basics of the gospel, faith towards God, repentance from dead works. We need to move on beyond the resurrection that Jesus has in store for us, the eternal life,

and the eternal body, and immortal bodies that God has in store for us." He says, "These are all powerful gospel truths that God gives to us in the hope of the gospel, but you need to go deeper than that. That's kindergarten. You need to graduate. You need to be a senior." That's what Paul is telling us here, is he not?

You know, it's interesting, there's a number of different benefits that have been discovered through research, and that research tells us that exercise is one of the most essential activities that we can be involved in as human beings. Now, many of us exercise on a regular basis. You know, one thing I appreciate about the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that we understand that the Bible addresses all parts of our existence, including our physical and mental existence. And so, because of that, we understand there's principles in the Bible, and then as expand on that in research, spirit of prophecy and so on, there's a lot of things that we do to keep ourselves healthier, sharper, better people, better quality of life because of these health principles.

One of those is exercise. And if you're not exercising on a regular basis, maybe this is the time when God is going to convince you, you need to get off your feet and--I mean, get on your feet and find yourself exercising on a regular basis. God has created our bodies to move, and the more we move, the Bible tells us the healthier we are. And what are some of those benefits? The reason I'm bringing this up is because we just looked, and Paul says, "Listen, the reason that you're still babies, you're still looking for milk rather than chewing on some solid food is because you haven't exercised your reason and the senses that God has given to you in the Word of God. You have not learned to rightly divide the Word of God and become men and women of righteousness."

And so, I went to the CDC. We get a lot of--the CDC's getting a lot of attention nowadays, isn't it? Center of Disease Control. But don't always--they're not always--they're not just there to be able to help us with the research of viruses and the like, but it also tells us there a list of exercise benefits. Brain health. When we exercise on a regular basis, we think sharper. Our hearing--I mean our learning is sharper. We have better judgment. Research also tells us it reduces the risk of depression and anxiety. It also reduces depression and anxiety if we're already struggling with it. This is research, proven facts. It helps us to sleep better.

When we're exercising on a regular basis, it stimulates the release of melatonin, a higher level of melatonin when we go to sleep at night. We have a deeper, more restful, more recuperative sleep when we exercise during the day. It helps us to achieve and keep an ideal body weight. It reduces the risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, a list of certain cancers. Exercise also tells us--it helps to reduce the risk of falling when we get into our later years. It helps us to live longer. It also makes our bones and our muscles stronger.

You know, one of the laws, the physical laws of life and physiology, biology is that the more you use your muscles, the more you have, the bigger they are, and the more stronger they are. If you stop using those muscles altogether--there's a fancy name for it--it's called atrophy. Okay, and atrophy means that your muscles start to shrink. And the less you use them, the smaller and weaker they get. Okay, so there's a law of life there. If you don't use it, you lose it, as the old saying goes. And the same with our bones.

You know, if we're not being physical, especially walking and running with impact exercises and so on, our bones start to hollow out, and they become frail and brittle, and we can break our bones a lot easier because of that. Again, if you don't use your bones in a physical way, in the way that God has intended for them to be used, research and experience tells us that if you don't lose it, you lose it. And so, this is what the Bible is also telling us here as well. The same thing goes with our spiritual walk of faith.

You know, one of the spiritual laws that the Bible reveals--experience also verifies--is that you can't maintain the status quo in your spiritual faith. In other words, you can't become a Christian, learn so much of the Bible, pray and connect with Jesus, worship with Him, serve in some different ways, and then just say, you know, "That's good enough." You know, "I think I know enough about the Bible, I've spent enough time in prayer, I go to church occasionally." But, you know, even if you go to church on a

regular basis, you can't just stay at status quo. It's like muscle. It's like exercising.

You know, some of us wish we could just be faithful for a couple of months, get our bodies all in shape, get the body fat level down, and get our muscles a little bit stronger and bigger and so on, and then just kind of stop and just keep it there. "Okay, I've got it there, now let's just put it in the bank, and let's just go back to life and sitting down again." But it doesn't work that way, does it? Okay, you get it, but then you can lose it. You can get it back again, but then you can lose it.

Same with our spiritual life. You can't stay status quo. Either you're going forward and growing stronger as a Christian in your knowledge and faith and connection with Christ, or you're going backwards. You're backsliding. That's the only two options. It's just a law of life. As much as it is on the physical plane, so it is on the spiritual plane. That's why Paul made one of my favorite statements. It's one of the most healthful in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, in verse 27. Paul said, "I discipline my body and bring it under subjection, lest while I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

Again, Paul--even as the entire book of Hebrews gives us that answer. "Is it possible to be lost after we have been saved?" And the answer is yes. And Paul is saying, "Listen, I myself, even while I am preaching, even while I am full time in ministry, can find myself disqualified from the race. And so, Paul says, "Because of that, I make sure that I discipline my body and bring it into subjection."

Now, one of the things that sometimes, you know, as I'm preparing, and I have the privilege of preparing a lot of people over the years for baptism. And typically, when people are preparing for baptism, they're experiencing Christ as fresh or maybe they've come back to Christ and it's renewed and they're just pumped and excited about their new relationship with Christ, and they're looking forward to their baptism. They're looking forward to their continued walk with Jesus. Everything's new and fresh. You know, kind of like a honeymoon experience they have in a marriage between a couple and so on.

But even as a couple knows, a married couple knows that after the honeymoon's over, and you get into the nitty gritty of life from day to day, and the bills start adding up, and the pressures come, and the difficulties of life continue to hit you, and you start to butt heads on different issues and how and where you're going to put your furniture, and which way, and who's gonna do what in the house, and all these other practical things that get in the way of all that beautiful love and romance and everything. And pretty soon, you're not all as excited about each other, and you're not--you have to work at it. You know, it's not as natural.

And same thing with the Christian walk and experience. You know, we can be excited and pumped in the beginning. That's why sometimes when I share with people, as I do with pre-marriage counseling, I do pre-baptism counseling, and I warn them, and I say, "Listen, you know, as time goes by, you know, it won't be as novel to be able to get on your knees and make sure you spend that time with the Lord in prayer. It won't be as novel and new and fresh when you get into the Word of God. Now, each time that you do, it's just like with your exercise program. Typically, when you go out and force yourself through it, even on the days you don't feel like it, you'll always feel better at the end."

You know, friends, you can get some of the fastest, best athletes in the world, the best basketball players, football players, track athletes and so on, and 90% of the time they love their workouts, they love what they do. They're thankful and grateful that they can make a living, if they're making a living at doing what they love in this way. But even the best of them, with the biggest passions and the most successful careers, have days when they get up in the morning, and they say, "Oh, what I'd do just to roll over again and not have to go to practice today." But typically, when they force themselves through that, they discipline their bodies and bring it in under subjection and they do it anyway. Typically, when they come to the end of it, they say, "Oh, am I ever glad I came to practice today. I feel great." And the same thing with the spiritual walk.

There'll be days and times when you don't feel like praying. You don't feel like taking that time. You've got 100 things to do today. You've got all this pressure. You feel bad, and there's all kinds of different things, distractions that get in the way and start to consume the first moments and hours of your day.

And next thing you know, you come to the end of the night and say, "Lord, I just realized I haven't spent a single minute with you in prayer, yet alone Bible study or Bible reading." And so, we need to discipline--these are called spiritual disciplines for a reason.

A discipline means that it's doing something that sometimes you don't feel like doing. But typically, when you whip through--you know, sometimes I'm tired or I'm distracted. I've got other things to do, but I find myself in the Word of God, and I don't have to get very many verses into it, and I just get lost in the world of the Word of God. And then when I'm finished, I'm like, "God, I didn't feel like it, or I had other things that were pulling at me, but I am ever glad that I came back to your Word. Thank you for solidifying me and growing me and helping me to grow up as a Christian, that I might not remain a baby."

So, this is the context, friends. This is the context that God is giving to us. As we look at this particular subject and as we look at these verses, that can be troublesome and confusing to some people as we look at it. By the way, Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 12, if you jump ahead there a little bit, and we're going to look at that in more detail in a few moments. But in Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 12, the word "sluggish," "lazy," is used there for us as well.

And again, this is describing when we don't feel like prayer every morning, we don't feel like taking our Bible study and making sure that we read chapter, verses, or whatever, reading in a Bible reading program that you have, setting some kind of program. That's why Amazing Facts and different parts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church provides these resources. Reading your Bible through in a year, so that tells you, listen, you want to get through a year, just make it your goal to read Psalm 1, and Genesis, the first 2 chapters, and Matthew chapter 1 today.

You know, and so it tells you, this is how many you have--you're doing it. You're setting up some program to find some discipline in your life. Christianity is not something that just kind of falls in your lap. Maturing in Christ is not something that falls in your lap; but instead, it is something that is needed to approach in a very proactive, disciplined way, so that you can grow in the faith and the hope that we find in Christ. So, let's go to Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 1 through 3 now. So, we're going to Hebrews chapter 6, and verses 1 through 3, as we continue to pick up this context.

In Hebrews chapter 6, verses 1 through 3, it says, "Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms or of laying on of hands, or the resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits. For it is impossible," it says. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, have tasted the heavenly gift, and become partakers of the Holy Spirit, have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put him to an open shame."

And so, if God is telling us, through the parables of Jesus, that if we do find ourselves in Christ and then outside of Christ, there is opportunity to be able to come back in Christ. So, we know that this is not what it's saying, but the immediate context of the verses before this is Paul and God is telling the Christians that, "Listen, if you are not going forward, you are inevitably going backwards. And if you are going backwards, there's going to come a time, if you do not find yourself turning around in time--you see, if the prodigal son had never turned around or if he had pushed himself and pushed his decision ten years down the road, he may never have come back to the Father.

And so, if the sheep that wandered from the flock had wandered far enough, he may not have ever come back to the flock and have never been rescued and restored. You see, the shepherd goes out looking for the sheep, but the sheep still has to be receptive to the--and willing to receive the shepherd's leadership back into the flock. And so, it is impossible for those who were once enlightened to be--those who are saved, if they fall away far enough, long enough. And this, I believe, ties in with the unpardonable sin that Jesus talked about. You see, when we're backsliding, the Shepherd inevitably is

calling out to you. The Shepherd is saying, "Come back home. What are you doing? Why are you doing this? Why are you making these decisions? Why are you making these choices? Come back home, come back home. Come to me. My mercy and my grace is available to you. I will forgive you and restore you. I will be like the Father of the parable that ran down the street to meet you and wrapped his arms around you and kissed you on the neck, and then threw the biggest party that he had ever had. Because my son was lost, but now he's found, was dead but now he's alive again. And so, that is possible. It is available."

But if we go down that road too far, too long, pretty soon the voice becomes so quiet that the lips of Jesus are moving... Jesus' lips are moving, but you can't hear a thing. Jesus talks about the point of no return. And so, this is a very sober, needful warning that God gives to us, that there can come a time when it is impossible to renew ourselves again to repentance, because our conscience is so seared for so long.

You know, Paul put it another way. He said, you know, "Our consciences can become seared," you know. The police still rely as much as they have other things--face recognition and so on--and maybe the fingerprint one day will be antiquated. But we still put our fingerprint, you know. My green card, I'm a permanent resident here. When I got my green card, my family, we had to go in and give all our fingerprints, you know. But if I put my thumb on a hot element, a red-hot element, you know, and burn that long enough, the fingerprint will become seared to the point where there is no pattern left anymore. There's a permanent searing of it. And God says our consciences are the same way.

And so, God is lovingly telling us. He's not mincing words here. He's speaking in some very sober ways, because He wants to be sure that we understand that this is a life and death issue that He's talking about. Making decisions to grow in Christ is very important for us. Now, my eyesight is not very well, and I'm, you know, the AV people here have a clock up there. Oh, there we go, thank you, okay. Then I know how much time I have before we continue on. All right, so where were we? And so, the context here again is talking about a slow death, a slow spiritual death, one in which you are backsliding. Because you are not going forward, you're slowly going backwards.

And so, friends, I believe again that the immediate context of verses 11, chapter 5 through Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 3 is the key to understanding verses 4 through 6. And so, is it sober? Is it a serious warning? Sure it is, and it's intended that way because God loves us. He doesn't want to lose us. He wants us to continue to stay on the straight and narrow.

Okay, so no matter what--and by the way, that text is, you know, you can talk to a number of different pastors, look at different commentaries. There's two or three or four different perspectives on what God is trying to say there. If there's one thing that we need to pull away, even if we don't agree on each other's exact interpretations of those verses, is that God is warning us very clearly and soberly. He says, "Listen, run the race." You know, Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 26--the one before the verse in which I quoted earlier--he says, you know, "I run thus, not with uncertainty. I fight thus, not as one who beats the air."

In other words, Paul says before that, he says, "When you run, run like the athletes do. Only one receives the prize. Run the race as the one that wants to receive the prize. I forget those things which are behind," Paul says, "and I reach forward to those things which are ahead, that upward calling that is found in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is a proactive ingredient that we need to bring into our relationship, a saving relationship with Jesus.

You know, Ellen White called it the triune or something to that effect. It's been a few years since I read it. But, you know, Ellen White had once written about the Christian growth, and she says that there's a triune, a trinity of growth that is found in the Christian walk that is necessary, and that is the three Christian disciplines, and that is prayer, Bible study, and service. Serving in God's church, praying before God, and then searching out for God's answer to your prayer. How can I be involved in the church? How can I serve? In what capacity can I make a difference?

See, the problem is if we only come to church and we only find ourselves in the pews and we only find

ourselves in the chairs at Sabbath School and we only find ourselves attending the programs, but we're not involving ourselves in any way, at any time, in any of the activities of the church and knowing that, because of my labors, because of my work, I am making a difference in the kingdom of God and for His church, you're not growing to the capacity that God wants you to grow.

Sometimes we find ourselves in Bible study and prayer and we're faithful and we're sincere, and our efforts are authentic, but we find it waning, and we ask ourselves, "Why is my prayer life and my Bible study and my Bible reading always waning? Why is it always losing when it comes to my spiritual walk and life and the activities of life? And one of the answers is, is because you're not serving. You need that third leg. You need all three. They all feed each other. And if you're missing even one of them, the other two will find themselves hurting as well.

And so, then Paul goes on and encourages. In verse 9, he says, "But, beloved--" And we're in chapter 6 again. So, and by the way, Hebrews--maybe I said that two weeks ago when I was teaching--but, you know, all the way through Hebrews, Paul is--God is warning and encouragement, warning and encouragement, warning and encouragement. And so, here we find that pattern again. There's a rebuke up until verse 3 of chapter 6, then there's the warning, verse 4, 5, and 6, and 7 and 8, and then 9 through the end of the chapter is the encouragement. This is the positive part.

Let's look at it. It says, "But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this matter. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shown toward His name, and that you have ministered to the saints and do minister." What are they doing? What is God commending them? What is God putting His confidence in? He says, "Keep doing what you're doing when regards to service within the church of God, ministering to the saints. God wants us to take, yes, but He also wants us to give. And so, a healthy church is one in which every single church member is not only taking but also giving. Taking, giving; taking, giving; taking, giving. That's how it is, that's the pattern of the healthiest church that we can possibly have, as well as individual life.

All right, so here we're ministering to each other. In verse 11, it says, "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end." There's that discipline word, diligence, that you do not become sluggish. The opposite of sluggishness or laziness is due diligence. But rather, it says, "Imitate those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

And so, we find here that patience is another attribute, a character attribute and discipline, a word that God needs for us, that God knows that we need. In verse 15, as we skip on, it says, "And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise," speaking of Abraham as an example. And so we have another discipline word there. Patience again but also endurance. He patiently endured. That's endurance.

So, we need faith, we need patience, we need due diligence, we need endurance. These are all discipline words, aren't they? So, we have the rebuke, we have the warning, and then we have the encouragement. Then we have the encouragement to move on and not leave behind that which God has called us to do, to be able to apply those disciplines, that rather than backsliding, we find ourselves moving forward, and that's where God wants us to be.

So, that's Hebrews chapter 6, and with our last couple of minutes, one minute here, I just want to speak in chapter 10, verses 26 to 29. It says, "For if we sin willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of judgment." And again, this has been misunderstood by many, believing that, "Boy, if I go out and I sin, and I find myself making a bad choice, a sinful choice, that's it, I'm done. Sacrifice of Jesus is no longer atones for me. I'm a lost sinner from that."

No, God is not talking about that. God is talking about if you willfully and persistently choose a sinful lifestyle or a sin in your life, okay. So, David, did he commit adultery? Yes, he did, okay. Now, after he committed adultery, what did he do? Okay, he murdered. Yes, you're right. And after he murdered, what

did he do? Then he repented, didn't he? All right, he owned his sin, he confessed his sin, he pleaded to God's mercy to forgive him of his sin, and he continued on in a walk with Jesus Christ.

Now, if David had decided, "You know what? That was pretty fun, and now I've got rid of the husband, and not only am I going to marry Bathsheba, but I think I'm going to continue on with some other women, doing the same thing." Okay? Men have chosen that, haven't they? Okay, women have chosen that. They find themselves in one affair, and they decide rather than repenting and asking for forgiveness, they go on to the next affair and then the next affair and then the next affair. And they make it a pattern.

That's what this particular text is talking about, persistent sin--not when we stumble and we find ourselves making the odd stupid mistake or choice, and God's speaking to us, and we find ourselves continuing to walk in the grace of God.

Friends, it's good to be able to study with you. It's nice to have you here in the Granite Bay Hilltop Church. And for those of you who are watching online, it has been such a blessing.

Don't forget to take advantage of the free gift offer that we have today. "Can a Saved Man Choose to Be Lost?" We'll put that information up on the screen, which is Offer number 112. And you just dial 1-866-788-3966 and ask, "Can a Man--" "Can a Saved Man Choose to Be Lost?" And, of course, it's on the subject today. So, please take advantage of that if you've never read that book, and we look forward to studying with you next week.

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Male: I grew up in a church-going family. I mean, we were at every meeting. I sang in four of the choirs there. I directed three. Very involved, very active. It almost seemed like busy work sometimes, you know. I went to Sunday School. I knew about God, I knew about Jesus, but I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. My senior year in high school, I got the news my father had been murdered. Now, I played it off well. No one really saw that I was struggling with it. It just really felt like there was a hole that needed to be filled, and I tried to fill it with drugs, with alcohol, with partying.

After college, I just stopped going to church altogether. One day, on a Sunday, because I didn't feel like going to church with my mom, I thought, you know, I should get a little bit of Word. She had the satellite system hooked up, and I'm flipping through channels, and then the logo pops across, "Amazing Facts Presents." I've listened to a lot of different ministers, but this was the first time that he's actually saying something where I had to grab my Bible and actually pick it up. And I'd never heard this before. Let me look through and find this.

I went through all the Storacles. I went through all the study guides, and I just couldn't get enough. And then the Sabbath came up. And he's going through the appeal, and I'm just going, "Lord, I hear you. I have to go to church." So, I show up. It was funny, I didn't feel like I was gonna be judged, anything judgmental, anything. I walked in the door, and I just felt at home, but there's still a problem. I'm still partying. I was still going out to the bars.

At this time, I was selling cocaine to pay my rent. Sixteen days later, I find myself in a life-or-death situation. I had just come back from a liquor store and I grabbed a bottle of vodka. And there I am, high off cocaine with my Bible in hand, trying to do a Bible study. And I heard an audible voice. "Just look at yourself." And I did, and I was like, "What am I doing?" And I got on my knees, and I said, "Lord, if you do not take this away from me now, I'm going to kill myself." I was going to continue this lifestyle and I was going to end up overdosing, having a heart attack, whatever it was. "You have to take this away, all of it."

And that day, he lifted all of it away from me. It was all gone.

When God does something in your life, He does it complete. ♪♪♪ ♪♪♪ ♪♪♪

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Male: I grew up here in New York City, I guess dealing with all the temptations that you would have in a big city. Everything that you could imagine that you could run into--drugs, crime--was always here. When I was at a young age, I actually got into trouble with the law, and my only out was to join the military at the time, in order to not do time. So, I left New York and traveled the world a little bit while I was in the military. Eventually, I came back.

Having grown up as a hip-hop kid, I eventually found myself working in the music business, actually. I worked at a couple of major radio stations, hip-hop, reggae. I was in all the big reggae shows working. And no matter what I did to try and satisfy myself, nothing really worked. I remember I used to play at this one club in Manhattan, used to play there every Friday night. So, I came home one Saturday morning after leaving the club, and I turned on a video channel like I usually do. So, it was this guy in the video channel talking, and he was definitely out of place, but the things that he was saying just totally amazed me. I had never heard anyone speak about the Bible like this before.

So, I started coming early on Saturday mornings just to catch this show. I found the things that he was saying absolutely amazing, to the point where it literally made me stop and start to think about how I was living my life. So, I found that all of these things that I had been doing to try and find happiness were actually not making me happy at all, but were really just leaving me empty inside. When I started reading the Bible and it started to make sense, I started to make changes. I even tried to keep the Sabbath, which I failed at miserably.

So, I was actually invited by Amazing Facts to go to see a live series at one of the local churches. But after going the first night, I ended up going another night and another night. I stayed for the entire series. That was there I made a decision that changed the rest of my life forever. I gave my life to Christ, and everything was different after that. I made a decision to give up the music business, stop hanging out at all of the clubs. I made a decision that was eternal for me and for my family. I started going to church. I got a position in church where I was actually in charge of the Personal Ministries Department. And the same Amazing Facts studies that changed my life, I actually got to share them with people and sit down with them and tell them about Jesus.