



No Wake Zone

Part 4 – Simplify

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The other day, I heard a kid defining and describing Father's Day and this is what he said. "Father's Day is a lot like Mother's Day, just a lot less expensive gifts."

When I heard him say that, I thought, *What gift?* For those of you... When I said Happy Father's Day, you thought *Oh, no, that's today?* Let me give you a couple of last minute ideas for you to give to your dad. Dad's like to read. So, if your dad likes to read, you can get him this book *The Power of Home* by somebody you know, Ted Cunningham. It's a great devotional about the home.

Then a couple of other books that are probably the best books on the market today. *Jesus Hates Religion* and *Your Little Red Wagon*. I wrote them. They are out there in the lobby. If you want devotional thought, get the first one. If you want real content, you can get the other two. You could pick up a book or take your dad to lunch, which the church is providing for you today. You could say, "Dad, I was thinking about you this morning. I thought we would go to lunch." And on your way out, you could do that. You could get him a root beer and have a pop with your pop, which will be a free gift to everybody from the church. I love that this church thinks about how they can make walking with God fun and how we can be brothers and sisters in Christ.

I had this moment years ago. I was a young man. I'm still a young man, but I was a younger man and had four babies. I remember pulling up to a red light in Meredith's minivan. This guy pulled up beside me in this tricked out F150. I have to tell you there was a little bit of lust in my heart about this truck. In the back of it, he had this vintage Harley Davidson that had the leather saddlebags. You know what I'm talking about. I had a lot of lust. It was just full on sin at that point.

There is this man communication that happens where you just do the nod. I gave him that and he laughed at me. I remember thinking. *What is he laughing at?* That's not all I thought. I did think I could get out and whip him, but as I drove away from that stoplight, I thought *I'm not cool. He's laughing because I'm in a minivan. I'm just not cool anymore.* It was a tough realization for me because I was the cool student pastor for all those years. I traveled the county, talked to teenagers and college students, and was just cool. Now, I'm driving away in a Nissan minivan thinking, *I'm not cool anymore. I've crossed that threshold.* Let me just say to those of you who are 30 and over: You're not cool either. We are all past that line and we've got to quit trying at that point.

But, here's what I want to say to you on Father's Day. I would not trade the diapers, the vomit, the nonsense, the heartbreak, and the minivan for any toy in the world. The children that God gave me and the life that I have with all of that, including in the minivan, has given me more purpose in life, more significance in life, and a whole lot more sermon material than anything else could offer.

I told Meredith what Ted wanted me to speak on in this *No Wake Zone* series. She said, "That's going to be hypocritical for you."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "You're capsizing all of our boats with your pace and the way that you move."

So, just the assignment to do this sermon has brought some relief to my life and to my family. Just studying this subject matter and thinking about this subject matter because today we have five campuses in Tulsa and we're about to add the sixth next year. We have one in Chicago and one in Egypt, so you have seven or eight churches and you have four children. It's just a lot, at times. You wonder what you're going to do with all this. There are many Sundays I just quit and God lets me quit. He just says, "If you'll come back tomorrow, you can quit today for the rest of the day." I thank God we don't have Sunday night services or I would have quit forever a long time ago.

In the thought process of doing all that, you think about it, and as a dad, a provider... For me it's not just a dad, but it's pastor. There's a lot of pressure that runs in that lane of being dad and pastor at the same camp. And with all the areas of life that you and I do as dads, there's just this moment where life could get really complicated and you can over think it. There's a one-word answer. I want you to write this stuff down today because I promise I'm going to give you really helpful help. You will not remember it unless you write it down. It's going to be good and you need to write it down so that you can remember it. Here's the one-word answer to this over complicated life that you and I live in today. The word is *simplify*. We need to simplify our lives. We need to simplify the part of our life... Here's what I know. No one is immune to the complicated life. Nobody in this culture, especially a parent, is immune to this over complicated life. In fact, I don't know anybody who has a natural bent to simplify their lives. It's a natural bent for us to move towards complication and to move away from simplification.

Today, if you just go to a hamburger joint and order a hamburger, it's just complicated. It used to be that you just told them how much fire you wanted on the cow. That's all you had to tell them – well done, medium well done... Now, there's this litany of questions. "What kind of beef do you want?" Dead. "Organic, grass-fed..." I don't know. "Do you want cheese on that?" Yes. "Aged Swiss, cheddar, pepper jack..." Just put it all on there. "Do you want a bun?" Of course, it's a hamburger. "Do you want pretzel bun, gluten-free bun...? Stop it with all the choices. I just want a hamburger. Life is that way. We have complicated lives and the choices provided today make it more and more complicated. Our natural bent is to over-schedule, over-saturate, and over-complicate our lives. As a consequence, we live hard, we play hard, we work hard, but we hardly ever stop to refuel.

One of the reasons I love your pastor... In fact, I so believe in your pastor's heart that this last spring, I brought him into a Mega Metro Pastor's Conference to introduce him to 50 pastors of the 50 largest churches in America.

I told him "I want you to speak to them and I want you to share your heart with them. I want you to make them laugh. I know this is going to open pathways for you to communicate the message that God has put on your heart."

What I love about your pastor and his wife is that they, more than most people I know, try to find a way to refuel their souls. They try to find a way to stay healthy as human beings, as individuals, and as God followers. I want you to hear that living with these paper-thin margins that you and I tend to live our lives with is a problem. We've pretty much given our lives over to the myth that in order for our lives to matter, our schedule must be full – I must work, I must do, I must do, I must do – but it's wrong. In order to live lives that mean something, we don't need to do more; we simply need to do what really matters. That's what we need to do. We need to do what really matters. The older I get, I have found that success has a whole lot more to do with quality than it does quantity. Success is not measured by the amount of things you do; success is measured by the value of the things you do. A life that's full is not full of stuff. A life that's full is full of what really matters.

Here's the good news. Jesus wants to help you and there is a lot of truth found in his word to help you and me with the culture that we live in. He wants to free us from this cluttered, complicated, overwhelmed life and he wants to help us focus on what it is that really matters. What we need to do is listen to Jesus. What we need to do is hear the words of Jesus. What we need to do is follow the instruction of Jesus in order to live lives that matter and that are not just full.

Let's go to a passage in Luke 10. I want to show you this story. It's really just a snapshot of the life of Jesus, this moment in time in the life of Jesus. He's on his way to Jerusalem and he stops in Bethany, which is just a few miles from Jerusalem. He's at a friend's house. We know he's there often. In fact, there are multiple stories in the scripture of him being there with these friends. Let's look at this.

38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. Now, a couple of phrases. If you write in your Bible, I would encourage you to do this. I have to do this because I'm ADDDD. I have to write myself notes in the scripture. I have to draw pictures. If there are no picture involved, I don't think the book is worth having, right? So, I'm drawing pictures all over my Bible, but this phrase right here: "continued on their way." Literally, that is as they were going. It's an adverbial phrase meaning "as they were on their way." Then the second phrase I want you to underline is "welcomed into the home." Those are two of the phrases that so personifies a no wake zone life that it's crazy when you think through it.

"On my way." That's difficult for me. That I would allow myself to be interrupted while I'm on my way, that I would allow Jesus to speak while on my way, that I would allow him to stop me and allow me to have an interaction with somebody or something because he wants to do something else than what I was on my way to do... When I'm on my way, I'm on my way and I'm blazing a trail.

“No, we’re not stopping to use the bathroom; we’re going.” My goal is to get out of the car. Why? I don’t know. But, on your way, while you’re living life, that God would have permission to speak, while you’re living life, he would have permission to interrupt, he would have permission to put a relationship in place, etc.

Then, “welcomed into the home.” That is perhaps the greatest gift that God could give you. That you would welcome people into your home and you would be welcomed into other people’s home. We’ve lost that art in our culture.

I remember, when I was a child, families would knock on the door of my parent’s home on a Saturday afternoon and they would come in. We wouldn’t just say hello to them; they would come in the home. They would eat lunch. They would be a part of fixing lunch at the kitchen counter. Then we would sit down and two families would eat lunch together. Then we would play games. The kids would go outside and play and the parents would play cards or whatever. Then at night, we would eat dinner and they would have coffee and dessert and they would stay from just before lunch until bedtime, just being welcomed in one another’s home. If you have a kitchen table, a couch, or a love seat, you have the ingredients necessary to live the no wake zone life, to have people in your home and for you to be in people’s homes. Let’s keep reading and see what happens in this story.

39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet... Every time we see her, by the way, she is sitting at the Lord’s feet. Most scholars believe this is the same Mary who broke the expensive nard, the alabaster jar and poured it on Jesus at either his head or his feet or both, depending on which gospel you’re reading.

...listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. Now, look at these phrases. I would circle these because I need to make sense out of scripture, study it, and meditate on it. “Sat at the Lord’s feet” and then “listening.” I think you ought to mark those. Then the other one is “distracted.” These are two completely different responses to the presence of Jesus, to the presence of God in this house. One was sitting at his feet and listening which is a picture of intimacy. Intimacy is into me you see, right. And intimacy is to be known fully with no fear of rejection and to know fully with no fear of rejection, which is what God wants for you and me and our relationship with him.

The other reaction to the very presence of Jesus was duty. Martha was distracted like another Martha in our culture who was very busy and went to jail and in the process was distracted. If you are here today, I would love to meet you. As we walk through this whole process... Martha thought *Jesus is here, he’s the VIP, he’s the important one, so I have to respond. I have to prepare the house, I have to prepare the meal, and it’s duty, it’s religion.* I think Jesus hates religion. Why? It’s because it destroys every opportunity you and I have for real intimacy with God. When we approach him out of duty, it’s like “I’ve got to do this and do that in order to get and stay in the presence of God.”

...She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair...” How many of you are parents? Leave your hands up if you’ve heard that word unfair before. My mom used to say, “Do you want cheese with your whine?” It’s not fair, right? You can just hear her whining in this text. ***...to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work?***

The other day, my 12 year old said to me, “Dad, I do everything around here.”

I said, “Son, doing three or four things a day that took a total of ten minutes is not everything” and I just started listing things that he didn’t know we did.

Tell her to come and help me.” The NIV translates that this way: “Lord, don’t you care?” Has there ever been a more ridiculous phrase put with ink on paper? “Lord, don’t you care?” The one who made you, the one who breathed you into existence, the one who came and left the halls of heaven to this sin-filled world that you may have a relationship with God, jumped up on a cross, died, and gave his life. Lord, don’t you care? Do you see how ridiculous those two phrases are together? Lord, don’t you care? Basically, she is saying, “Hey I don’t believe my sister cares about me and I’m starting to doubt, Lord, whether or not you care about me. I’m so exhausted and I’m so overwhelmed and I see other people happy and they should be miserable just like me. We call these people Baptist by the way. They should be miserable, just like me. If you really cared, you would be as miserable as I am. That’s religion. If you really cared, you would be as miserable as I am.

This is the difference, by the way, between a cluttered life and a no wake zone life or a simplified life. A cluttered life is trying to do everything, working and striving in your own power out of a sense of duty. The no wake zone life is doing what really matters, but that’s not all. It’s doing what really matters and doing it in the power that God supplies. Isn’t that different and isn’t that better than “Hey, if you come to God, you just don’t have to go to hell.” It’s a whole different story and a whole better gift. He came to give us life and not just life, but to give us abundant life by what he’s going to do with his power and his strength. Really, what matters is all we are responsible for doing.

This is a revelation I had in the last year or two. I can do everything that God wants me to do every day. You say that’s not that profound. It is profound. It was very profound for me. I felt like I went to bed every day not able to get done most of what I wanted to get done. The theological truth is that I am capable of doing what God wants me to do. He’s not going to put more on my plate than I could possibly accomplish. I just do what matters. I can go to bed everyday going “As long as I walked with God, I did everything he wanted me to do today. Everything else can wait until tomorrow.”

41 But the Lord said to her, “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Let’s just look at this. “Worried (I’d underline that and circled it) and upset about many things.” That’s one side of the story. That’s the cluttered life. “But few things (I’d circle that) are needed – indeed only one. Mary has chosen the one that matters.” What Jesus is doing right here with Martha is cutting to the chase and he’s cutting to her heart. He’s saying to her, “Martha, you’re over-cluttered. You’re too busy. You’re moving too fast. You need to take a breath. Mary chose what mattered and because she did that, she’s filled with energy.” It’s counter intuitive, but because she did that, she’s not drained and choosing less, Mary had more. And in choosing more, Martha had less. That is so difficult, in this culture, for our brains to comprehend.

In our brains, more is more, that's the way it is. It's just simple math. More is more. If I want more, I do more, I work more, I perform more, more, more, more. More is more. But, that's just not biblical. What is biblical is less is more. Somehow, we have to let that sink into our heart.

I have a good friend who has been a friend for a couple of years. He's filthy rich and he has more money than he knows what to do with. He's become extremely generous with his finances and he has this lake compound that has this big cabin with animals mounted in it. I feel like I'm sleeping in the Bass Pro. He has this infinity pool that you can't tell where the pool ends and the lake begins. It's just crazy beautiful. The way the sun sets; he built it just perfectly. He has like ten four wheelers, ten different ATVs, horses, and all this stuff there.

At one point, he and I were talking and I said, "I've been thinking that at some point in my life, I may invest in some sort of lake property, just to have a getaway and to have a retreat.

He said, "Let me just give you some advice. I really want you to listen. The one who dies with the least keys, wins."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I have all of that. I have a gazillion keys to all those four-wheelers, the houses, the guesthouses, and all that. I'm just telling you it's a headache. Every time I'm there, I'm responsible because it's mine. I see something that's broken and I see something that needs fixed. I want to yell at the ranch hand because he didn't do this, that, or the other. It's just not restful. Just use mine and tear up whatever you want to tear up and don't own it. Hear me, pastor, you don't want that. Stuff does not equal more. Peace equals more." He went on to explain.

At that point, I'm writing notes down because he's just shedding amazing truth on me. As you look at this, the more we try to do, the less that we have in our tank. And the less we have in our tank, we don't have the energy and the passion and the reserve to do the things that really matter in life. When we simplify, we find we have more from doing less.

We need to take a peek at the fuel gauge from time to time. I want you just to think about your fuel gauge. I want you to think about that emotionally. Where are you on the gauge? Where would you draw that needle? Financially, where would draw that needle? Physically, where would you draw that needle? I think there ought to be points at which we do this on a regular basis. That we look at the dashboard of our lives and evaluate where we are.

How ridiculous would it be for you to be driving down the road on a trip with your gas tank empty, pull into a gas station, and put two dollars in? Then drive a few exits and pull off and get gas again and then you put two more dollars in. How ridiculous would that be for you to live that way? I remember doing that as a teenager, by the way, but two dollars bought some gas when I was a teenager. But that would be so crazy. You would live so stressed out. You would be living on fumes. You would be living this stressed life on the edge of everything you do in life and that's ridiculous. We can't live our lives that way, yet we try to do that emotionally. We try to do that in our jobs. We try to do that in our

relationships. Our schedule... “Hey, I’ve got 15 minutes; let’s go ahead and add another meeting.” “I made a few extra dollars; let’s go to the mall and do retail therapy.” Instead of sleeping eight hours and working eight hours, we try to four hours of sleep and work twelve hours and the math just doesn’t work, right?

If you can go 400 miles on a full tank, we’ve got to quit trying to go 800 miles on a half of a tank. It doesn’t make any sense at all. When you think through that... I think about these passages of scripture and I think about this message and there are times, as a pastor... I’ve just got to tell you our church is filled with millennials. There are times when I want to preach this stuff and teach this stuff about rest and simplification and all that and I’m a little bit afraid because what they need is a spanking. They need to learn work ethic, the hard day’s work.

Where do you draw the line and how do you balance it? Let me just tell you something. There is a big difference... God spoke this to my heart about eight months ago. There is a big, big difference between how we try to live our lives and how he wants us to live our lives. You and I try to rest from our work when, biblically, we are supposed to work from our rest. It may sound like I said the same thing, but I did not say the same thing. Study that and ponder that and ask God what that means. To work from your rest rather than to rest from your work. Let God speak to your heart and show you what he means by that.

What’s our response to this whole process? What happened to Martha? In the Bible, it says she was distracted. That’s the very word that the Bible used. She was distracted and when she became distracted, she became irritated. Now she’s irritated at her sister and clearly, she’s stepping over the line to where now she’s irritated at God. So, she’s distracted and irritated, and then the last D is demanding. This is what we do, right? We become distracted, irritated, and demanding. I call it the DID syndrome. We did this, we did that, we have to do, do, do. The past tense of do is did and we have the DID syndrome when we become distracted, irritated, and demanding. By the way, when we are distracted, irritated, and demanding, we are not fun to be around.

God gave me the greatest gift when he gave me my wife because she is a party waiting to happen. She wakes up every morning and thinks *Let’s have fun today*. I could go months without that thought ever going through my mind. I jokingly say on a regular basis, opposites attract. Is that Janet Jackson or Paula Abdul? That’s Paula Abdul. Forgive me. I really do know 80s music. Paula Abdul says opposites attract. If Meredith had married someone like her, they would have parties. If I had married someone like me, we would rule a small country. We would get stuff done. We would check stuff off the list every single day. We would rule some small country somewhere. Maybe a big one. Honestly, I’m underselling myself. If Meredith married somebody like her, they would have a party every single day under the bridge where they live. I’m grateful that God brings opposites together.

We need to think through these things. Distracted, irritated, and demanding is not the platform to live the no wake zone life. If we’re honest, we do the same thing. We get overwhelmed, we get distracted, we get irritated, and we get demanding. Our work suffers, our relationships suffer, our finances suffer, and we continue to try to do more, do more. We run with these paper-thin margins to the point that we can’t breathe anymore.

Beyond that, it leads to exhaustion and irritation, which eventually, if you hang out redlined on your tachometer for any length of time, you will end up crossing lines that you never thought you would cross. It may be something as simple as over watching Netflix or incessantly scrolling Facebook or whatever your latest crack addiction is. It's unbelievable that you and I could have an intimate relationship with an inanimate object like our phone. It's because we are distracted from what really, really matters. You walk through this process and you end up crossing lines. You end up abusing alcohol, you end up abusing drugs, you end up with a porn addict.

Somebody told me several months ago that the greatest factors related to pornography addiction are isolation and exhaustion. What happens when you're isolated and when you're exhausted is you misplace intimacy and it ends up in the wrong place in your life. What this series that your pastor is walking you through is about is how to decide what it is that really matters in life. If you've never gone on a fast where you do away with something in your life for a season of time in order to focus on the Lord, I would encourage you to do that. You give up food or you give up technology or you give up something for a period of time in order to spend that time with the Lord. In that season, ask the Lord what it is that really matters in your family, in your job, in your soul, in your parenting. And just let him speak to you.

I want to give you this one key ingredient today. It's all I have time for today. But, before I do that, let's talk about why you would do this, why would you even try to simplify your life? There's a story in the Bible where the disciples are arguing about who's the greatest among them, which is so telltale of the disciples and us.

Jesus responds. This is in Matthew 18 in The Message. **4 Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God's kingdom.** Whoever becomes simple and elemental will be the great one. Somehow, while carrying the sins of the world upon his shoulders, he has time to focus on what really, really matters and we would do well to learn from Jesus. In that one statement, we have the key for your entire series and here it is. Stop doing what doesn't matter and start doing what does. If you want to live the no wake zone life, you stop doing what doesn't matter and start doing what does. Simplifying, by the way, is much more than just cutting out things in our lives that are irrelevant; it's about doing the things that really do matter. By the way, we don't do this for selfishness. We're doing this for significance. It's not selfish; it's to live the life that God created us to live with significance.

Paul spoke to this to a really complicated Corinthian Church and to a really complicated Corinthian culture and community. This is 1 Corinthians 7, again from The Message, so it's a paraphrase. **There is no time to waste, so don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. Keep it simple—in marriage, 30 grief, joy, whatever. Even in ordinary things—your daily routines of shopping, and so on. 31 Deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is on its way out.** That phrase "no time to waste" is an incredible phrase for you and me. If there's no time to waste, don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. Leave it simple. Not for selfishness, but for significance. Just take any one area of your life. Just think about your work and the work that you do. If you fill your whole life with your work...

Listen to what Ecclesiastes 10: 15 says. **Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work.** That is a strong, strong indictment. Only someone too stupid to find his way

home would wear himself out with work. Don't you love the Bible? How it deals honestly with us, as I'm looking in the mirror.

It reminds me of the guy that had the pre-k daughter. He kept working all the time and finally she asked about it. She said, "Daddy, you just work too much. You work all the time. You go to work and work eight hours and then you come home and you have work to do."

He tried to explain to her in his adult way to a four year old girl. "Honey, daddy just can't get it all done at work; I have to bring some of it home so that I can get it all done.

She said, "Daddy, I think they should put you in the slower group."

As you think through that, maybe the little girl is right that what's needed is for us to slow down. Again, it's not about selfishness, it's about significance.

Let me just show you a photo that just illustrates the back of some of my technology here. I just have to tell you that I don't know what any of that is. The tech people have to come to my house because I like it to work and I like for it to just set the place on fire, right? I like for all that to work, but I don't understand any of it. I don't know what any of the cords are for. I put tape on it and try to label it all and try to figure it all out so that when we have to move equipment from one place to another, I know how to plug it back in. I write with a Sharpie on the equipment, but I never get it right. In fact, if it were left to me to do it, I would punch a button and the garbage disposal would come on.

I don't know how to do it, but there's one thing I understand about each of these pieces of equipment. There is one cord that is the power cord. It goes from that piece of equipment to the electricity. That's the one piece of equipment I don't need any help with; I understand it. All the rest doesn't matter. You could have all that right, but if you don't ever plug directly into the power source, none of that is going to work.

The same thing is true with you and I, as the children of God. We can complicate our lives and have all the wires leading every which direction, but if we don't learn to plug into that power source, which, in our case, is Jesus himself. How do we plug into Jesus? We plug into the Word. We've got to do something with the Word. We don't just read it and check it off so that we can move on if you're a type A like me. We have to meditate on the word of God. We go to it and we mediate on it. I'm ADDDD and a quiet time for me is different from a quiet time for a normal human being. I've got to draw all over my Bible. I have five thousand books, biblical, theological, Bible study books on both of my computers. I know how to use them and I know how to sync them and I know how to read through them and how to lay it all out. I know how to do all that, but in spite of all that technology, when I sit down in my chair and study the Bible every day, I will write the verse out vertically. I do what I call pulverizing the scripture. I will read the verse as many times as it has words because that's what's required for my lack of an attention span.

For... What's it there for? It's there because of the previous verse. What's the previous verse? The previous verse is ***14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be***

lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” I learned something because of that one word – *for*. I ended up in Exodus and studying what all that meant in John 3: 14-15.

God... For what? For God, which means God started all of this. He began it.

So... For God what? For God so... He didn't just love, he so loved. He loved big, he loved extravagantly, and he loved generously.

The world... For God so loved what? He loved the world, the whole world. My city, my nation, my world. He so loved the whole world that he did what?

He gave... That's what lovers do; they give. That he gave what?

That he gave his only son... Not just one of many. He gave his one and only, his most precious son.

That whosoever... Who is whosoever? There are whosoevers here today.

Believes in him will not perish...

I have to pulverize the scripture. We have to get in the Word and let the Word get in us. I say it this way all the time to my staff. "We are far too busy to not spend time in the Word of God. Don't you dare show up to work at this church having not spent time with God. You're handling the things of God. I need you to know the Word of God. I need the Word of God to know you. And I need you to know what to do when you handle the things of God because you've been in the Word of God. And if for some reason, you get to work and you were unable because of a vomiting preschooler or a flat tire or whatever, you tell your assistant that for the next fifteen minutes, you are unavailable so you can get in the Word."

It's not just getting in the word, it is getting in prayer. I know I jumped a verse. Let me show you what Paul says in Philippians 4. **8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.** That's where I'm going to fix my thoughts. Now back up two verses to six and seven. I want to pulverize this passage of scripture for you and show you how to do this in Philippians 4: 6-7.

Don't... This is what I would write in my journal beside "Don't." It's the opposite of "Do." I'm just letting you in and I'm being vulnerable with you and showing you how I have to do this. It's a negative command. It's the opposite of do. Don't what?

Worry... What is worry? I looked it up in the Webster's Dictionary and there are three definitions for worry. 1) "To torment oneself with or suffer from disturbing thoughts." That's what worry is; don't do that. There is a second definition. Look at this one. I've never heard this one before I looked it up. 2) "To seize, especially by the throat, with teeth and shake and mangle like an animal." That's what worry means. That's a biblical definition, by the way, of worry. And it's a great picture of spiritual warfare and what the enemy wants to do with you and me when our thoughts go awry and we worry, upon worry, upon worry. 3) "To harass by repeated biting or snapping." That's what happens to us when we worry. We are tormented in our souls. We are bitten. We are snapped at. We are harassed.

Go back to the passage of scripture. Don't worry... Don't worry about what?

Anything... I wrote in my journal that morning. Anything is the opposite of nothing. This is how I study scripture and let God speak to me. If I don't do it this way, I read the Bible for you rather than reading it for me. I've got to let it speak to me before I can let me speak to you or it speak to you through me.

Don't worry about anything. Let's go on. Negative command: Don't worry about anything. Now he's going to give us the flip or a positive command. What do you do in order to not worry about anything?

Instead, pray about everything... So, I don't want to worry about anything. Instead, I'm going to pray about everything. The worrying thing... I'm going to worry about nothing. Don't worry about anything. The opposite of anything is nothing.

Every time I hear the word *nothing*, I go back immediately back to my sixth and seventh grade years. In the sixth and seventh grade, I played basketball, but I didn't get to play. I sat on the bench the whole time. We were losing by 50 or 60 or winning by 50 or 60 every time I got in. Consequently, I got to watch the cheerleaders the whole game. I never watched the game or paid attention to the game; I watched the cheerleaders. I learned every cheer. My favorite cheer from junior high basketball goes like this. And these girls would get it. They would just jive and shuck. It went like this.

N-O-T-H-I-N-G – That is what you mean to me. Nothing, absolutely nothing.

When I think about that word *nothing*, here's where my brain goes every time. Am I going to worry about that? No. N-O-T-H-I-N-G – That is what you mean to me. Harassing church member who shouldn't be because they are not a Christian. You can't act like the devil and be a God follower, right? I get off the phone and I literally think, *N-O-T-H-I-N-G – That is what you mean to me.*

Don't worry about anything, but instead pray about everything... There's nothing too small, there's nothing too big for you and I to pray about. Let's get going. Watch what's going to happen when you do this. How do you tell God what you need? I've heard people say, "Quit asking God for stuff." That's the craziest theological advice anybody could give you. The Bible says you have not because you ask not. Tell God what you need. And tell him what you want. By the way, it's not because he doesn't know what you need. It's because you and I need to check it off. We need to say it. We need to cast our cares, as Peter tells us, on God because he cares for you. Offer your heart onto his heart. Let him carry it. He's designed to carry it. You and I are not designed to carry it. Tell God what you need.

And thank him for all he has done... Then spend the rest of the time thanking him for all he has done. For ALL he has done. Not just in your life. You thank him for ALL he has done. That could be a project that could last the rest of your life. If you are going to thank him for all that he has done just in your sphere of knowledge, you would have to go back to Genesis 1: 1. He did a lot more before Genesis 1:1. That's not in the beginning. He existed before "In the beginning." That's just in the beginning as it relates to mankind. So, God, thank you that you made us in relationship and for relationships. Thank you that when we sin... Adam didn't just sin; we all sin. Thank you that you covered us, not with the blood of animals, but with the blood of the Lamb of God. Thank you that you took care and you sat down on the Mercy Seat. I could spend the rest of my days thanking God for what he has done. It will change your heart. The attitude of gratitude will determine your altitude. When you spend the rest of the time thanking God for all he has done, watch what happens.

Then... There's that word. You understand if and then, right? If you don't worry about anything, but instead you pray about everything, tell God what you need, and you thank him for all that he's done, then...

You will experience... *Experience* is a big word, by the way. It's not that you will know about it. It's not that you will read about it. It's not that you will hear about it. You will experience it. It is experiential. You will see it, you will feel it, you will taste it.

God's peace... What do we know about God's peace? What does the Word tell us in the next few words?

Which exceeds anything we can understand... Don't worry about anything. Why? It's because God's peace exceeds anything that we can understand. God's peace trumps anything that you and I could worry about.

His peace will guard your heart... Your emotions.

And mind... Your thoughts. That's what we need, right? In this culture that is trying to push us to extremes and limits that we were not designed for, we need our hearts guarded and we need our minds guarded. God will do that...

As you live in Christ Jesus... There is an adverbial phrase. As we live in Jesus, as we walk in Christ, these things will happen.

Do you want to live a no wake zone life? it's very simple. Don't worry about anything, instead, pray about everything. What's the formula for praying about everything? Tell God what you need and thank him for all he's done. Then the peace of God, which transcends understanding, will guard your heart and mind as you live in Christ Jesus.

Would you stand for closing prayer please? As you bow your heads in the chapel and here in the castle, would you just receive a blessing this morning from the Lord? If you would, just in a posture of receiving, just take your palms, hold them up to the air, and let me pray a blessing over you today.

Father, I pray your blessing on these men and women of God. I pray you would meet them right where they are in the complicated and cluttered life that we try to live and that you would be the God of peace in their hearts and their minds and their lives. I pray that you would speak truth to them about who they are. We sang about it a moment ago. You're a good, good father and I am loved by you. That's who I am. May we let the Word tell us who we are rather than the world tell us who we are. Would you receive that blessing today?

If you are here today and you've never received the Lordship of Jesus Christ, can I just tell you the peace of Christ is a by-product of a relationship with the Son of God. If you've never received him as your Lord and Savior, would you just pray with me? It doesn't matter where you are. Just right where you're

standing, would you just say, "Dear God, I know I'm a sinner. Today I ask you to forgive me for all my sin. Wash me clean and give me a brand new start. Jesus, would you come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior and my Forgiver. The best I understand it, I turn my back on my sin and I trust you alone, Jesus, to save me. Thank you for saving me.

If you just prayed that prayer, as a sign of confession, would you just slip your hand up and let me see it all across the room? We had several in the last hour. Before you leave today, would you tell a staff member or tell somebody that you prayed that prayer and you meant it with all your heart that they may encourage you and help you in your new walk with Christ.

Father, we received the blessing today. In Jesus' name... Amen.