

The Pastor's Struggles

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Speaker: **Nathaniel Bronner**

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Nathaniel Bronner: Life is like a wave. It's not all consistent. It's ups and downs in life.

Female: You are listening to BrothersofTheWorld.com. This is the Sermon titled, The Pastor's Struggles, by Nathaniel Bronner. This Sermon is number 5850.

(Music Playing)

Female: And now for, The Pastor's Struggles.

Nathaniel Bronner: I'm sitting down today. Now, it's not because I'm tired or, yeah, I am tired. It's not because I can't stand up. It's actually is a different purpose. Today is a different kind of message. It stems from -- I was traveling on a train recently. We take the company every year on a trip and this year, we went to Washington D.C. But we didn't just go to Washington D.C., we actually took Amtrak. So, we had overnight sleeping cabins and it was in the middle of the night and I woke up and I was sitting by the window looking out the window as the scenery go by in the middle of the night on a train.

It wasn't a midnight train to Georgia; it was a midnight train to Washington. And while I was there, I began to hear God speaking. I wrote down a lot of stuff, but one of the things He said, He says, "You're in the middle of the series I have commanded you to speak dealing with spiritual exercises that once you complete the fifth part of that series, I want you to just talk to the people from the subject of the pastor's struggles."

Most of the time, pastors they don't tell you about their struggles. But I can guarantee you that all of them have them, and it is a general principle that if you're a leader of anything, you never let them see you sweat. The leader cannot show weakness or indecisiveness and heaven knows the leader cannot show fear. But I can tell you, sometimes leaders get scared and there is a weight of leadership that is sometimes even elevated above just regular life, but then, you got just your regular stuff too.

So, God says, "I want you to just talk to the people about the pastor's struggles." Now, one of the things also today and today may be our day of the month that we run a little overtime. This is the second message of the New year. We just celebrated the

Biblical New Year, not man's New Year of January 1st, but the Rosh Hashanah New Year.

So, we're sort of moving into a New Year, and often what I have done in the past is, I'll answer questions that the congregation has not particularly theological questions, but just questions you got about this church or the ministry or things of operation or whatever. So, if you have a question just e-mail it to answers@airjesus.com. That's answers with an s, at airjesus.com and they'll come in and James will read them out and I'll do my best if we have appropriate time to answer them today. And if not today, I will answer them in the future.

But today I just want to talk about, The Pastor's Struggle. Now, the Book of Job, the first verse of the 14th Chapter. A we are all so familiar with, "Man born of woman." And as of today, there's no other way for a man to be born, then Jesus had to be born of a woman. Now, this actually may not apply in the future because science is really advancing. So, we may a hundred years from now have an artificial womb and artificial insemination and you may be able to just produce a child artificially.

But right now, the only way you can get here is to be born of a woman. Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. And as I thought about it, even when we do get to the point where we can artificially produce humans, they still going to have trouble. Now, I don't care how you were born, in fact you're going to have trouble.

In the days are few, now actually, we're living longer than we've ever lived in modern history. In the old days, when Methuselah, he lived 969 years and he lived a long, long, time. They lived a very long time back in ancient biblical days. But in modern times, we're actually living longer than we've ever lived before. At the turn of the 1900s, the average lifespan was about 45 to 50 years old. Now, the average lifespan is getting close to 80. There has been a slight reversal of that in the last two to three years. But that's primarily been due to stuff other than folks just dying naturally. It's been due to suicide and the opioid crisis.

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So, those things have slightly lowered, but those are choices that you make. When you kill yourself, you will make a choice? I won't

cut my life short and I don't have a dual lifespan. You just made a choice to cut your life short. When you begin to take certain drugs, you've made a choice. But nevertheless, we're living longer than we've ever lived in modern history and still that short.

I am 63 years old and it looked like it was just yesterday, I was getting out of college. Time flies so fast and I've been out of college now for 42 years. And it looks like, I could just remember yesterday college graduation and now, all of this seeming time has passed, that stuff is a mist in the wind and another 20 years will go by before you know it.

So indeed, the days are fleeting and man born of woman is of few days. Now though full of trouble, Job may have been exaggerating with that. I personally, don't believe life is full of trouble, but he's got enough trouble. Because there are moments that are definitely not trouble. Most of my world is definitely not trouble. But life has enough trouble of its own and it's got enough trouble every single day.

Psalms 90:10 says, "70 years are given to us. Some even live to 80. But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble. Soon they disappear and we fly away." Now, this is Job and David. Job was the richest man in the land at the time. He of course is, as you know went through his ups and downs. David was the king. So, both of these were leaders. Job would be equivalent to the modern-day Bill Gates, David would be equivalent to the modern-day president and both of these men said, "Life is short and is just full of trouble." And here David says, "Even the best year, not your worst years." David says, "Even your best years are filled with pain and trouble."

Now, all of us have struggles from the very young to the very old and there are basically four major areas of life of struggle: spirit which basically include depression, fear, worry and anxiety. The things that do with your mind and spirit. Then you have money, you have relationships, and you have health.

In truth, I've got struggles in every one of those four areas. I've got a fantastic life. I don't apologize or I've got a fantastic life. There's no one I would trade places with, but even with a fantastic life, I have struggles in all those areas and usually, when people ask me, "How you're doing?" I always answer with one word, which is, "Excellent." And that's absolutely true. I am doing

excellent, but that's not the whole story. I'm doing excellent, but I'm still struggling. Many of you are doing excellent, but you're still struggling.

How many of you are still struggling? I'm still struggling. I'm doing really good, but I'm still struggling and I think, God wants me to just talk to you today just about, The Pastor's Struggle because most or all of you are struggling even now. And we go through periods of life where it doesn't appear there's a struggle. Life is like a wave. It's not all consistent. It has ups and downs in life. It's just ups and downs with your spirit, with your relationships, with your money, with your health. It goes through ups and downs.

Recently, we just attended the Brothers of the Word in several people here from the Ark, we attended my brother Bishop Dales' capacity conference. And he had some awesome speakers over three days. They just came and inspired and taught us. But the one that impacted me most was a gentleman called, Kerry Nieuwhof. It's spelled N-I-E-U-W-H-O-F. I thought Bronner was rough until I saw his name. Sometimes you think, your situation's rough, till you see somebody else's situation. I said, "Good grief. I can't spell this man's name looking at it."

But his name is, Kerry Nieuwhof and he is a pastor of a church and he came and he just talked about, The Seven Personal Barriers and Struggles that pastors go through. And every one of those seven, I could relate to.

So, I kind of want to use his Seven as a beginning framework for this. And even though it applies to pastors, it applies to so many of us in just our regular everyday lives. He talked about these are the things that he went through and the things that he still struggles with and had to overcome. And the first one was cynicism.

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Cynicism is basically when you have this view that things are just not going to turn out right. And often you'll say, "Pastor, you suffered with cynicism?" Sure do. Have you ever helped somebody and you gave them all you had and they still didn't appreciate you worth a hoot? Still did you wrong, still didn't treat you right. Have you ever done that? Have you ever done that

more than once? Several times, multiple times. You know, in the pastoral world, and to be honest about it, I actually helped more people outside of the church than I do in the church. So, most of these really come from outside of the church, but it happens even in the church.

When you give folks everything you've got for years and still, they don't appreciate it worth a hoot. And you do one thing they don't agree with, and all of a sudden, you're the walking devil. Have you ever had that kind of situation and Nieuwhof, he gave examples of when he had put everything he had into parishioners? He said, one situation, the man left upon and he just stood there, "I'm leaving this church." and he said, "Why? I spent so much time with you and you're -- why are you leaving?" He said, "I am leaving." And he went through situation after situation after situation and it finally just made him cynical. He said, "No matter what I do for folks, this just is not going to turn out good."

And I understood that because too often, I had helped people for years and years and when it became time to say, "No, you've got to stand on your own, I will not help you anymore. This is over as far as me giving you and helping you. I've got to move on to other folks." And they just get mad as they can be and so, you're low down dirty dog.

It happens. It happens to anyone in leadership. Anyone who has an open heart and that's why, so many people in church become wounded because they give all they have and people still spit on them, and it creates cynicism.

So, I have learned that, you just have to do what God tells you to do, and if folks don't appreciate it, that's on them. And when you learn how to do that, it helps. Jesus told the disciples, "If you go into a city and if they don't receive what you and they brush to dust off your clothes and you keep on going." That's what you have to learn to do.

Now, everybody does not do that. Everybody does not do wrong if you help them. Some people are super appreciative. But the thing about life is this, the wounds and the stabs in the back, hurt worse and lasts much longer than the pats on the back. You can have a hundred folks pat you on the back. It's not as impacting as one person who stabs you in the back.

And this is true with all of this stuff. So, often the pain or the disappointments or the negative magnifies much more than the positive. It's the way human nature works. You remember a criticism much more generally than you will remember a compliment. So, human nature is more sensitive to the negative than the positive.

Carey Neuhoff, he gave an example. He was working as legal assistant in a law firm and one day, one of the lawyers came in and he had a lottery ticket in his hand. He said, "If I win this lottery, you all are never going to see me again in this office." And Carey said, the problem was the lawyer was the owner of the firm. And he was cynical even about his company, that if he had enough money, he would never show up there again.

Do you know if you're leading something and particular in ministerial positions, I at least can comfortably say, "If I won a lottery for half a billion dollars, I would still be in church the next Sunday, I would still be here preaching and I would still be doing what God told me to do."

So, even though ministry has some wounds, when you know it is what God has ordained you to do -- do you know Jesus said, "Those who follow Him are going to follow Him with persecutions." You don't need to even step into the ministry. You don't need to step into helping people if you're not prepared to take some wounds, it's just as simple as that. It goes with the territory. And my job is just to do what God has told me to do. And that's one of those big struggles of doing what God has told you to do.

The second area of the seven that Neuhoff said was this, "It's moral compromise. You just struggle with doing the right thing." And moral compromise goes everything from the big stuff of having affairs to stealing money, those are the big things. But most of the time, most of us, we're not really messed up by the big things of moral compromise.

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We're messed up by the small things. We're messed up by jealousy, we're messed up by criticism. We're messed up by small, what I would call, errors of character and judgment that we don't correct, not the big stuff. Now the big stuff messes up folks, but normally, the public never sees the small stuff. They only see the

big stuff, but it is the small stuff that usually takes us down with God and with our own spirit.

So, I struggle, with a lot of times, with just some basic stuff. And sometimes, I struggle with avoiding somebody, that's big stuff because the big stuff isn't easy to avoid these days. With a pastor, do you know it's hard to just stay faithful to your wife? That isn't easy. And some people may think, you know, when you see a pastor's fault, to be honest about I, when I hear a pastor now who has been caught in infidelity, the first question in my mind I want to know is, "Was it a man or a woman?" I hate to say it, but that's the first -- and then when I hear it's a woman, I said, "Phew". I'm telling you, that's really bad.

Sometimes I'm just relieved that here the pastor was caught with a woman. So, I understand. You know, I used to just look down -- I understand how men and women can get weak and they fall in situations because stuff just happen and usually when men and women fall, it's not something that happens overnight. This is not something that just happened last week. They just thought about, where the week before last, everything was perfect and they fell into it. No, that thing builds over years, over years, over years. This erodes, that erodes, this get weaker, stuff gets cold. And all of a sudden, you slipped into something that you never would've done five years ago.

So, this happens to pastors. And oftentimes, what you will see, you will see some big well-known men. You all have not heard of a single woman who's been in the news and seeing a married woman that she'd been caught with another man. You can't name any, not one. Not one I can't think of. There's not one that has been in the news, but there's been plenty men. But the stats say, the women are cheating just as much as men. How come there isn't women in the news? You know why they are no women in the news? Because if the married woman is with somebody, the man is not going to come out and say, "He'd been with a married woman." That's why. But a single woman will come out now, you won't hear other married women coming out but with the men, but you hear plenty women, single women.

So, both men and women are just as guilty of it, you just don't hear about the women because the men aren't going to tell on a married woman, that's why. But one thing you will notice about usually when the big men have a signal. You all aren't going to

sleep now. I'm not standing up, but you're sure not going to sleep. What you will often find is, when the woman appears, a lot of times, she's just not pretty and they'll be big, powerful men and you'll say to yourself, "Why?"

Now see, you ought to be saying it, you said, "Why is this man fooling with this woman?" And you're not expecting her to be a movie star, why is the woman just not that pretty? You're still laughing because it's true and you all have said it and you've asked yourself this question. Why is this big, powerful man, got all this money, all this power and he fooling with this woman who's not even that pretty, what's wrong with that?

Because it's not about the beauty. Usually, the man is going with a woman to fill a void in his life. So, it's somebody who's around him, somebody who had paid attention to him, somebody who had boosted his ego, stroked his back, patted him on the back, someone who has been warm and kind to him and over time, the thing grows and it has nothing to do with beauty. It has something to do with filling a void.

So, all people in power and whether you're in power or not, whether you are elite or not, when there is a void in your world, nature abhors a vacuum and there will be something that will try to fill that void and pastors often have voids. We go through the same ups and downs in relationships as everybody else.

T.D. Jakes spoke on Thursday night and T.D. Jakes said, "Anybody who said, 'They don't have 50 years or just a happy, married life, because it doesn't happen.'" And I mean, I believe there are cases of when it does happen, but it's really, really, rare and most people don't know anybody in that situation, any pastors or anybody else. You go through ups and downs. And you go through ups and downs of where stuff is just beautiful and then, you go through ups and downs of, "Why in the world I married this person in the first place?"

So, you go through ups and downs. It happens with relationships. So, moral compromise is a challenge that all leaders go through. And I can honestly say that, I've held up extremely well dealing with moral compromise, but I've held up well with that only because I had been shored up by God.

There had been some situations that if God hadn't step in, I wouldn't have made it. And I know some of you wonder, "What is pastor talking about happened over there? What is pastor talking about over there?" It's like when Paul says, "The things that I should do, that I don't do the stuff I shouldn't do -- and everybody went, "Who would probably do it?" You see, everybody of you all and wonder, "What is pastor talking about that he wouldn't made it, if God hadn't stepped in and shored him?" It doesn't fit. I'm just being honest. I wouldn't made it.

With just pastor with his own strength, there has been some temptation I have dealt with, if God had not stepped in, the pastor wouldn't have made it. That's the reality of it. So, I've had some struggles, but thank goodness, God has had my back because I wouldn't made it.

And the third thing that he talked about was disconnection. And he talked about with disconnection, sometimes, especially if you're really busy with stuff, you have to slow down and connect with those who you are supposed to connect with. He made the statement. He says, "Love has a speed, and it's slower than you are." You have to give some stuff some time, some relationships, some people that you're close to.

In our current back world, we have sped up so much. It used to be that, if you wanted to find out how to get somewhere, you had to go and get your map, unfold the map, find out where the place you're going is on the map, find out where you're are, and then, go through the stuff and find out how to get from point A. Now, you just turn on your phone, you don't even have to type, you just hit the microphone button and speak or say, "Bixby or Siri, tell me how to get to such and such, and it pops up.

We're moving now at a pace that is so fast. It's too fast for most relationships. That's why, when you go out to a restaurant now, and you look at couples who are sitting there eating, you'll find that six out of ten of the couples, both of them are on their phones, and they're out on a date. You know, in the old days, if you took a woman out, you just look in her eyes. You did. You just sat down, and now, you're looking at a screen, and even before the folks get married, they're still looking at the screen. Just go to a restaurant and look around, and you'll see six out of ten of the couples are on their phone because we don't slow up to connect.

There's still no difference. So, our disconnection now is higher than it's ever been.

Pastors in the old days were far more connected to people than we are now. There's just no question about. You know, in the old days, the pastor never went to dinner except if it was to a congregation member's house on Sunday. My grandmother used to tell me, they would have a pastor open the pastor's favorite food was pasta, that has changed. No longer does a pastor, or the pastor go to dinner at the congregation's house and no longer does the pastor's favorite food, pasta. Both of those have changed. So, we're disconnected. I don't even know what pasta tastes like, and to be honest, I've not even heard and find out. So, we're disconnected now. Parents are disconnected from children. Even teenagers are no longer connected. They don't talk on the phone, they don't associate, they're online. We're disconnected. So, the disconnection has created an issue within our world.

The fourth thing that Kerry said was, irrelevance. Now, he said, he defined irrelevance, is the gap between how quickly things change and how quickly you change. I am 63 years old right now, and there are some things that I have -- you become irrelevant when you are at a level that's way different than the level where everybody else is at, particularly young people. And often, we don't even understand what they're even talking about. They're no longer on Facebook. They're on Snapchat. If there's a new tick type, it's changing so fast. I can't keep up with it, but what you can't keep up with, you become irrelevant towards it.

And I have even begun a recent change within church direction of where -- I said, "I want to revamp our web presence because our main Sermon website, the onlineword, has not been changed in 20 years." It's still the best Sermon site out there, but it's old and it's antiquated, and we just haven't focused on that, and there's a huge focus and push towards getting young people in the church.

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A lot of us speak was even at the conference we're talking about how do you get the millennials and generation Z in church. They come in to church. That's just the bottom line. You get them in, you'll get a few, but you only you're going to get 10% at the best. They're not coming. They don't want to be in an environment that it's a traditional church, and if they do come, they're not coming

to traditional church. They're not coming to a place if that even looked like a church. They want to come to a place look like a warehouse. They like the service now. They don't like bright lights. They like it like a concert where the lights on the stage and it's dark in this congregation. That's what the young people want. They don't -- they're not coming.

And the speaker was talking about how young people now, the time that they spend on screens. So, I said to myself, "If they're not coming to church, they're on the screen, we got to go the screen. If they're not coming where we are, we had to go where they are." So, I have to have a different mode of thinking, and then, we've got to think, "How do we get them even if we get on the screen, you still got to get their attention." And it's not easy, but we're working on that. But one thing about it, you'll never get what you're not focused on even trying to do.

So, we have to make a turn and that would be a part of what I want to explain about even the vision of the church and where we're headed. But we got to move away from being irrelevant to young people. And young people now, all the stats are showing at and writing it up. The church is becoming more and more irrelevant to young people. They don't see it as necessary, they don't want to come, and they don't want anything to do with organized religion. So, how do you change that?

First of all, you got to get their ears and their eyes. You got to go where they are. So, if they're on the screen, we have to go to the screen. And I had told the leadership in the church and, instead of us putting a whole lot of money into fixing up this physical building, I said, if we do that, we may affect a few hundred people, but if we take that same resource and attention and put it into reaching out online instead of a hundred, we can affect a hundred thousand. And then, they told me and said, "Pastor, we do need some things fixed up in the church." I said, "Well, we've got the prettiest sanctuary I have seen in ages." Well, the women's bathroom is terrible. I said, "What do you mean that's terrible? We have the bathroom." There's no vent in the bathroom, and all of the women who were present, amen that.

The men knew nothing about it because the men's bathroom is fine. But they said the women's bathroom, "Pastor, we've got to rush out of there because there's no vent in there." There was a vent because we put the vent years ago, but the vent didn't go anywhere. It just goes up in the ceiling. And, you know,

sometimes, all you're doing is blowing smoke around. It didn't help you at all. You got to get that stuff out of there. So, I said, "We got to just knock a hole in the wall." And see, the thing about it, none of the men knew anything about it because we were disconnected, and we didn't know.

So, that's why you have to have your finger on the pulse beat of what's going on even within your own church, and that's why I want to open up the questions, answers@airjesus.com Now, some things, we may not be able to do anything about, some things we can change.

And so, ladies, I want first of all apologize. The pastor didn't even know about that. We got a real nice bathroom, but there's no vent in there. So, very quickly, that's going to be fixed, and you'll be able to go into both bathrooms, or all three bathrooms, and you won't have to worry about running out in a hurry. We will get that fixed.

So, the fifth thing that he talked about was, pride. And this is the thing that God has told me after our last service, Diana came up to me, she said, "Pastor, I had a dream about you. In the dream, you took your hand and you covered my hand, and it was the hand for some of you all know, Diana had a major injury in one of her hands and she said, "You took your hand and you covered my hand, but your hand was covered with a blue mesh." Now, when Diana told me that, it had a very strong significance to me because of the one experience I've had that I absolutely without question knew was supernatural was, the 'blue sign.'

Now, it has been many of the things that I believe God has moved in so many areas of my life. I've had so many signs, but if somebody asked me as a scientist, "What could you point to unequivocally where there is absolutely no other possible explanation, it was the sign of the 'blue light?'"

I was sitting at my office one day, not the office I'm in, but my former office, I was probably about 34, 35 years old. I was sitting at my office, and I noticed around my hand was a very intense bright blue light. It was about my right hand, and I held up my hand because being a scientist, "What is that?" So, I held up my hand to see if it was around both hands. The left hand totally normal. So, I do all this kind of movement to see if it was a light from somewhere. No, it was not. My hand was glowing. I couldn't

explain it. I'm sitting there, I'm not dreaming, there is no vision. I'm sitting at my desk at work wide awake in the middle of the day.

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The room just as bright as it can be and my right hand has this bright blue light that's just glowing. I am saying, "What in the world is this?" And I'm doing all these kinds of stuff trying to see, is there anything causing the light from external, and there was not, nothing on the left hand, my right hand glowing bright blue.

God has never explained it to me, but I knew within my spirit, I knew without question if I could have touched anybody while my hand was glowing blue, it would have healed him. I just knew. God did not boom it out to me, but I knew if I can touch anybody while this hand is glowing, it would heal them. I believe the glow is coming back, but it is not coming back until we are ready.

This morning in my prayer, God spoke to me and He said, because I was asking. You know one of the things about leadership and one of the struggles that you have is, you know, is a simple question of when. You know, when God has promised you a whole lot of stuff, you have this simple question, "When?" I am the only one who has got that question? Is this simple question of, "When?" Lord, you said, all these promises, you promised all this stuff, "When?"

So, it reminds of my wife and I, we used to watch a series called, "When It Comes to Heart." The one of Hallmark and it was a situation of where we have this movie actress, she was an actress, there was an old western town set way back in, but she like this fellow who was a businessman, but she was playing hard to get. So another lady they devise a scheme that, the other lady would show great interest in the man which she did and they started going out which made the other woman jealous and she finally just confronted the businessman, she said, "Look I see you with this other women, I don't like it, I think we are to be together."

So, the man just smile because that were plot all alone and he said, "Well, since you feel that way and I do feel that we do have somethings in common and we may have some great benefit of spending time together, he said, "I am going to break it off with the other young lady." And she generally said, "When?"

So, you know sometimes, this is the question that we have of God. The things that had been promised, it looks like, it is taking so long because when God speaks it, you know luck is just right around the corner. It looks like, it just tomorrow and here it is 10 years later or 15 years later or 20 years later and still this thing has not manifested.

You see, I saw that blue light, that has been almost 30 years ago and it has not shown back up and it has been 30 years ago and I knew when I saw it, I knew it was God, I knew it was powerful, I knew if I could touch anybody with this glowing hand it would heal them, but it hadn't shown up and it has been almost 30 years.

So, you ask yourself the question, "When?" And God spoke to me this morning, as I was even just mulling over this and asking Him, "Lord when is the power coming?" You said about us building this 4,200 seat sanctuary people over with all this stuff, so "When is this stuff coming?" And God spoke that He said, "You are not ready for the power. Your spirit cannot handle it now, nor can the structure around you support it."

For those of you who are asking God, "When?" Can you handle it. Now, I mean seriously, God just told me affront. See most preachers are not going to tell you this. They aren't going to tell when God say, "You aren't ready for it. Your spirit can't handle it."

I have had three prophets prophesy that I will have the ability to raise the dead and God has told me that's true, He said but that is not the issue. Raising the dead is my power, your problem is, the pride that goes along with it. And He said right now my spirit cannot handle it.

Now, the challenge with that, is when your spirit cannot handle it particularly due to pride. Because just even the ability, if you could just heal. Just last week I talked about the planking how it good or bad, if you could just heal a back pain, you would just know there's nothing but the backpain healing preacher. If you could just heal one thing, do you know you will be worldwide-known and you would have a line to get to your church, a mile. If you could just heal one thing, just one thing, if you could just heal stuffed up sinus and that's all, just one thing. If you could just heal headaches, just one thing, if you could just even heal toe ache nothing big stuff just one and just one. And you could say-- God

has said, “Everybody who has a problem with their toes, if you shall come and everybody if they came and get their toes healed, you would have a line, a mile, -- we’ll, you’re going to heal one thing, you would be worldwide-famous and you would have a line of people stretching to you.

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If you could just heal baldness, Woah! Goodness, you could heal bald. Woah! If you could anoint a hair and hair start growing. If you could just heal one thing, you would be world famous and have lines of people stretching around the building multiple times trying to get in to see if we could heal one thing. That not even talking about the ability to raise the dead.

So, you would have to have your spirit strong enough where the pride of God’s gift did not overwhelm you and people that’s not easy. It’s not easy because people would you put up on a pedestal, it is not as easy as I know, “Well, you got to get me dead or I’ll blow you up.” Yes, it will. It just does and all of us are subject to that. It is a difficult thing to handle.

The antidote to pride is humility and often, the medicine is humiliation. The antidote or the vaccine to pride is humility, but the medicine is humiliation.

I spoke about that when I talked about my experience when I was speaking at Dick Gregory’s funeral, but I felt so free after going through an experience of humiliation and understood how detrimental pride is, it blinds you, it messes up spirit, it does all these. But it is a part of human nature and when anything is going successful, there is the creeping of pride, that’s hard to handle.

So, I struggle with pride. You’re not ready for the power, your spirit cannot handle it and neither can the support system around you. I do not think we are ready as a congregation for a dead raising preacher because that’s going to change everything, it really, really is. So, God has to prepare us. So, often the answer of “When?” is not when God is ready, is when we are ready.

The sixth thing that Carey said was, burnout and the seventh is emptiness. And I am going just tie both of this kind of together because they kind of go together. A lot of pastors they became

burned out because of the excess load of congregational care. That's not my situation. You are one of the best congregations I think, any pastor could ever have. I have had very, very, very little issues with the Ark of Salvation, not a whole lot of people of issues, not a whole lot of the traditional mess that most churches have to go through. When I get around all the pastors and I hear them talking about their kind of this done, I just feel like, I am just whole different world.

So, burnout for me is not coming from you all. Turn to the person next to you, "It isn't me." It is not coming from you all, but there comes a point when after you have done something for so long, there comes a point when you do not want to rest. I remember before the 24-hour MBA, I was telling God, "I'm just ready to slow down." He said, "No. I am not taking you to slowing down, I am taking you to authorization and busyness, you are not going to slow down to Me then you'll get busy."

But the problem that goes with that in particular as you get older and sometimes it has nothing to do even with age, you just want to slow down. And one of the reasons in terms of why, I knew that our websites were not fully up to par, they were not modern, they were not as effective as it could be, I just didn't have the energy to go in and revamp them.

It is like what happened with Mountain Wings and this even ties in with emptiness. Carey gave an example of where he did a post and in that post a half a million people read it within 24 hours, it just went viral and it just took him to whole different level. And he said, after that there was an emptiness because after that it would just hard to talk and normally it would be only a few thousand 3 to 5 thousand people who would read his post. So, once he went to the point when he got one that went over a million, the little 5,000 just felt empty.

Mountain Wings at one point to my knowledge was the largest inspirational email on the face of the planet, with over a million people getting it every single day. When I started it, I said, "If I could just get 5,000 people to read this email every day, I could change lives in the space of a few years." It is hard to beat that and there's a point that you feel like, "Been there, done that."

So, when I have done it and already had a following of over a million people, "I have been there, done that." And I knew what

it took to do that the first time, I did not feel like putting out the energy to do that the second time. So, that's a part of what goes into burn out and that's why a lot of times companies will not get older people to do stuff, you need a young blood who hadn't done it to do it because they're full of energy, they're full of fire and for the first time, they've got the type of drive to get something done that's almost impossible to do.

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So, I've got to get myself re-gearred and re-fired to say we're going to redo or even go beyond what was done with Mountain Wings to reach people and to bring them into the kingdom. But that isn't easy and that's one of the struggles that I go through and that I deal with.

So, those are the seven and even though he was relating them in particular to ministry, those same seven things: that's like, ladies, in fact, those of you who rear children and you got them growing, you don't want to do that all over again. I just want to relate it something you don't understand. Now, you're capable of doing it. You just don't want to do that all over again.

So, sometimes, when you've done something, you just don't want to do that all over, but that's why you have to know destiny of what God wants you to do and everything God is showing, our future is much greater. I can hear almost God say, "Boy, if I told you you're going to live all this long time, why do you think I'm going to let you live all this long time? Just you, lay back, kick your feet back and just watch TV. What do you think I'm going to give you all this time for? I'm going to put you in the earth for purpose and if you've got these years ahead of you, you need to do something powerful meaning with those years."

So, for those of you, and you think that you have more years behind you than ahead of you, so what, use the years that are ahead of you become re-fired. Don't be in burnout, be burning. And there's a big difference in there.

In those four areas: spirit, money, relationships and health, I got challenges in all four of those areas. It's hard to keep your spirit up all of the time. It's hard not to be envious. It's hard not to be competitive. It's hard to be generous. It's hard to put other people in the same level and in the same concern as yourself. These are

spiritual issues that pastors have to deal with. It's hard sometimes to deal with those spiritual issues and in our relationships.

I've been married for 25 years, just renewed our vows after 25 years and marriage -- I used to have a friend and sometimes, when they've had a button that you push their button, they would have the statement which were, "Don't even get me started." So, sometimes, even with some things, "Don't even get me started." You know, marriage has been the best thing for my spirit absolutely in the world. I wouldn't trade anything for it but it's been one of my most difficult things.

For some of you, it's been one of your most difficult things. Even the pastors who I know personally. Most pastors who I know personally, they're not in their first marriage. Most pastors that I know personally, not in their first marriage.

So, pastors even have challenges with marriage because -- Adam had a challenge with it. Even the first marriage had a challenge. It's not easy. It's a struggle, but it develops you better than anything else when you can hang in there and work through that thing and you can then see the benefit of it.

And then, there's money. I got money challenges. So also, a "Pastor, you run this big business, you got all this money." And folks always think that you have more money than you do. Especially if you got a big name, folk always think you have more money than you do. And you know, sometimes, you have somebody starves and end up dying and finally they didn't have any money, but you think they just got all -- a teacher sent me when he went on, and said, might have sued the media to bring out his place. "I don't have this money folks, with the things I got."

So, a lot of times, I have two challenges with money. First of all, I am not the best money manager in the world. I'm really not. I've got some friends who are just awesome money managers. They really have built up a whole lot of money over the years. They are really tight with money. I'm almost the opposite with that. I had a situation recently with my son and I was on the phone with him. I was leaving a meeting and one of my high school friends was standing there and he was in his car. And he has this convertible Bentley. And I was just telling him how nice

his car was and he was telling me, “Yeah man, this twin-turbo and convertible and just a super nice Bentley.”

So, my son, on the other end was hearing that conversation. And he was saying, “Daddy, that’s a beautiful, really nice car.” I said, “Son, it’s an extremely nice car. There’s no question about that.” I said, “But I can just about bet you that your daddy is happier in his Miata than that fellow is in his Bentley. And I said, “the second thing,” I said, “You know how much money I just put just in the educational fund for all of the rest of the extended family.” I said, “If I took that money, I could buy any car in the world that I wanted.” He said, “You sure could.” I give away more money than I spend on myself by a longshot. But that’s not good earthly money management.

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It’s excellent heavenly money management, but it’s not good earthly money management. So, often times, I do have to be concerned. I’m not worried about it, but I do have to be concerned about money. I got all the money I need. I can buy anything in the world I want. Fortunately, I don’t want anything. And so, you can buy anything you want if you don’t want anything, I got everything I really wanted. There’s nothing I can think of that I want that money can buy that I don’t have.

But I do have challenges with building up money and my mother used to often say, that every time she would save a certain amount of money, like something would come and just swoop it up. It was almost like God would not allow her to build a certain amount of money. And sometimes, even in my life, I’ve seen where God has kept money at a certain level because when money rises too high, we often don’t depend on God. And if you got a hundred million dollars in the bank, you’re not depending on God from where your next meal or check is coming from. You have a hundred million dollars in the bank. Trust me, it changes things. It changes even the way I feel when I have a whole lot of money in the bank. It just does. So, sometimes, God, by design will keep your money at a certain level so, that you remain dependent and recognizing Him.

And then, there are health issues. I have health issues. My body is in excellent shape for my age. There’s no question about that. I can outperform most 20-year old, but I still got health issues. My biggest health issue is, maintaining proper blood pressure.

My blood pressure will go through the roof with just the slightest deviation. It just goes through the roof. Part of that is genetic, I understand that. But another part of that is, doing what I'm supposed to do to keep blood pressure under control.

My mother is 86 years old; her blood pressure is under perfect control. But Momma has been on blood pressure medicine since she was 35. My daddy had a heart attack at 45. I don't take any blood pressure medicine. And if I did, I wouldn't have to worry about blood pressure. Since I don't take any blood pressure medicine, I have to be really careful. I have to be really strict about what I do because it will go through the roof. The average American, their blood pressure, the systolic number is 100 plus their age. That's the average American.

So, if you're 40 years old, for the average American, their top number for their blood pressure is 140. If you're 50, the top number is 150. If you're 60, the top number is 160. As you age, it is a natural physiological function that blood pressure increases. One of the things that affects my blood pressure the most is, sleep and rest and when I don't get enough sleep, when I don't get enough rest, my blood pressure goes up no matter what I do.

So, I have to make sure to stay on track with a lot of things: so I got blood pressure issues, I have plantar fasciitis which is an inflammation of the fascia tendon underneath the foot because I run a whole lot and when I run sometimes, my feet and the heel hurt. It's epidemic among runners. My knees are in good shape, my hips are in good shape. Everything else is in good shape. Sometimes, I'll have shoulder issues, but that's because I work out. But I have a few aches and pains here and there, but for the most part, I'm in really good shape, but blood pressure can be really serious. High blood pressure can kill you and it can kill you quick. So, I got something that can kill me quick, if I let it get out of control.

So, I have issues in every one of the major areas of life. I have struggles with them. I'm doing excellent, but I'm still struggling. I'm still struggling. And what I do realize that as long as I am in this body, I will struggle. And I'm not sure about heaven. "What do you mean pastor? You're not sure about heaven?" Some things are not going to be in heaven, but some stuff maybe. Because they have a war in heaven. So, your body, when you don't have

anybody ailments, but you know, young people for the most part don't have body ailments and they got a high suicide rate of all. So, just because certain things are eliminated it doesn't mean you won't face some other things. But as long as you keep God and Jesus in your heart, you can deal with almost anything. And I believe that even with the struggles that I have, I'm just as happy as I can be. I really, really am. I'm struggling, but I'm happy struggling because I have learned that I have realized that number one, God orchestrates everything. I believe he orchestrates everything. Number one and number two, I believe He is orchestrating everything for my good. I just believe that. I believe everything that happens to me, God is orchestrating it for my good and I see it in that light.

Well, pastor, how do you think God is orchestrating for your good and your blood pressure get high sometimes? Because if my blood pressure didn't get high, I would stay a strict on my program, that's why. I would take just as much leeway as I could get. Any of you all like that? You take just a little bit leeway as you can get. The reason I'm so strict because I have to be if I don't want pain.

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And I don't like pain. I can tolerate pain, but I do not like it. So, I am going to stay away from his much pain, from his much debilitating stuff as I possibly can. And to do that, I got to stay on track ask. And if God let my pressure stay normal, and I tell him what all I do. And I will tell Him what I would be eating. I just would. I am just being honest. I just would.

If I have an indestructible body, I will go right about riding and get me some barbeque ribs with salt. I sure would. I just would, then I'll have me a big chunk of German chocolate cake and I'm going to wash it down with some sweet tea. I just would. But I can't do that. If I do not want pain.

So, I just believe God puts a lot of that stuff and he orchestrates that stuff help us stay on track. And I view everything in life like that. So, I have struggles as all of us do. But I have a Savior who says that, "Follow Me for my burdens light and my yoke is easy." If I keep Jesus in my heart, all of these struggles, they disappear and they diminish. But it is not easy doing that. It is not easy.

As a matter of fact, I told you this before I think, the Old Testament was easier, because the New Testament following Jesus fully, Jesus said “Just two things you need to do: love God with all your heart, mind, and soul and love with everything and love your neighbors yourself.” And neither one was easy.

Especially, loving your neighbor as yourself, that just isn't easy. Look at the person sitting next to you, now say, “Clayton and Natasha they are married they can look at each other and they can say “Ooh, I do love.” But I want you to just look at the person next to you. Now, Jesus said, “You got to love them.” Now, you're in church, there isn't (00:51:46) attitude, this is in church.

And Jesus says, “You should love them just as much you should love yourself.” That is not easy. The Old Testament says, “You can treat them like they treat you.” Which is different, totally different. The Old Testament said, “They slap you; you slap them back.” That what the Old Testament says. The New Testament says “If they slap you, you had to turn the other cheek.” It says, slap me again. So, it is not easy, it is a struggle to follow Jesus, but it is a struggle that produces benefits. See, it is a struggle in appearance, but the results of the struggle are for better than if you didn't follow Jesus. But I have struggles with all these areas, with all this stuff because I am in the flesh and the flesh has struggles. So, that's the end of the Pastor's Struggles.

Pastor James do we have any questions that have come in and I'll do my best to answer any questions that we have. I know that we are going to run a little late because struggles are a long story. And that's not all of them, we don't have much time.

Pastor James: First one says, why you not accept a salary, do you think all Pastor should serve in this manner? How come we bless you for your sacrifice?

Nathaniel Bronner: The question was, why do I not accept the salary? Do I think all pastors should operate in this manner and how can you bless me for my sacrifice? First of all, most pastors need a salary. I don't think this is typical or normal or even desired in most congregations simply because, most pastors are either, monovocational meaning that, it's all that they do or they're bivocational meaning, they have another job. But often even that other job does not fully support them.

I am able to do this because God has blessed the businesses that I am in and because He has done that, I do not have to take any income from the church. But it is not typical or desirable for most pastors. Because to be honest about it, and even when pastors come here to preach, we generally pay them much more than large churches do and we've done that from the beginning and the reason that I instituted that is, because most pastors are highly underpaid. If you go somewhere and preach, most churches are going (00:54:24). And sometimes it costs you more on gas, it just does.

So, a lot of times, you'll hear the stories of how churches often will not take care of pastors financially whether there is a pastor who is there or whether it is a guest pastor. So often when people come here to speak and they all often tell me, "Look, you all paid me more than I have ever received anywhere ever." Because I understood the financial struggle that most people in ministry go through. I do not go through that struggle because God has blessed business.

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So, that was the question of "Do I think other pastors should do this?" The answer is, no. Not unless your outside income fully allows them to do that without any additional assistance.

The third part of that was, "How can you bless me for my sacrifice?" To be honest about it, I do not really need any additional money. I got all the money I need. I got more money than what I need. I am getting to the point and I believe this coming year is going to put me at the limit of income that God has told me that I could hit. So, I really got all the money I need. I appreciate asking the question. What I need from you is, to help in this ministry. That's the part of the sacrifice, when we ask you every Sunday to bow your heads and ask God what should you give, that is the answer to that. Just give what you hear God is saying. It does not go to me because God has already blessed me. And that's why I recognize that financial blessings have come from God. They're coming from God. Every success I can look at it, I can see the hand and the direction of God in the middle of that.

Sometimes He'll send you things in droughts. And He'll send you things in tough times and the older I get, more connected I get the

less I worry about stuff because I know God just got it all. I am just not worried about money. Money is one of the least things in my world because God just got this stuff handled.

Now, I have to work. I'm in the midst of the lotion project right now. That's another one of those examples. I think, that's going to be one of the massive projects. But, we're in the third batch and we don't snag, with all three batches. But God said from the beginning, "It's is not going to take off to the fourth batch." Well, I'm saying to myself, "Now, why I got to go to through all these stuffs? Why you couldn't just tell me how to do stuff right from the start?" I can't answer that.

Sometimes, God will send you through and remember this, the promise land has always been on the other side of the wilderness. And sometimes, there is no way to get to your promise land except going through the wilderness. So, I appreciate the offer and the answer is, "Just to give to this ministry, what God has spoken to you." Next question.

Pastor James: Why does your wife not do more in the church?

Nathaniel Bronner: That is a good question. She is different. She does a lot and to be honest about it, she does a lot. She has an organization called, Yearly Angels. That is separate organization that helps every year, but you can go to YearlyAngels.com and actually look at it. She raises money independently of me and with something she said, God told her to do. God told her to help a certain number of families every year individuals and families and she told me how much money required to do that. And I told her from the beginning, I said look, whatever you do not raise, I will put in a difference with that amount of money.

The program has been going on now, I think, for close to 10 years and she has never asked me for a dime. She has raised it all on her own. -- And she goes out every year and she help all of these people, but none of those people are in the church, not in this church. So, sometimes she likes to do her own thing. And it's what God told her to do. She most of the time does not even sit out of here. She sits back in the T.V. room there. So, she has always been like that and sometimes you know folks are just different. And everybody in church is not the same. Every first lady is not the same.

To be honest about it, the real acting first lady of the church is, Minister Stephanie. She's sitting here on the front row every Sunday; she is doing a lot and she is super active. So, sometimes different people simply have different personalities. It's just as simple as that, they have different personalities, and different ways that they want to express themselves.

I told you this years ago, the main job of the first lady to be honest about this congregation, the main job of the first lady at all and a lot of times, the reason that many pastors have fallen is because, the first lady is seeing about the congregation and I they're seeing about pastor. If Pastor called in home and pastor got voids, and this is another principle. I am trying to put this nice here.

A comedian once put it like this as I'm cleaning it up. He put it like this, he said, "Show me a wife who won't and I show you a neighbor who will." So, the job of a first lady first, is actually to see about the pastor and just as the Pastor's job first is see about first lady. So--

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So, she's not overly active. She does the first lady forum and people love that; it's usually packed with people. But, it's her own thing, that's just her personality. I understand it. And one thing about it in marriage, you got to learn to accept folks they are. Now, see that's not correct English without question. I know that. But sometimes, some folks don't talk that in and if you've got that speaks incorrect English, you've got to accept them as they are, because they're going to get mad if you try to – that's supposed be off. Don't you understand that supposed to be off? And you got to accept folks for what they are because if you don't accept them as they are, they're going to be gone. So, that's the way she is.

Pastor James: How can I work in the church when I cannot get my husband to come. How can I feel I'm effective in ministry when I cannot move him?

Nathaniel Bronner: Ask Jesus. And when I say, "Ask Jesus." What I mean by that is, Jesus could not do any miracle in His own hometown. As powerful as he was, He could do no mighty works in His home. And Jesus says, "A prophet is without honor saved in his own household." So, sometimes, you cannot get those closest to you to do what you know they should do simply because you're common

to them. They see you in your ups and downs, your weaknesses. They see you in your harrows, they see you in flippers, they see you in your bloomers. They see you in situations that church folks don't and as a result for some reason, you're closure common—and sometimes, people at home my father, as great as he was, he would often have to take us to other people.

Nathaniel Bronner: My father was a phenomenal health advocate, but I didn't change until he took me to a group of experts to be lectured to for weeks. C. Elijah right now, he's a super juice advocate. But even though my father made us make juice every day, C. Elijah didn't become a major juice advocate until my daddy took him to see the juice man and when he saw the juice man, a jaded juice man, he became converted.

My daddy making carrot juices and he would juice it all day long, but until he saw a jaded juice man, sometimes you cannot do it because you're too close to them. And what you have to do is you simply have to show them the way over and over and over.

C. Elijah tells a story of Smith Wigglesworth and how he was converted by his wife. And he tells a story of how his wife would go out to Bible study, she would go to church, and go to revivals and it made Smith mad and he told his wife, he said, "If you go out one more time to that church, I'm going to lock you out of this house." And she went out to church, and sure enough, Smith bolted door. It was cold when he left his wife out there all night long and when he got up the next morning, he went and opened the door and his wife was there huddled at the door and just fell inside the door. She fell inside the door almost frozen, she got up, shook herself off, went in, made his favorite breakfast, came back and sat it before him, and says, "Good morning, honey."

And Smith said, "What kind of religion is that?" I locked this woman out and freeze all night long. See, most of us would have been scared to eat that breakfast, all it'll have some hot grits on us. He said, "What kind of woman is this?" And Smith Wigglesworth became converted, became one of the greatest evangelists in history has ever known not because of his wife's preaching, not because he went to church with his wife, but because of what he saw her do that was almost impossible without Christ.

We got to be just like Jesus. And Jesus had difficulty, He couldn't get His own folks to follow, His own hometown to follow. So, we just sometimes got to just show and remain faithful and if they watch and see long enough, they say, "What is this?" And whenever they see us, "I want this." Do we have another question?

Pastor James: There are some that say, "The Holy Spirit talked to them, but how do you know that it is the Holy Spirit talking to you and not you talking to yourself?"

Nathaniel Bronner: That's a theological question and that's a little bit longer of a discussion than I have time for here. Actually, there are sermons. And I think, I do have a sermon, How Do You Know It's the Voice of God? I would recommend you go and listen to that. That's not easy to answer first of all, because all prophets have been wrong. I don't know any prophet had been wrong including myself. You sometimes, you just miss it. I don't know what happened, but some really just don't come out right, they just don't.

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And there's no passage in the Bible that tells you how to know a true prophet. The only passage that you know is from God if it comes to pass. But every prophet I know has said some stuff that didn't come pass and has been dead wrong. The simple quick answer is sometimes, you don't know. There are three ways of telling: number one, they will always agree with the Word of God, but you got to know the Word of God, you need to know it really, really, well to make sure that it agrees with the Word of God.

Sometimes, it will agree with your inner spirit of what you know you should do but often, when I hear God, God is telling me stuff, I don't want hear in the first place. I usually have to question whether it's me, when it's something I want to do. But the majority of times, when I hear from God, He's telling me stuff, I don't want to do in the first place. Yeah, I would just recommend, go and listen to that sermon. I think, It's How to Know the Voice of God. I've taught on that and C. Elijah has taught on it. So, there are resources online because that is not simple and easy and even after you listen to that, you're still not going to know, to be honest about it.

What I do tell people is this, “You ask yourself the question, ‘What if it’s not God?’” And if it’s big enough to where if it’s not God, this is going to be major, you need to get some second or third confirmation of it. But let’s just say, for example, I’ll give you a good example. I was in this grocery called, Good Depot and I go there because it’s the only place, it has great seeds in, but it’s actually geared to a lower economic clientele. So, I had my fruit in the basket and I see this couple, where there’s this man holding a child, and they’re Hispanic. And I get this inkling in my spirit, pay for their groceries.

Nathaniel Bronner: And you know sometimes, when you here, you just don’t want to fool with your stuff. I wouldn’t even necessarily question whether it was God. Now, “How do you want to fool with?” This isn’t one of the troubles I go through. Sometimes when I hear God’s Word, “I don’t want to fool with it.” I didn’t want to fool with that. I’m not in church, I’m out on my own, I’m trying to relax, I’m trying to shop, get me some grapes. I didn’t want to fool with it.

So, I even asked, I said, “Lord, what if I just don’t do this?” Because sometimes, when I don’t it, it beats on my heart consequently. So, said, “What if I don’t do this?” He said, “When you don’t do this, there will be no negative consequences.” He said, “But neither will there be the blessing form this.” So, I’m standing in line, I still didn’t want to do it because number one, if you go up to folks like that, sometime they think you’re crazy. They really do. You got to raise craziness with this stuff.

So, I’m standing in line and I hear God saying, “I will make it convenient for you.” So, the minute I get through paying for my groceries and push my cart out from the line, they’re at the register. “My oh, goodness.” So, I walk up to the husband and I say, “First of all.” I say, “Do you speak English?” Because I wasn’t sure if they spoke English or not. And he spoke perfect English. He said, “Yes, I do.”

I say, “Now, this is going to sound strange, but I’m just kind of led.” I said, “Somebody did this for me once and I’d like to return the favor for you. Would you mind if I pay for your groceries today?” And he said, “Really!” I said, “Yeah.” I said, “Would you just mind if you would allow me to just pay for your groceries today?” He said, “Are you serious?” I said, “I’m serious.”

So, I just stood back and as I start really, it was \$20, it went to \$30, I didn't realize how much stuff he had in his basket. It went to \$40, then \$50, \$60, \$70, \$80. It went to \$90. It went to \$100, \$110. It went to \$120, \$130. He said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yes, I'm sure." It ended up it was \$141.38. So, I took the cash out of my wallet, I paid it. And the clerk said, "Would you pay for my groceries?"

Nathaniel Bronner: So, I paid for the groceries, and I told them, "Bless you." And they said, "Thank you." And I walked out. As I'm walking out to my car, I hear the husband telling the mother, "No one in our lives has ever done anything like that for us before." Now, I wasn't positive this was God, but I had to ask myself the question, "If it is not God, what is the consequence of it?" If it was not God, then it would have cost me \$141.38. I could risk that.

So, often if you've got a situation like that and you're not sure it's from God, ask yourself the question, "If it's not God, what is going to be the consequences of these?" If you could live those consequences, go ahead and do it without question and particularly, if the consequences that you can see will be good.

See, I know, leave it worst, it could have happened, it could have cost me some money or they could have rejected the offer. Because sometimes folks won't let you, "No, nope."

01:10:03

So, that would have been the worst thing that could happen is, they would have rejected the offer what would have cost me some money. So, ask yourself that question when you think you're hearing or being led of the Holy Spirit, "If this is not God, what are the potential negatives are? But if I can live with the negatives, go ahead and do it." It is so big, this is not God, this is disastrous, then you need to get some counsel with two or three other folks.

So that the last question. Amen. Well this is the longest service that we've had in a long time. It is 1:12.

So, we're actually almost 45 minutes beyond our time to date. But hopefully I got all your questions answered that you had. And we do this every now and then, open up the audience to whatever questions that you might have of us. I want to say, "I thank all of

you. I really do.” To me, “This is the best congregation in the world. It really is. I thank you. The 25 years that we have been here has been a true blessing.”

Nathaniel Bronner: And I am thankful that I don't have the typical pastoral struggles. All of the struggles that I have named, they're really internal to me. It is not you. They're really internal to me and I thank you for being such a glorious group. Such a peace loving, such a loving group. Everyone who does come to the Ark, they talk about the love and the family that they feel here. I thank you for maintaining that spirit. So, even though the pastor has struggles, you all are not one of those struggles.

So, I'm going to ask C. Elijah to just close this out, to have any comments that he may have or Pastor James, it's a blessing to serve you. It really, really, is.

(Music Playing)

C. Elijah: We thank pastor that being transparent and open and talking about his struggles. Not many pastors will do that, they all make it seem like their life is all perfect. But we thank God for the pastor that we have. He's straightforward and he's open. So, give him another hand. –

The only thing I would like to add is, I know somebody asked a question, “you don't get a salary and how can we bless you?” So, one way that you all can bless and that is, prayer. So, pastor prays for you all every day. But just ask yourself, “How many days do I pray from my pastor?”

So, you've heard that he has struggles and all of those areas and don't just pray for him cover his entire household, cover first lady and his poor sons. You know they're driving on the road every day and they're dealing with their own issues of life. So, you can cover his entire household and remember him in your prayers. So, that's something that he can always use.

As we all go through our struggles. So, just add that to your daily prayers that make sure that you cover pastor. And may have been one of the reasons that God had him to open up some of his struggles. So, now you know what to pray for more specifically. So, don't just hear it, do something with it and that's the way that, we can all give back. Amen.

C. Elijah:

Praise God. I certainly agree with Pastor James that was the most transparent message I've ever heard. I've heard a lot of pastors; I've been through a lot church and I've never heard a pastor share from his heart like our pastor did today. That takes a lot of humility to just share your shortcomings and your struggles.

We all need the grace of God in our lives. Nobody is perfect. We are all striving to walk out the Word, it takes the help of the Holy Spirit. I don't think we can live a perfect life without the Holy Spirit. That's why, God moved him on the inside of us, to help us, to be that Living Word and as to speak to us, to comfort us, to strengthen, to guide us.

God knew that we could do it on our own and that's why He came. He came down and said, "I got to down because they're missing on a lot of love." He came down and moved in on the inside of us and so, all the time, He's nudging us to do was right. He's all the time, He's given us that little sense that the still small voice, that's not conscience, that's God. He is always trying to get us to move and do what's right. That's His life on the inside of us. He lives in us and He's always there to help us. And so, I just appreciate Pastor Nathaniel for being so transparent, so honest to share his struggles and as God helps him, God helps all of us, we all walk it out.

01:15:01

We all walk this life out, together. And that's the beauty of church. We are one family and we all help one another, we all pray for one another, we all struggle together, we all get better together.

And so, we're in this together and that's what I love about it. Nobody's better than anyone. We're all human, we're all human. It's the human experience with the life of God that has come on the inside of us. So, aren't you grateful that you can repent, you can receive God's grace, you can receive His forgiveness and yet, you receive the power of the Holy Spirit? And so, we're just so grateful, we are grateful and I'm grateful for Pastor Nathaniel. I'm grateful heart. You had the chance to hear his heart today and that took a lot of humility as I wouldn't have shared all of that.

C. Elijah: And we thank God for Him so much. Stand on your feet, I'm not going (01:16:00). Praise God. Once again, a special thanks to musical guests. (01:16:06). Thank you for being with us.

Let's pray. Father, we just love you so much. Father, we just thank you so much for the power of your spirit. We thank you for your goodness and your grace. Thank you for allowing us all to come a little closer to you today Lord. To be open to open our hearts to You, to you to receive from you Lord.

We ask you to forgive us. Forgive us of everything we've done wrong, things that we should have done that we haven't done and things that we're doing that we shouldn't be doing. We repent, Lord and we ask you to forgive us in Jesus' name, we ask you to fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, we just thank you so much. Father, just speak Your grace and peace and love over everyone here today, Lord. Let us have a wonderful day and a wonderful week. This, in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Music Playing)

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(Music Playing 01:20:33 -01:20:39)

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