

pt.1 - Get Out Of The Middle

Sermon Title: **pt.1 - Get Out Of The Middle**

Sermon Number: **5613**

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Nathaniel Bronner: What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are only tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

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(Music Playing: 00:00:25 - 00:00:54)

And now for 5613, Get Out Of The Middle.

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word, because brother, you need the Word. I was in California recently for eight days, actually it was last week. And before I went to California, I had made the decision that I was going to run every single day except for my day off, which was Wednesday. I made sure that the hotel had a fitness center, so that I would have a place to go in and get on the treadmill and run. When I got to the hotel the next day when I went to the fitness center, they had two treadmills in the fitness center. The problem was one of the treadmills was broken, so there was only one working treadmill. And oftentimes if you got to a middle or upper-scale hotel, the fitness center, people use it early in the morning and it's usually crowded. So, every morning that I would go there, there would either be somebody on the treadmill or someone waiting for the treadmill, but I had made the decision that I was going to run and work out every single day. So, when I was there in the fitness room and the treadmill was busy and the broken one was still broken, I just started doing jumping jacks. One day I'd go and the treadmill will be open, I would do my run. Another day I'd go in, it's busy. They had a pool. I started swimming. I made it a point that I was going to work out every day without excuse. And one of the reasons is to why I'm particular about my health, I've always been that way first of all. But a few years back, one of the most accurate prophets I've ever known came to me and he said, Nathaniel, he said, "I see in the spirit that you could run into a health crisis if you're not careful at age 59." This has been probably 10 years or more ago. So, I'm coming up on that 59 in the not too distant future. And since this prophet

has always been super accurate, it sticks with me that there's a great deal of potential truth in what is saying. He said, "you could run into a health crisis if you are not careful," but yet God has given me instructions to stay healthy if I just follow the instruction. And while I was there in California, I heard God speak and I heard him say, "the words that that prophet brought you years ago is accurate," and he said this, he said, "when you are 59," he said, "you will either be in awesome shape or in terrible shape." He said, "for you, there is no middle." You will either be in awesome shape or you will be in terrible shape. For you, there is no middle.

And I want to talk to you today for a few minutes from the subject, "Get Out Of The Middle." "Get Out Of The Middle." Now, first of all, if you understand demographics and population distribution of anything, whether it's intelligence, whether it's money, whether it's health, whether it's anything, the population in general always follows what is called is a statistical bell curve. A bell curve fundamentally looks like a bell and it has a big hunk in the middle, and it has a small portion on the left side and a small portion on the right side, and what a statistical bell curve distribution says is that most people will be in the middle. If you got a hundred people, 80 of them will be in the middle, 10 will be on the low end and 10 will be on the high end. So, the middle is a function of nature. It's a law of nature. It's a law of population and people, there will always be a middle and the middle will always be bigger. And we were in revival last night and while I was sitting in revival, a realization hit me about what God told me. You will either be in awesome shape or terrible shape. For you, there is no middle. And I realized, God was speaking to me in a parable when he said that. See, when Jesus talked to the people, he talked to the people always in parables and he always used things that were relevant to them of that day. That's why when he talked about the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed. It's likened to a sower, who was sowing on a field. It's likened to a merchant looking for pearls. He always talked to them because they were an agrarian society that farming with their big industry. So, when Jesus talks to them, he used terms where they were and the thing I realized about the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of

Heaven, there is no middle. You will either be in heaven or hell. There is no middle. And I said, God was teaching me just with my own thing that I was concerned about. He was using what was relevant to me. And oftentimes, God can do that. I remember one fellow who I was friends with and God was trying to reach. He was an avid sports fanatic. He knew every statistic about every sports team ever. And God began to give me the outcomes of football games. And I will tell the fellow, "I heard spiritually this team is going to win." He said, "no way in the world." He went to tell me the reasons why they were. He said the quarterback is this and his defense is this, the offense is this. (00:06:40). They won. He told me the second game, the third game. Each time, he would disagree with me because he knew I did not watch sports. I didn't then, I don't now. I don't even watch the Super Bowl. That will tell you how much I watch sports. He gave me the outcomes of seven straight games. Seven straight games. And after the seventh game, I said, "now, you're an unbeliever. You've seen me say that God has given the outcomes of seven straight games and you know I don't know a thing about football. What do you think about that?" He said, "well, I got to admit, that's a little strange." And he told me then, "you shall never again give him anything from me." Because his mind was closed, but God was using something that was relevant to him to try to reach him. So, oftentimes, Jesus would teach in parables that the people of that day could understand. So, he used something that was even relevant to me to explain the Kingdom of Heaven. You will either be in awesome shape or terrible shape. For you, there is no middle.

People, let me tell you something, you are either headed to heaven or you're headed to hell. There is no middle. When I got ready to come back on the plane whether you have a first class ticket, whether you have a ticket in couch or whether you're flying (00:08:08), only one thing matters, that's whether you make the plane. Only one thing matters. Now, you may be sitting up in first class or you may be sitting all the way in the back and the middle of the row, you may be sitting in a worst sit on the plane or on the best sit on the plane, but the only thing that really matters is whether you're on the plane. There is no middle. You can't sit on the wing or on the tail, you can sit where you know I had made the flight. No, there's no half making the flight. You either

make the flight or you don't make the flight. You either make it into heaven or you don't make it. There is no middle ground. So, I begin to understand that God had given me a parable likened to the Kingdom of Heaven. And Jesus used the Kingdom of Heaven 32 times in the Bible. He used the Kingdom of God 69 times. So, over a hundred times Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God, but only one place and only one time did he tell you where it was. Luke 17:20, "Once having been asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, the Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, here it is or there it is because the Kingdom of God is within you." The Kingdom of God is within you and you either make the Kingdom or you don't. You either go to heaven or you don't. There is no middle ground. Now, some religions talked about a purgatory. I don't know about a purgatory. The Bible doesn't even mention -- there is no middle ground. You're either going to heaven and you may have a first class sit in heaven, you may be in couch in heaven. There may be levels in heaven.

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I don't know about all of that. There are probably levels in hell. Dante's Inferno, it's a book about seven levels of hell or the nine levels. There may be levels in hell. I don't know. I don't want any level in hell. I don't want to be in the penthouse in hell because no matter where you are in hell, it's terrible. See, it's right then in the intensive care in the hospital. I don't want the best room in intensive care. I don't want a room with a view of the city and I'm hooked up in the lung and tubes running whenever which way, tubes running in every hole I got and I'm lying there looking out on this beautiful cityscape in the best intensive care room. No. All of it is terrible. All of it is terrible. So, there is no middle ground with some things in the spiritual world. You either make it or you don't. You're either in awesome shape or in terrible shape.

And there was a quote that goes, what lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are only tiny matters compared to what lies within us. What lies ahead of us and what lies

behind us are only tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

In the book the "Slight Edge," he talks about only 5% of people are truly fulfilled. Only 5% have the awesomeness of life. The other 95% are in the middle or on the bottom. So, how do you get and how do you move? You know me, if God has told me that you got a choice at 59, you're either going to be in awesome shape or terrible. You know what choice I'm making, but it's not just a choice; you have to do the stuff. You can't just declare it. You had to do the stuff. You got to do what God has for you to do to get what he has for you to get.

And see, 95% of what I call "W" people, wishing, wanting, waiting, whining and whying. You know, why me, why this, why that. They're "W" people, wishing, wanting, waiting, wining and whying. Five percent are "A" people, achieving, appreciating, acting in the present, accepting responsibility and always optimistic. And that major difference of what the "Slight Edge" talked about is all of the studies have shown that the big difference between the 95% and the 5% hinges on one thing and one thing only and it's not religion. It hinges on one thing for those who are truly fulfilled versus those who go through live with the "W" phenomenon, waiting on this, whining about this, wanting this, all of this kind of stuff, why me, all of it. There is a difference that 5%, there's one thing they do that the 95% does not do and this is the thing that would take you to awesomeness, that will take you to fulfilment. You need to be in Christ. But how many of you all know folk in Christ in miserable condition because they're really not there. They claimed it but they're really not there. That's why Jesus said when the folk who had done all this (00:13:18) know you. Did you call my name? Yeah, you did, one of them. I don't even know you. So thou you claimed it, we don't really live it, we don't really believe it. It is not really in our heart. The 5% do one thing. They take full responsibility for their life. They take full responsibility for life.

You see, there are three types of things in life people. Number one, there are things that you can do absolutely nothing about. You can't do anything about the weather. You can't do anything about the price of gas. You know

there is a lot of stuff. You can't do anything about the color of your skin. You can't do anything about the broadness of your nose, you can do something about that but you probably won't. So, first, there is a type of things that you can't absolutely do nothing about. Number two, there are some things that you can do something about but you're not. A lot of people complained about the government. You could do something about that, you can go out and start protesting and you could run for office yourself. You can do something to try to get in there and actively change the government. So, the second category, there are things that you actually could do something about, but you're not. Bottom line, you know you got crime in the hood, you can complain about crime; you could do something about that. You could go join the police force (00:14:35). You can join the neighborhood patrol. You can get out there and you patrol. You can do something about that, but the probability is you're not. So, the first two categories, there are things that you absolutely can do nothing about. The second category, there are things that you possibly could do something about but you're just not. Bottom line, you're not going to do anything about it. So, there is a third possibility or the third category.

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These are the things that you can do something about, that you will do something about; the things that are under what's called your sphere of influence and that are under your control. The type A people, the 5%, they only talk about, they only focus on that third category. They don't worry about the things that they can do nothing about. They only deal with the things that they can do something about.

The first commandment of the 10 commandments, the 10 commandments in Exodus chapter 20. Exodus chapter 20 begins, "and God spoke all these words saying, "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Jesus says, "The Kingdom of God is within." Romans chapter 14:17 says, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now, I read those series of verses. The first commandment, God says, "Thou shalt have no

other gods before me.” Second commandment talked about graven images, about making graven images of God. Third commandment talked about using his name in vain. But the first commandment, the first thing God had to tell folk, first thing of all the 10 commandments, “you shall have no other gods before me.” Jesus says, “the Kingdom of God” and he actually used the term the Kingdom of God, not the Kingdom of Heaven. He said the Kingdom of God is within. In Romans, it says, “the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” So, pastor, why do you say all of that? Because so many of us, we are letting things and people take our righteousness, take our peace and take our joy and that’s inside, that’s the Kingdom of God. You are letting another person or another thing become your God. Whenever you let anything take your joy, take your peace and take your righteousness, you are letting another thing or another person become your God. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” That’s his kingdom on the inside of you and you let some knucklehead, some stupid, some defiled demonic stuff take your joy, take your peace, and rule your kingdom. “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.” And the 5% of those who are fulfilled, they don’t let any outside force take over their kingdom because they take full responsibility and you can tell it by listening to our words.

And see, whenever you hear somebody talking about, “well, you know, the problem with the government” or the problem is not with the government, listen to your words and the government. Well, you know my husband. Well, you know my wife. Well, you know my boss, my job.” All this kind of stuff. “Well, you know I’m black. You know my daddy wasn’t at home. You know all this stuff. Whenever you started hearing all that stuff, you move from the 5% into the 95% because you’re talking about stuff that 95% of the time you can’t change. You can’t do one doggone thing about it but talk about it and the talking takes your energy, takes your focus and you (00:18:34) and it messes up your inside, it messes up the Kingdom of God and you have now given another thing power over your life and over your spirit and it’s a violation of the first commandment. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” That’s why Jesus told the people, “don’t you know that you are gods.” You have the power to control your inner kingdom and when you grant that power

to someone else, you have granted them the power of God. God wants you to have righteousness, joy, and peace. That's his kingdom. So, if you don't have that inside of you, you got another ruler in your kingdom. You have put another God before you and some of you will say, "well, pastor, you don't understand what I'm going through." People, you could be going through hell and some of you all, but so what.

The three things that are most psychologically difficult in devastation, number one is death of a spouse. Now, I know some of you will say, "it isn't the toughest thing because I wish my husband was dead". I know some of you are saying. Now, I'm talking about generalized. This is from the experts. There are some individual situation that is not true. As a matter of fact, some of you all may have been thinking about putting something in your husband's coffee. I know that, (00:19:52) anyway. This is generalized. Number one is death of a spouse. Number two is divorce. Number three, death of a child.

00:20:01

My mother has been through two out of those three. Her husband died and I took my mother to the hospital when they called for us to come. We didn't know my father had passed. When we got there, I saw the doctor come in and said, "Mrs. Bronner, your husband has now expired." I was there with my mother when my brother at 38 years old passed away. Not once that she shed a tear. And it wasn't because she didn't love her husband or love her son. My daddy said if he had to marry the same woman, he would marry her all over a thousand times over. That's a good wife. Some of you all be thinking about the thing that -- he said if he had to marry, he would marry her over a thousand -- it wasn't that she was an excellent wife, it wasn't that she didn't love her son. She loved both her husband. She loved both her son. She says she knew without question, she was put on earth to be with that man. There was never a doubt in her mind. So, it wasn't any of that, but my mother said, God was inside of her and she knew the purpose and she saw life not death. See, that's the difference. When you are attached to God, the things that destroy and distraught other folk, you can get through without even shedding a tear. That's the difference, because the Kingdom of God,

even if the worst thing happens and the worst thing psychologically psychologist say that can happen to you is death of a spouse. So, if you can get through death of a spouse without so much as a tear, why can't you handle all this other stuff? Because you have given over authority to something or somebody outside, and God's first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Let me tell you about Oseola McCarty. Most of you don't know the name of Oseola McCarty, but you've heard her story. Oseola McCarty was the black washerwoman who donated \$150,000 to the University Southern Mississippi. You heard her story years ago, but I want to tell you the details of her story because this is a woman who lived in the 5%, though she had all of the things against her, she had every excuse that the 95% can use about why she couldn't do what she need. She, first of all, lived in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Do you all know what Mississippi means? So, there's about not a more racist place than you could live than in the middle of Mississippi. So, she lived in Mississippi. She dropped out of school in the sixth grade to care for her sick aunt and grandmother. She never graduated from high school. From that point on and for the next 78 years, she spent her life doing other people's laundry. She did laundry for s living. She had no washing machine. She used only a large pot and a scrub board. Now I understand that she was the washerwoman. She didn't even have a washing machine. She used a pot and a scrub board. Listen to the story. She never revealed a secret. She never left the home she was raised in. She never married. She never had any children. She never learned to drive because she was content with what she had and where she was. She was raised by her mother, Lucy, and had no father at home. She had a black and white television on which she can only get one channel, but she did not care because she never watched that one channel anyway. She bought an air conditioner very late in life so that her visitors could be comfortable when they came to visit. She never used it just for herself because she said it ran up the cost of her electric bill. In July of 1995, McCarty at 87 years old gave \$150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi to fund scholarships for black students. Her grandmother died in 1944. Her mother died in 1964. Her aunt died in 1967. She had been alone for nearly 30 years when she gave the

money. The bank manager found a simple way to explain to McCarty how she could decide what she was going to do with her money, how to give to what and to whom. He laid out 10 dimes to represent percentages. On slips of paper, he wrote out the parties to whom she wanted to leave her money. He explained to her that she could decide how much money each party got by just placing the dimes where she wanted them. She first placed one dime on her church. Then, she placed three dimes next to her cousins and six dimes went to the University of Southern Mississippi. At 87 years old, where she had never earned more than minimum wage, this woman had \$250,000 cash in the bank. They asked her what she want out of life, she says she only wanted one thing. At 87, she said, "I only want to live long enough to see one of the students graduate." Four years later, the first of those students graduate, she was in the audience. She saw that student graduate. At the age of 91, one month later, she died. Now, this is the thing. Ted Turner say that that story of that lady so inspired him. He said if she could give a \$150,000 off of a washerwoman's salary, he ought to be able to do a lot better than that. And that was why Ted Turner pledged to give one billion dollars. And I believe that Turner's billion also inspired Warren Buffet and Bill Gates. All of that stuff rooted right back to this one black washerwoman out of Mississippi who had no education, who had no daddy, who had no husband, had no children, and even didn't had no washing machine. Now, how can you be a washerwoman, you don't even have a washing machine? She did not let the external things of the world stop her or prevent her from doing what God had placed within her. Now, she didn't have an excuse. And see, this is the power of what I call righteous empowered living. You don't live by the excuses, you live by the possibilities. You don't live by the excuses. You don't live by the things that could stop you. You live by the possibilities of what could be and that's the difference in the 5% and the 95%. And I said, "Lord." I said, "how do you even take people because people are so used to routine and ways of thinking. How do you even take them out of that? How do you take them out of the middle and how do you take them to the top? How do you take them to the 5%?" And I asked God what do I do to help people get out of the middle? He answered me. He said, first of all, he said, only a small number truly want to move. He said, only a small number truly, truly want to

move. It's like when people says, ooh, I want to follow Christ. Only a small number truly, truly want to move. And then he said, and even a smaller number is willing to do what it takes. So, I said, "Lord, what do I do?" He said, don't you call an (00:27:43) because that's easy. Folk are used to that. They'll walk right down and walk right back. That's the middle. That's the middle. And what God told me to do, I said, ooh, my goodness. He says starting on New Year's Day at 6:00 a.m. for 10 minutes for 7 days, (00:27:57). So, New Year's Day, and I said, "Lord, did we get the business on learning on New Year's Day? I didn't learn about tending a garden (00:28:03). So I was telling you I'm taking you to (00:28:06) organization on New Year's Day, starting 6:00 a.m. for 10 minutes, we're going to have a 10-minute service for those who want to move out of the middle. And this is what he also told me. He said, "do not announce it again." So, I'm not going to mention it because see, the people at the top, you only have to tell about it one time. The middle, you got to remind them over and over. You got to tell them day before, the week before. Do you understand what I mean? You got to tell them over and over and over. Don't forget that. You all don't forget. He said, don't you tell them but one time. Don't you mention it again. So, I'm going to be (00:28:34). So, I'm not going to mention it. You may tell somebody, but I'm not going to mention it. He said, tell them one time and one time only. So, I'm going to be (00:28:41) what I'm going to say but it's a part of the process of taking you from the middle to that 5%, to the part the people who are fulfilled to those who truly have the Kingdom of God within because it's rare. That's why Jesus says, "wide is the path that leadeth unto destruction and many there are, so the middle is going to be full but narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be (00:29:05). It never was designed for a whole crowd of folk. Never was, never will be. The (00:29:11) can only just hold just so many. You have to make your decision of what, where you're going to be. I choose awesome. I don't want any part of the middle and I don't want any part of terrible. I choose awesome, and that's just what God spoke. So, I'm not mentioning it again. You all know the time, you all know the date. That's it and that's it. Amen.

I want to be like Ms. McCarty. No husband, no man, no children, no education, no washing machine, no car, no

colored television, no even air conditioning except for other folk. But this woman changed the world and caused billionaires to stop and take notice. Oh people, when you make up your mind, what you can do is literally unlimited, but you've got to get out of the middle. Only those at the top will ever change the world.

00:30:03

Bow your heads as we get ready to dismiss. I'm not calling for an (00:30:07). That's it. We'd be getting out of here early. Bow your heads. Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for just even a glimpse of glory at the top. And Father, I pray that you impress upon those who truly have a desire to have your kingdom within them, who truly have a desire. I know you said most of them truly don't want you in. I understand that, but I pray that those who truly have a desire to have the Kingdom of God within them. Father, you shall open up a way and open up a path that no matter how tight, how narrow, how steep the path, show them the ways of the path and let them make the decision about whether or not they will go through and whether they will climb the path, but show them the way. And Father, I pray that you place it upon the hearts of the people that they shall say as for me, I choose life, not death because there is no middle. Father, I just pray that you let the middle disappear and out of this group, out of this sanctuary, out of this congregation. Let the middle be the top and let the top be full, and let us defy the odds of the world and the statistical distribution of population. And Father, let us not be a bell-shaped curve, but let us be a straight line up to you. Father, I pray that you give us the vision and most of all the diligence to follow your Word and go to the top. In thy son Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Stand to your feet. You are dismissed. Amen.

Female

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