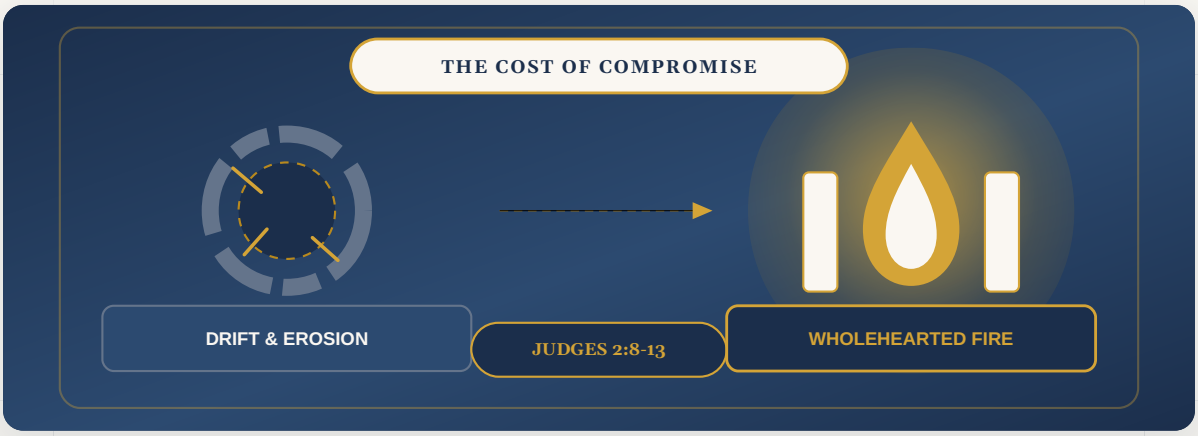
HAVEN OF REST BIBLE CHURCH • SERMON STUDY GUIDE

The Danger of Spiritual Compromise

Sunday - September 20, 2026 • PM Service

▶ Watch on YouTube

Speaker: Pastor Anthony Paulus | **Primary Text:** Judges 2:7-13; Joshua 24:14-24 | **Supporting Scriptures:** Judges 1:27-34; Judges 2:1-6; 1 Samuel 15:8-23; Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14:8-14; Romans 12:1-2; Psalm 101:3; Deuteronomy 6:5



Spiritual compromise begins like tiny, tolerated cracks in a seal, whereas wholehearted devotion protects the vibrant flame of the Holy Spirit between sturdy pillars of obedience.

Core Message: Spiritual compromise rarely starts with dramatic rebellion; it begins with incomplete obedience, tolerated gray areas, and settling for less than God's clear command. Just as ignored O-ring erosion destroyed the space shuttle Challenger and half-hearted conquest plunged Israel into idolatry, small concessions in our generation rob the next generation of knowing the Lord. God calls every believer—young and old—away from merely preserving dead forms and into wholehearted, Spirit-filled obedience that keeps the fire of holiness burning brightly.

1. Primary Scripture Reading

> And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.
>
> And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.
>
> **— JUDGES 2:7-13 (KJV)**

2. The Generational Crisis at Joshua's Tomb

Every faithful believer who cares about the future eventually faces a sobering question: what happens to the faith when the faithful generation steps off the scene? Pastor Anthony Paulus shared that this burden gripped his heart deeply after the birth of his son, Titus. Looking into the face of a newborn child forces a Christian parent, youth leader, or young adult to think past today's convenience and look down the road ten, twenty, or fifty years. That same spiritual urgency leaps off the page in Judges chapter 2. Joshua, the battle-tested servant of the Lord who had watched God part the Red Sea, rain down manna in the desert, roll

back the flooded Jordan River, and topple the fortified walls of Jericho, died at the ripe age of one hundred and ten. They buried this faithful leader in his inheritance in Mount Ephraim, and soon after, the elders who had walked beside him were also gathered to their fathers.

What followed is one of the most heartbreaking transitions in all of Scripture. Judges 2:10 records that there arose another generation after them which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. Notice carefully that this tragedy did not take ten centuries to unfold. It happened in a single generational handoff. The people who lived through Joshua's leadership served the Lord outwardly, and the elders who outlived Joshua kept the nation moving in the right direction for a season. Yet underneath the surface, something vital had failed to transfer. The young people growing up in Canaan had witnessed the mighty miracles of Jordan and Jericho—or at least heard the eyewitness accounts directly from their parents—yet they grew up spiritually disconnected from the living God of Israel.

> **Word Study: Knowing the Lord (Hebrew: Yada) & Serving Baalim**
> When Judges 2:10 says the new generation *knew not* the Lord, the Hebrew verb is **yada**. It does not mean they had never heard God's name in a history lesson. *Yada* describes intimate, firsthand, relational, covenant knowledge—knowing God personally through obedience, worship, and surrender. Because they lacked that living experience, they turned to **Baalim** (plural for local Canaanite storm and fertility idols) and **Ashtaroth** (female deities of lust and prosperity). From a Wesleyan-Arminian perspective, salvation and holiness cannot be inherited genetically from godly parents; every generation must personally exercise repentant faith and yield its free will to Christ.

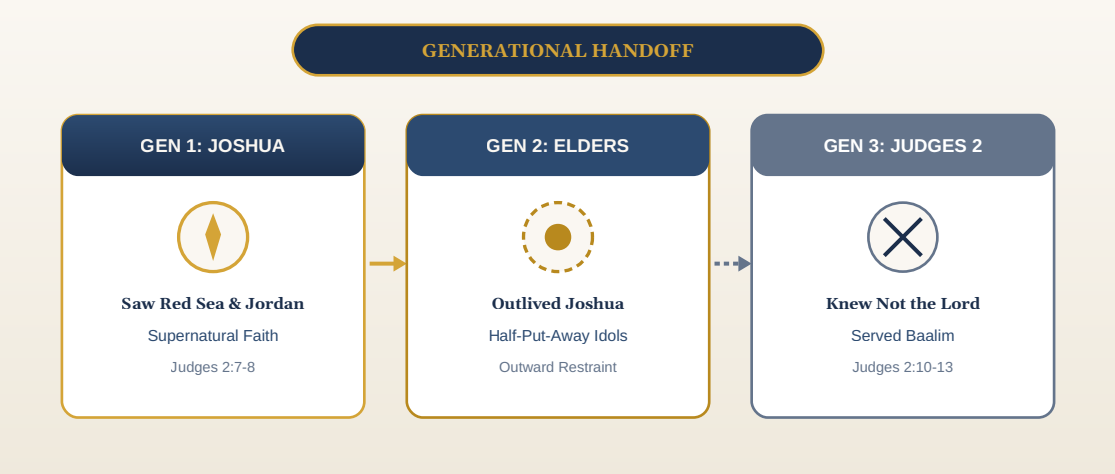
In Judges 2:11-13, the spiral accelerates rapidly. First, they did evil in the sight of the Lord. Second, they forsook the Lord God of their fathers who had rescued

them from Egyptian slavery. Third, they bowed down to the gods of the surrounding nations and provoked the Lord to anger. Why would a privileged nation trade the Creator of the universe for carved blocks of wood and stone? Because spiritual power cannot operate in a vacuum. Joshua's generation had walked in the supernatural power of God—even seeing God send thousands of hornets to drive enemies out of fortified cities—while the next generation settled into natural, comfortable, culture-driven living.

Generation	Spiritual Condition	Relational Outcome
Joshua's Generation	Walked in eyewitness miracles (Red Sea, manna, Jordan, Jericho) and supernatural victory	Served the Lord faithfully throughout Joshua's lifetime (Judges 2:7)
The Surviving Elders	Maintained outward order and memory of God's works, yet tolerated unremoved idols	Delayed open apostasy while alive, but failed to cure hidden compromise
The Next Generation	Lacked personal *yada* knowledge of God; normalized neighboring Canaanite culture	Forsook the Lord entirely, served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and provoked divine wrath

In Plain English: Borrowed Faith Never Survives Pressure

Imagine growing up in a godly home or a Bible-believing church like Haven of Rest, hearing great stories about answered prayers and revival, yet never making Jesus your own personal Savior and Sanctifier. Borrowed religion works fine while mom, dad, or your youth pastor is watching. But the moment you step onto a college campus, enter the workplace, or face peer pressure on Friday night, borrowed faith collapses. God has no spiritual grandchildren—He only has sons and daughters who choose Him for themselves.



Three generations in Judges 2 reveal how quickly eyewitness revival fades into cultural idolatry when hidden compromises go unaddressed.

3. When Warning Signs Become Normal: The Challenger Lesson

To understand how spiritual compromise destroys a soul, a family, or a church, we do not have to look only at ancient Israel; modern history offers a devastating illustration. On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger lifted off from

Kennedy Space Center before millions of watching eyes. Just seventy-three seconds into flight, the shuttle tore apart in midair, claiming the lives of all seven crew members. Investigators traced the immediate mechanical failure to rubber seals called O-rings inside the right solid rocket booster. Exposed to unusually freezing morning temperatures, those seals stiffened and failed to contain superheated gases. Yet the shocking discovery of the Rogers Commission was that the O-ring problem was not new at all.

Going all the way back to the tenth shuttle mission, engineers had noticed field-joint O-ring erosion and hot-gas blow-by. Mission after mission showed scorched, damaged seals. Yet each time, the shuttle landed safely, the crew stepped out smiling, and the program rolled onward. Gradually, a deadly shift took place inside the minds of decision-makers. Because catastrophe had not struck yet, management began treating seal erosion as an *acceptable flight risk* rather than halting flights to cure the root flaw. Even when engineers warned against launching below fifty-three degrees Fahrenheit on that bitter January morning, launch proceeded anyway. Seventy-three seconds later, years of tolerating warning signs exploded into irreversible tragedy.

Historical Reflection: Richard Feynman's Warning on Normalized Danger
Physicist Richard Feynman, serving on the Presidential Rogers Commission, exposed the exact psychology behind the disaster when he observed in essence: *We got away with it last time.* Nobody woke up on January 28 intending to destroy a billion-dollar spacecraft or kill seven astronauts. They lost the Challenger because warning sign after warning sign had been tolerated long enough that something inherently dangerous began to look completely normal. That is precisely how spiritual compromise works in the human heart.

From a Conservative Holiness perspective, this explains why the Holy Spirit convicts us tenderly over seemingly minor spiritual leaks long before public ruin

happens. When a Christian begins neglecting private prayer, excusing sharp words, flirting with worldly entertainment, or holding onto bitterness, nothing blows up on day one. You still show up at church on Sunday morning. You still sing the hymns. You still feel like you got away with it last time. Over months or years, that silent erosion in your soul gets reclassified as an acceptable risk. Eventually, a sudden temptation or freezing trial hits—your spiritual O-rings snap—and what looked like a sudden moral collapse was actually years in the making.

1. Erosion Ignored

The Spirit sounds an early alarm over small compromises, yet because no immediate disaster strikes, we brush the conviction aside and keep flying.

2. Risk Rationalized

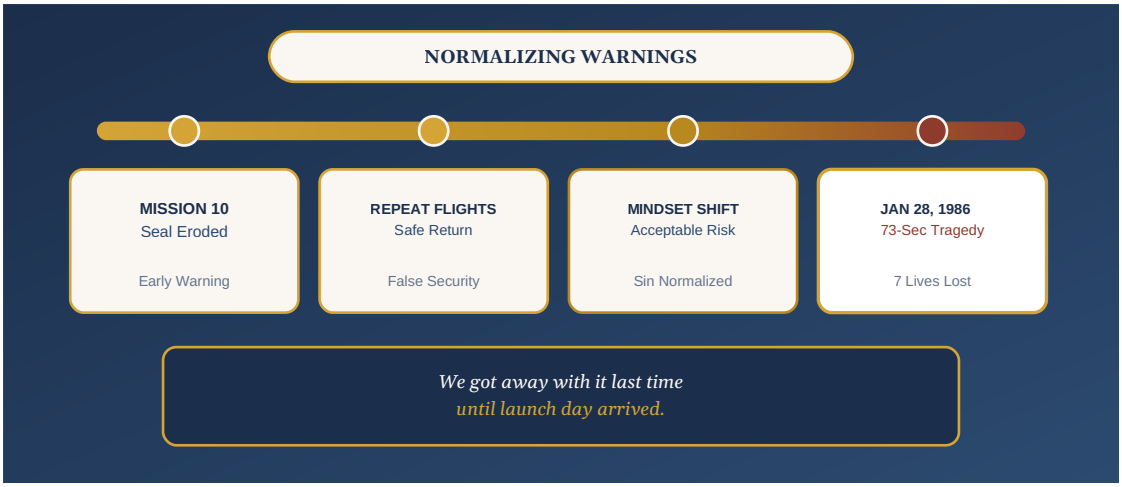
Repeated survival tricks the conscience into renaming dangerous sin as normal Christian weakness or an acceptable personal quirk.

3. Catastrophe Realized

When cold crisis or fierce temptation arrives, weakened spiritual seals fail completely, harming our witness and those riding with us.

In Plain English: Don't Wait for the Explosion to Fix the Seal

Suppose a teenager starts watching borderline videos or laughing at crude jokes in the locker room. Nothing awful happens the first week—no lightning bolt strikes, and grades stay fine. So the thought creeps in: *See? It didn't hurt me. Everyone does it.* Friend, surviving a warning sign is not the same thing as being safe! God's prevenient and sanctifying grace warns you early because He loves you too much to let your soul crash seventy-three seconds into adulthood. Fix the O-ring the first time the Holy Spirit whispers.



The Challenger disaster illustrates how tolerating repeated spiritual warning signs quietly turns deadly danger into a perceived normal.

4. Joshua's Ultimatum: Compromise Refuses to Put Away Idols

To prove beyond doubt that Israel's collapse in Judges 2 was born out of deliberate compromise, we only need to turn back a couple of pages to Joshua chapter 24. Near the close of his earthly pilgrimage, Joshua summoned the elders, heads, judges, and officers of Israel for one final covenant assembly. In verses 14 and 15, the veteran commander delivered an unmistakable ultimatum: fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods that their fathers had served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt. Then came his famous line etched on plaques in Christian homes across the world: *Choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

Pause and picture Joshua speaking those words. He was not a young dreamer making a rash speech; he was the man who, decades earlier as one of twelve spies sent into Canaan, stood alongside Caleb against ten fearful traitors. When the entire congregation picked up stones to murder Joshua and Caleb for believing God's promise, Joshua refused to bend to the crowd. Now, at one hundred and ten years old, his conviction had not budged an inch. Yet listen to

how the people responded in verses 16 through 24—and notice Joshua's startling pushback. When the elders swore piously, *God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods,* Joshua looked them dead in the eye and declared in verse 19: *Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.*

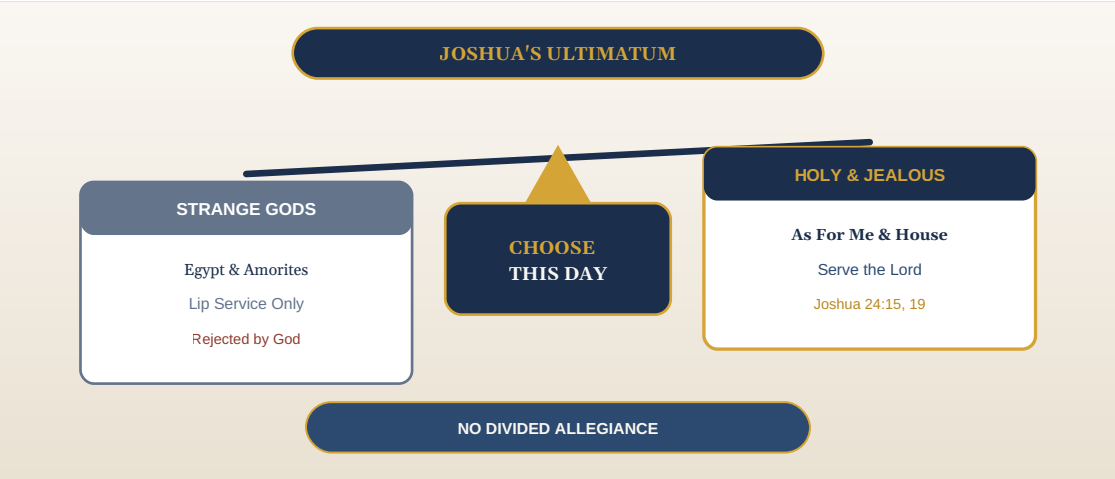
> **Holiness Truth: Why Joshua Said "Ye Cannot Serve the Lord"**
> Joshua was not teaching deterministic inability or saying God refuses genuine seekers! Rather, he exposed their hypocrisy. The Hebrew words **qadosh** (holy—morally pure, utterly separate from sin) and **qanna** (jealous—demanding exclusive covenant love) reveal God's unchanging nature. You cannot serve Jehovah with one hand while clinging to Egyptian and Amorite household idols with the other. In Wesleyan-Arminian theology, true repentance requires a total break with every known idol, and entire sanctification purifies the divided heart so we can love God with undivided affection.

Why did Joshua press them again in verse 23, commanding, *Now therefore put away... the strange gods which are among you*? Because those idols were already hiding inside Israel's tents even while their lips sang praises to God! They wanted to add Jehovah to their shelf rather than burn their idols on the altar. That reveals the first major trait of spiritual compromise: **compromise leads to refusing to put away.** Soon after Joshua died, the Angel of the Lord appeared at Bochim in Judges 2:1-5 to rebuke Israel for breaking covenant. Verse 4 says the people lifted up their voice and wept—a sobering detail, because it appears to be the first and last time in the entire Book of Judges that Israel ever wept over their own sin! Sorrow without putting away idols never saves a soul; only thorough repentance and heart cleansing produce lasting freedom.

Biblical Character / Element	Historical Role	Spiritual Type / Picture	Holiness Truth & Application
Joshua	Successor to Moses who led Israel into Canaan and challenged the elders	Courageous spiritual leadership grounded in steadfast obedience	Refuse crowd pressure; establish non-negotiable loyalty to Christ in your home
Caleb	Co-spy with Joshua who stood firm against ten unbelieving spies	The Spirit-filled believer who follows God wholeheartedly	Majority opinion never defines truth; dare to stand alone when culture compromises
The Ten Unbelieving Spies	Brought an evil report and stirred rebellion against Canaan conquest	Voices of unbelief and spiritual fear inside the visible church	Never let fearful or carnal peers talk you out of victorious holy living
The Elders at Shechem	Swore loyalty with their lips while hiding strange gods among them	Double-minded religion that claims Christ without forsaking sin	God demands full surrender, not loud promises paired with secret idols
The Tears at Bochim	Israel wept aloud at the Angel's rebuke yet kept Canaanite snares	Emotional remorse without thorough heart-cleansing repentance	Feelings at an altar cannot replace actually throwing away the sin in your life

In Plain English: Stop Trying to Co-Serve Jesus and Your Idols

A lot of young people say, *I love God!* on Sunday night at youth group, while keeping secret idols tucked away on their phones, in their friendships, or in their pride on Monday morning. Joshua's warning cuts straight through double-mindedness: God is too holy to share your heart with sin. You don't need another emotional tear-filled prayer where you promise to try harder while keeping the idol hidden in your backpack. Bring the idol out, put it away completely, and let Jesus reign alone.



Joshua 24 confronts every generation with a clear crossroads: a holy and jealous God will not share His throne with hidden idols.

5. The Trap of Incomplete Obedience

If the first mark of spiritual compromise is refusing to put away idols, the second is just as deceptive: **compromise starts through incomplete obedience.** Turn back one chapter to Judges 1, and you will watch a tragic pattern unfold tribe by tribe. God had clearly commanded Israel to drive out the wicked inhabitants of Canaan completely. Yet read verse 27: *Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants...* Verse 29: *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites...* Verse 30:

Neither did Zebulun... Verse 31: *Neither did Asher...* Down through verse 33, tribe after tribe conquered most of the hill country, patted themselves on the back for doing part of the job, and left enemy strongholds untouched in the valleys. By verse 34, the tables turned completely: the Amorites forced the children of Dan up into the mountain and refused to let them come down into the valley. The people God appointed to conquer ended up cornered by the very enemies they spared!

Every young person knows how incomplete obedience works at home. Tell a child to clean his room, and he stuffs dirty clothes into the closet and shoves toys under the bed—claiming, *I cleaned it, sort of!* Or Mom says, *Don't eat any cookies before supper,* and the clever youngster grabs one cookie because Mom used the plural word *cookies*! Humor aside, spiritually speaking, halfway obedience is full disobedience. God Himself exposed this exact deception in the life of King Saul in 1 Samuel 15. God commanded Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites—a violently idolatrous nation steeped in child sacrifice and deep wickedness. Instead, Saul slaughtered everything weak and worthless while sparing King Agag and the very best sheep, oxen, fatlings, and lambs.

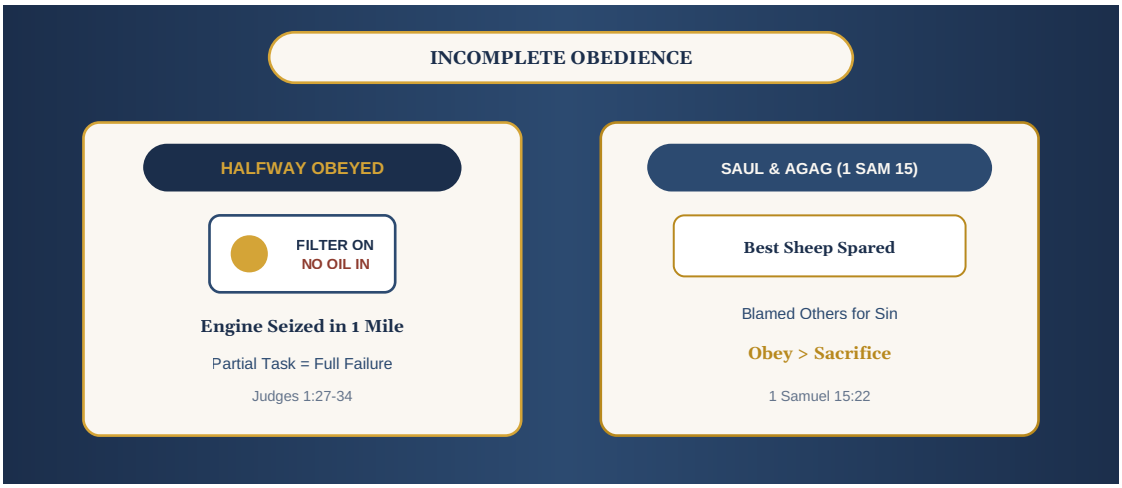
Scripture Pattern: The Bleating of Spared Sheep (1 Samuel 15:14-23)
When the prophet Samuel arrived, Saul boasted that he had performed the commandment of the Lord. Samuel replied with a devastating question: *What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?* Saul immediately blamed the people and claimed they saved the best animals to sacrifice to God. Samuel answered with a timeless Conservative Holiness truth: **To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.** Incomplete obedience dressed up in religious excuses is rebellion in God's eyes.

Consider also the difference between earthly negotiation and spiritual surrender. Merriam-Webster defines compromise as a settlement of differences reached by

mutual concessions. If you are buying a used car listed for seven thousand dollars and offer five thousand, meeting at six thousand is a fair business compromise because both sides give something up. In the spiritual realm, however, God never lowers His standard of righteousness to meet us halfway. When we compromise with God, only one side ever loses ground—us. We surrender divine blessing, clean conscience, and spiritual authority simply to feel comfortable or rationalize our disobedience.

In Plain English: The Oil-Change Disaster

Imagine driving your car to a mechanic and paying him for a full oil change. He puts the car on the lift, unscrews the old oil filter, lets all the dirty oil drain out onto the pan, spins on a brand-new filter, lowers the car, and hands you the keys saying, *You're good to go!* One problem: he never poured fresh oil back into the engine! How far will you make it down the highway? Barely a mile before the engine seizes up and is totally ruined. Doing half of what God commanded under the umbrella of *I obeyed mostly* will blow up your spiritual engine just as surely.



Halfway obedience—whether leaving oil out of an engine or sparing Agag's best sheep—always leads to spiritual breakdown.

6. The Gradual Slope: From Border Neighbors to Household Masters

The third unmistakable truth in Judges 1 and 2 is that **the compromising slope is gradual.** The Israelites did not wake up one Tuesday morning and announce, *Let's throw away the Ten Commandments and worship Baal!* Instead, they slipped downward one seemingly harmless rationalization at a time. At first, Canaanite tribes remained just beyond Israel's conquered ridges. Next, Israel let them stay inside their borders as forced laborers and servants. Why? Because Israel gained something out of it—cheap labor, convenience, and comfort. Soon those Canaanites moved into Israel's cities, then into their neighborhoods, and finally into their homes and marriages. By Judges 2, the very nations Israel kept around for convenience became the snare that captured their hearts.

Notice the sobering generational law at work here: **what one generation tolerates, the next generation accepts, and the third generation openly practices.** We do not have to guess at this—we watch it happen in denominations across the modern church world. Pastor Paulus pointed plainly to the tragic trajectory of once-faithful bodies like the United Methodist Church: where sin was first quietly tolerated in the name of cultural warmth, it was next welcomed as acceptable diversity, and finally celebrated as official practice. Showing Christlike love to sinners does not mean endorsing sin. A Christian must never tolerate sin—period. Yet compromise rarely begins with glaring evil; Satan is far too clever for that. He starts in the gray areas, whispering, *It's not that bad. Did God really say that? You don't want to be extreme, do you?*

1. Tolerated

One generation leaves worldly habits or unbiblical influences parked nearby because they seem useful, harmless, or too tiring to confront.

2. Accepted

Children grow up seeing those influences inside the home and church, losing spiritual alarm and treating worldliness as normal.

3. Practiced

The next generation embraces as standard lifestyle what their grandparents once felt guilty merely looking at from afar.

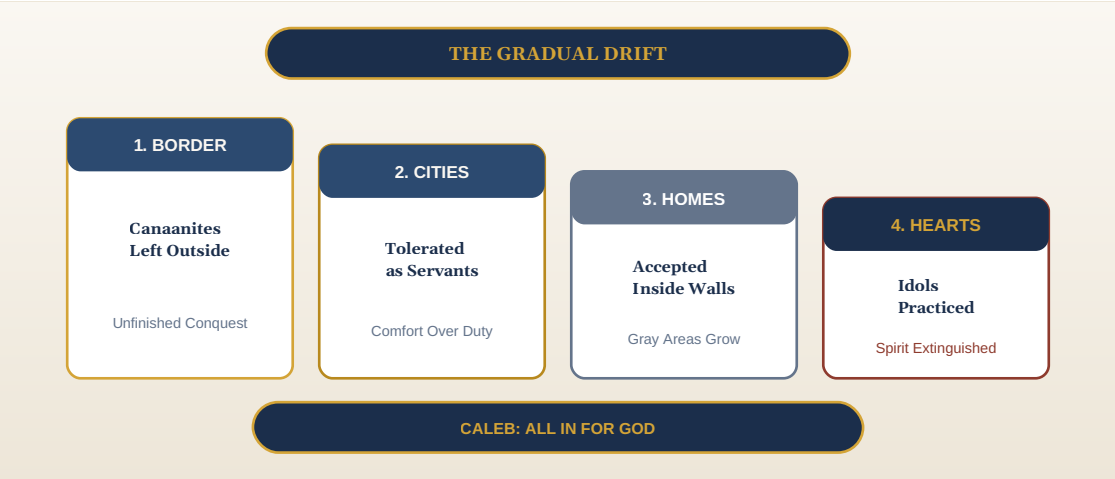
Caleb: The Portrait of Wholehearted Obedience

If compromise is a gradual slide in gray areas, what is its true opposite? Pastor Paulus stressed a vital distinction: the opposite of compromise is not mere political conservatism, nostalgic longing for the good old days, or outward traditionalism. The opposite of compromise is **wholehearted obedience to God**—nothing wavering, nothing shifting, nothing held back. Scripture gives us a shining example in Caleb. Three separate times in Joshua 14 (and earlier in Numbers 14:24), God testifies that Caleb *wholly* followed the Lord God of Israel—spelled W-H-O-L-L-Y, completely, with every fiber of his being.

- **All In Under Threat (Numbers 14:24):** You cannot stand calmly in front of an angry mob holding stones ready to execute you if your heart is half-hearted; wholehearted devotion settles the issue before peer pressure strikes.
- **Hebrew Word Study—Wholly (Male'):** The Hebrew term translated *wholly followed* literally means to be filled to the brim, overflowing with single-minded loyalty, leaving zero empty corners for rival affections.
- **Consistent Over Decades (Joshua 14:8-11):** At eighty-five years old, Caleb possessed the exact same fire he carried at forty—proving that Wesleyan-Arminian heart holiness sustains lifelong victory rather than fading into middle-aged compromise.

In Plain English: Don't Set Up Camp Beside the Line

A lot of teens ask, *How close can I get to worldly music, sketchy friendships, or questionable movies without technically committing a major sin?* That question itself is already halfway down the slope! Caleb didn't ask how close he could camp to the giants without getting caught; he asked for the mountain to conquer them. When you love Jesus wholeheartedly, you want to stay far away from the cliff edge so your life stays clean and strong.



Compromise always moves inward in stages—from spared border neighbors to entrenched household idols—unless met with Caleb's wholehearted resolve.

7. Preserving the Mummy or Protecting the Fire?

Here we reach one of the sharpest insights in Pastor Paulus's message, a truth vital for Conservative Holiness churches and youth alike. Many Christians confuse opposing compromise with *preservation*—trying desperately to freeze-dry yesterday's habits so nothing ever changes. Think of what preservation actually

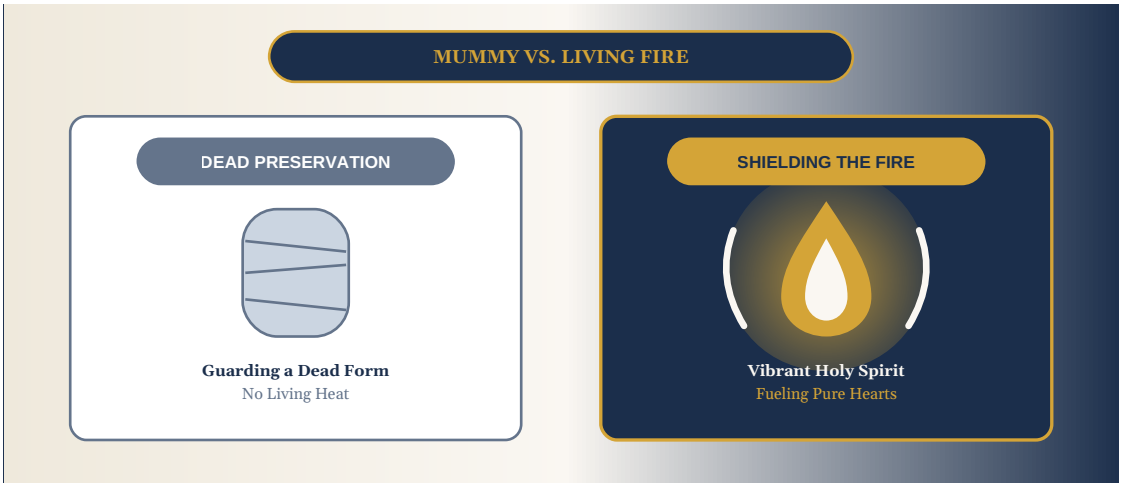
looks like: an Egyptian mummy wrapped tightly in linen strips and pumped with embalming spices to keep a dead body from decaying any further! If our ultimate goal is merely embalming the church of fifty years ago or ten years ago, we have missed God's heart completely. We are not called to guard a corpse; we are called to cultivate something alive, vibrant, flourishing, Christ-honoring, and burning with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

To illustrate this difference vividly, imagine building a roaring campfire outdoors. You gather kindling, place dry leaves at the base, stack seasoned wood, ignite the flame, and watch it leap upward. Suddenly, a stiff wind sweeps across the campsite, threatening to blow out your fire. You step in, crouch beside the flame, shield it with your own body, blow gently on the coals, and add fresh wood. Now suppose a passerby scoffs, *Why are you so obsessed with preserving that old pile of sticks?* You would smile and answer, *I'm not worshipping the wood—it could be spruce, oak, or maple! I'm protecting the fire!* You need the fire for warmth, for light, and for cooking. In the same way, biblical standards, modesty, careful media choices, daily prayer, and separation from the world are never about keeping dead traditions in a glass case; they exist to protect the living fire of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and pass that flame undimmed to our children.

> **Holiness Truth: Legalistic Preservation vs. Spirit-Filled Separation**
> There is a world of difference between Pharisaic legalism and Wesleyan-Arminian holiness. Legalism tries to earn God's favor or impress onlookers through rigid external rules while the heart remains cold and dead—like a whitewashed tomb or an embalmed mummy. True holiness begins inside through entire sanctification (Romans 12:1-2), when the Holy Spirit cleanses the heart from carnal pride and fills it with perfect love. Out of that burning love for Jesus, a believer joyfully guards every gate of the soul—eyes, ears, mind, and habits—not out of fear of who might drive by and judge them, but out of fierce devotion to keep the Spirit's fire blazing brightly.

That is why what we watch, what we listen to, and what we allow into our minds matters enormously. As the childhood chorus reminds us, *Oh be careful little eyes what you see, oh be careful little ears what you hear.* Psalm 101:3 puts it plainly: *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.* Every song, screen, and conversation either feeds the fire of God in your soul or dumps cold water and wet dirt onto the coals. Notice how modern compromise excuses toxic media: *Oh, it's mostly clean—we just have to skip that one bad scene!* Or, *I know the song has an explicit tag, but if I play the edited version it cuts out the swearing!* Why on earth would a Spirit-filled believer try to live as close to the Amorites and Canaanites as possible without getting burned? Living close to the line almost guarantees stepping over it.

> **In Plain English: Watch What You Put Into Your Campfire**
> Think about your spiritual walk like keeping a campfire alive on a windy night. You wouldn't pour soda, mud, or trash onto a fire you need for warmth and expect it to roar brighter! When you feed your eyes impure reels, fill your ears with ungodly lyrics, or laugh at mockery of sacred things, you are smothering the Holy Spirit inside you. Staying careful isn't about being weird or acting superior to your friends; it's about protecting the real presence of Jesus in your life because nothing else satisfies like He does.



Biblical separation is never about embalming dead traditions like an Egyptian mummy; it is about shielding the living fire of the Holy Spirit.

8. The Generational Cost and the Cycle of Judges

What, ultimately, is the high cost of compromise? Judges answers in blood, tears, and spiritual ruin across roughly four hundred years of history. Every time you read through the Book of Judges, you see the same tragic loop repeating like clockwork. First, Israel compromises with the culture around them and does evil in the sight of the Lord. Second, God withdraws His protective hand and allows surrounding nations to oppress and enslave them. Third, crushed under misery, the people finally cry out to the Lord—and because God is astonishingly merciful, He answers their cry and raises up a deliverer, a judge. Fourth, God gives them twenty or forty years of peace. Yet fifth, every single time without exception, once comfort returns, Israel drops its guard, welcomes compromise back in, and plunges back into idolatry.

Even more alarming than the repeating cycle is the downward spiral inside the deliverers themselves. At the start of Judges, God raises up Othniel, a valiant man empowered by the Spirit who serves with wholehearted integrity. By the end of the book, Israel's deliverer is Samson—a man set apart by a sacred Nazarite

vow from birth, yet enslaved by his own eyes, chasing forbidden women, breaking his vows, and treating God's calling lightly until his strength departs and his eyes are gouged out. That is what compromise always produces: the steady degrading of spiritual vitality. Worse still, **the harvest of compromise does not always fall on the generation that planted it.** You may survive your small compromises comfortably, only to watch your children or grandchildren reap spiritual shipwreck because you lowered the standard.

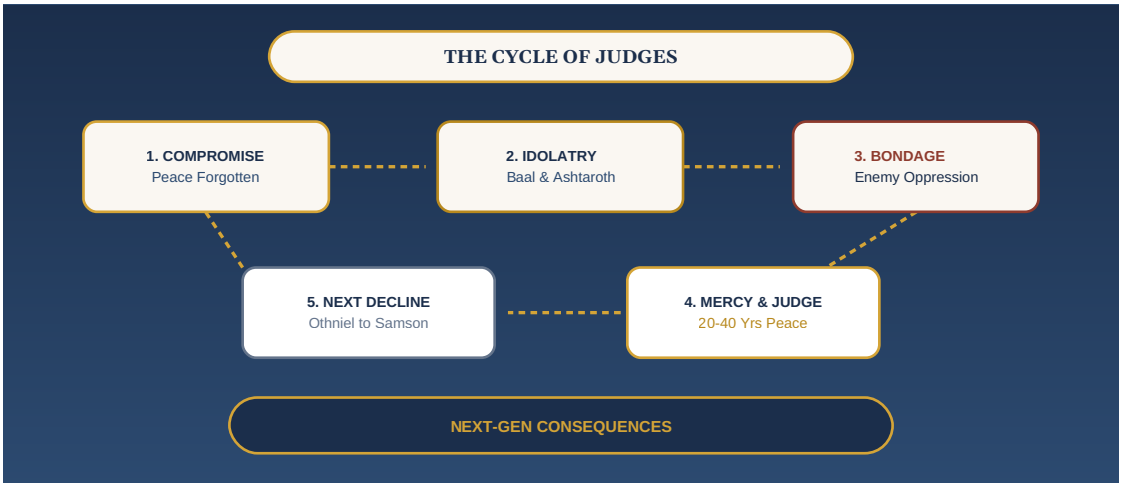
Pastor's Heart for the Next Generation: A Prayer Over Titus

Pastor Paulus shared transparently how he prays over his infant son Titus every single night—asking God that Titus would live up to the meaning of his name, *a man of honor,* loving the Lord with all his heart and never surrendering what he knows is right. Yet every parent and youth leader must face the sober truth: praying big prayers for our children while tolerating small compromises in our own lives sends a mixed message. Children follow what we genuinely pursue far more faithfully than what we merely preach.

Spiritual Posture	Primary Focus	Long-Term Generational Outcome
Dead Preservation	Protecting past customs, outward styles, and nostalgic appearances	Young people see empty rules without divine fire and walk away bored or cynical
Cultural Compromise	Keeping up with worldly trends, gray areas, and comfortable half-obedience	Each generation moves farther down the slope until the next generation knows not the Lord
Fire-Protected Holiness	Wholehearted devotion, Spirit-filled obedience, and vigilant guarding of the heart	Children witness real, vibrant joy in Christ and hunger to carry the same flame forward

Take heart in the mercy of God revealed even amid Israel's failures: whenever a soul cries out in genuine brokenness, God still answers! In Wesleyan-Arminian understanding, no family line is doomed to repeat past sins by unbreakable fate. By prevenient grace and sincere repentance, any teenager or parent reading this study can break a generational cycle of compromise right now, step out of the Judges spiral, and establish a fresh legacy of covenant faithfulness.

> **In Plain English: You Are Writing Tomorrow's Normal Today**
> Whether you are fifteen, twenty-five, or sixty, younger eyes are watching how you handle Scripture, Sunday worship, purity, and temptation. The little exceptions you make today become the starting line for the kids coming behind you. Make sure the path behind your footsteps leads closer to Jesus, not closer to the world.



Across four hundred years in Judges, repeated compromise dragged Israel down a worsening spiral from faithful Othniel to compromised Samson.

9. Six Searching Heart-Checks Before the Visible Christ

Knowing the history of Israel and the tragedy of the Challenger is useless if it remains merely an interesting lesson for someone else. Scripture demands personal examination. Before concluding, Pastor Paulus turned the spotlight squarely onto his own heart—and invited every believer in the room to do the same—through six searching diagnostic questions. In the Conservative Holiness tradition, regular self-examination under the light of God's Word and Spirit is not morbid guilt-hunting; it is spiritual preventive maintenance that catches tiny O-ring leaks before disaster strikes. Take a few quiet moments to walk through each of these six heart-checks honestly before God.

Six Questions to Test Your Spiritual Temperature

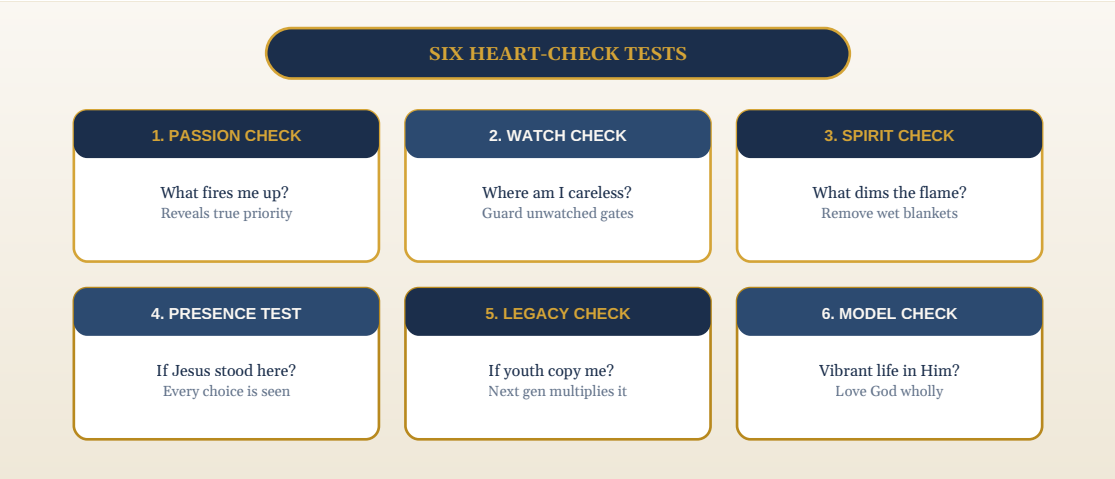
- **1. The Passion Check—What Truly Fires Me Up?** What stirs your deepest excitement, energy, and time—and does that reveal your real priority? If sports, entertainment, money, or social media ignite you while prayer and Scripture feel like chores, your altar needs fresh fire from heaven.

- **2. The Watchfulness Check—Where Am I Dropping My Guard?** Are there corners of your weekly routine—late-night scrolling, unguarded conversations, neglected devotions—where you have stopped keeping careful watch? Compromise almost always slips through an unwatched gate.
- **3. The Flame Check—What Is Dampening the Spirit's Fire?** Am I genuinely on fire for Jesus right now, or is something subtly inhibiting the Holy Spirit from burning brightly through my life for others to see?
- **4. The Visible Jesus Test—Would I Do This With Christ Beside Me?** Imagine Jesus Christ standing visibly right beside your chair, desk, or phone screen. Would you still click that link, watch that show, listen to that song, or speak those words if you could see His eyes looking on?
- **5. The Multiplier Check—What If Younger Believers Take My Step Further?** Since the next generation almost always expands what the previous generation merely tolerates, what will your family or youth group look like if they adopt your compromises and push them one notch deeper?
- **6. The Model Check—Does My Life Produce Wholehearted Followers?** Am I living a daily walk so authentic, joyful, and anchored in Scripture that anyone copying my exact example would fall deeply in love with God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Pause over that fourth question for a moment—the Visible Jesus Test. Years ago, bracelets bore the initials WWJD, asking, *What would Jesus do?* Even deeper is recognizing the biblical reality of Hebrews 4:13 and Matthew 28:20: Jesus actually *is* present right beside us! His Spirit dwells inside every true believer. Compromise thrives on the illusion of privacy, whispering that nobody from church sees what happens on Tuesday night. Remembering the nearness of Christ instantly clears away the fog of gray-area excuses.

In Plain English: The Seat-Next-to-You Test for Teens

Next time you put in earbuds, open a streaming app, or join a group chat at school, try a quick three-second test: picture Jesus literally sitting in the seat beside you, watching the same screen and hearing the same audio. If you would feel embarrassed and hit pause the second He walked into the room, you already know that thing doesn't belong in your life! Don't wait until Sunday to clean house—honor His presence right where you sit today.



Six searching questions function as a spiritual diagnostic compass, exposing hidden leaks before they grow into generational compromise.

10. All In for Jesus: Counting the Cost of Careful Holiness

How do we step off the slippery slope of compromise once and for all? Not by gritting our teeth and assembling a gloomy checklist of religious rules to impress our neighbors, and certainly not by hiding inside dead traditions. God calls us to go **all in for Jesus**—to embrace a careful, wholehearted, Spirit-filled life that goes

above and beyond bare-minimum religion. Remember that oil-change mechanic who merely drained the old oil and slapped on a filter? Going all in does not stop at draining the dirty sin out; it pours the fresh oil of the Holy Spirit into the engine, cleans off the grime on top of the motor, and inspects every hose so the vehicle runs faithfully for the long haul!

Let us be completely honest with young people and adults alike: living carefully is not easy. Is careful holiness always popular? No. Will refusing to compromise push you out of certain friend groups or social circles? Yes, it almost certainly will. Will you have to stand up respectfully against peer pressure, and even lay aside certain entertainment or habits you genuinely enjoyed so that you and the generation behind you can serve God wholeheartedly? Yes! Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship, yet He promised that whatever you forsake for His sake and the gospel's will be repaid a hundredfold in spiritual peace, power, and eternal reward.

> **Wesleyan-Arminian Synthesis: Consecration & Entire Sanctification**
> Why do so many sincere believers struggle back and forth in the Judges cycle—weeping on Sunday, drifting by Wednesday, and feeling trapped in partial obedience? In Wesleyan-Arminian Conservative Holiness teaching, new birth (regeneration) brings forgiveness and victory over outward willful sin, yet the believer soon discovers inward carnal resistance—the root of self-will, fear of people, and lingering attachment to worldly approval. Through **full consecration**—laying every right, possession, entertainment, ambition, and relationship on God's altar—and simple faith in Christ's blood, the Holy Spirit performs a second definite work of grace: **entire sanctification.** He purifies the heart of divided motives and empowers us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5).

1. Careful Watchfulness

Refuse to treat warning signs as harmless; keep your heart, eyes, and ears guarded daily through Scripture and prayer.

2. Courageous Separation

Choose God's smile over crowd applause, willing to stand alone like Joshua and Caleb when culture drifts away.

3. Contagious Fire

Stay so filled with the Holy Spirit that children and peers see living joy and hunger to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

At the end of the day, you cannot control what every celebrity, classmate, neighbor, or even every other church chooses to do. You are responsible for one sacred territory first: your own heart and your own household. Stand beside Joshua in Joshua 24:15 and make his timeless declaration your personal anthem today: *I don't care what everyone else chooses—as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!* When Jesus fills your heart completely, careful holiness ceases to feel like a heavy burden; it becomes the joyful protection around a fire that refuses to go out.



Standing wholeheartedly with Joshua means going above and beyond bare-minimum religion to keep the altar fire burning for Christ and future generations.

11. Small Group & Personal Reflection

1. **Generational Handoff (Judges 2:7-13):** What is the difference between merely inheriting religious habits from parents or church leaders and personally knowing (*yada*) the Lord for yourself, and how can our congregation help young people experience living faith firsthand?
2. **Normalized Warning Signs:** Looking at the space shuttle Challenger illustration, what subtle spiritual O-ring leaks (such as neglected prayer, sharp speech, or careless entertainment) are easiest for Christians today to excuse because nothing catastrophic has happened yet?
3. **Incomplete Obedience (Judges 1 & 1 Samuel 15):** Why does God view partial obedience—like Saul sparing Agag's best sheep or a mechanic changing an oil filter without refilling the oil—as disobedience, and is there any spared Canaanite enemy you need to drive out completely today?
4. **Preservation vs. Fire:** How can you tell in your own heart or family when you are merely trying to preserve dead outward forms like an Egyptian mummy versus actively shielding the warm, living fire of the Holy Spirit?
5. **The Visible Jesus Test:** If Jesus Christ stood visibly beside you throughout your typical Tuesday—watching what you watch, listening to your playlists, and reading your texts—what specific adjustment would you make immediately?
6. **Wholehearted Consecration (Joshua 24:15):** What enjoyable gray-area habit, friendship, or ambition might God be asking you to lay on the altar tonight so that you—and those following behind your footsteps—can serve the Lord with an undivided heart?

Closing Prayer Focus: *Heavenly Father, You are the holy and jealous God who calls us away from half-hearted religion and into an all-in, Spirit-filled walk with Jesus Christ. Search our hearts as David prayed, uncover any hidden idols, incomplete obedience, or normalized compromises we have tolerated, and cleanse us wholly by the blood of the Lamb. Keep the fire of Your Holy Spirit burning brightly within our lives, our homes, and Haven of Rest Bible Church so that our generation and our children will know You personally and proclaim with Joshua, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen.*

Full Original Sermon Message Transcript + EXPAND FULL TEXT

We're thankful for how God has been using Brian and we're excited to see what God will do with him in the future. And this is just interim time and I hope and pray that it is and will be beneficial in the future. And something I'm going to talk about tonight is something that God has been laying on my heart over the last number of months of actually shared with it, shared it with my young people already once. And so it will be a little bit of a repeat for them somewhat. I've addressed it, but I'm going to be going a little bit deeper into this topic this evening.

I must admit this topic is something I hadn't really thought about more in depth until Titus was born and it made me think a little bit deeper about this topic. And so if you'll open with me to Judges chapter 2, Judges chapter 2, and I had been reading through this passage and this is just something that stood out to me. And the Lord has been speaking to me about it and I pray that it will be the same for you as it has for me and will continue to be for me. Judges chapter 2, and we're going to start with verse 8, Judges chapter 2, verse 8.

And it says, in Joshua the son of none, the servant of the Lord died being 110 years old. That's a long time, isn't it? 110 years old. And they burned him in the border of his inheritance. I'm not going to say that because I'm going to butcher it in the mount of Ephraim on the north side of the hill of gosh. And also all the generations were gathered unto their fathers and there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

Verse 11, and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baileum. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers which brought them out of the land of Egypt and followed other gods of the gods of the people that were round about them and bowed themselves unto them and provoked the Lord to anger. Verse 13, and ending there, and they forsook the Lord and served Baileum or Baileum and Astroth. And today I want to talk about the high cost of compromise, the high cost of compromise.

Honestly, in studying for this today, I don't necessarily want to talk about compromise, but it shows itself in the passage. And I feel like I must share the context and share that for this evening. Thank you. Thank you that you are God that loves us, thank you that you are God that cares, thank you that you are one that we claim to. You are rock of ages, cleft for me. Let us hide ourselves in the Lord. May I be a hear of your word, but more than that, may I be a doer of it today and may you speak through me today in Jesus' name.

On January 28th, 1986, some of you were alive during that time, I am just reading basically what it was about, because I don't know I wasn't there. But January 28th, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger lifted off from the Kennedy Space Center, and just 73 seconds after the launch, the shuttle broke apart into millions of little pieces. And all seven crew members were killed. The investigation traced the immediate cause to the failure of

seals called O-rings in one of the solid rocket boosters, especially under unusually cold conditions that morning.

But they must acknowledge that the O-ring itself, the problem itself wasn't new. NASA's investigation found that the earlier shuttle missions had already experienced O-ring erosions and related problems. And in fact, at the beginning of the 10th shuttle mission, they found that was the case, and they continued through the Challenger, and more than half of the missions experienced some kind of field joint O-ring erosion or a blow by whatever that means. But there was an erosion on an O-ring, yet they kept on flying the shuttle. A little erosion appeared, and the shuttle came home safely.

The problem appeared, and it came home safely. Another warning appeared. Again, nothing catastrophic happened, so they didn't do anything. Gradually, something dangerous happened in thinking surrounding the problem, because the disaster had not happened yet. Nothing was wrong. They began to seem tolerable. The Rogers Commission concluded that NASA and the contractor management had come to accept, listen to this, accept erosion as an acceptable flight risk rather than resolving the underlying problem.

Later on, Commissioner Richard Feynman captured the danger with a devastating observation. He said this. He said, we got away with it last time, but then came January 28th. The temperature was unusually low. Engineers raised concerns about launching in those conditions. The contractor initially recommended launching below 53 degrees Fahrenheit, but he initially said they shouldn't. Nevertheless, the decision was ultimately made to proceed, and they later concluded that the launch decision was flawed, and that critical information and engineering concerns, they had not reached their decision properly. In 73, just a mere, 73 seconds later, the years of tolerating the warning signs ended in catastrophe and ultimately death.

But I want you to know the challenger wasn't lost because someone woke up that morning and decided, you know what, we're going to destroy a space shuttle. It didn't happen. It was lost after warning sign, after warning sign, after warning sign had been tolerated long enough that once something dangerous began to look normal. Let me say that again. Something dangerous started becoming looking normal, and that's how compromise works. And when I look at, we're going to delve deep into, so keep your eyeballs open.

We're going to be looking at it as you know me. I like to read the passages, and so keep your eyeballs open. When I look at, especially judges, if you read the whole book of judges, it is a terrible book. It truthfully is. It's an amazing book because God continually answers the prayer of His people. When they cry out to Him, God sends a deliverer, but you'll see a pattern in judges. The very beginning of judges, you see God sends a deliverer, and you'll see an incremental decline in the judges.

It starts out with someone who is serving the Lord with all of their heart, and you end up with someone like a Samson. Someone who is a judge or a deliverer, but there in no way following the Lord, and doing what God had called them to do at the start of their life and following the Nazarete Val. One of the main things that impacts me so much about this topic, and I told you at the very beginning, the reason why I feel like it has impacted me most, is because of Titus being born, is that I, more than ever, want my generation and my future generation to be all that they need to be, and not be the next generation like the people of Israel.

That it says here in chapter 2, that they did evil on the side of the Lord, and they didn't know the Lord, and that they followed after other gods, and they first shook the Lord. I don't want that for my generation. And so, one other thing I wanted to talk about, compromise, and follow the passage and what it talks about. What we cannot deny in reading the passage is that the people of Israel were compromising. How do I prove it to you?

Well, go back to Joshua chapter 24, just a couple of pages back in your Bible.

Joshua chapter 24, you'll see this is towards the end of Joshua's life. He calls the elders and the peoples together, and he wants to admonish them to serve the Lord. And we're going to read verses 14, Joshua chapter 24 verse 14, if you look at verse 1, you'll see he calls the elders, the leaders, those who are in authority essentially in, and he has a meeting with them, and he says this verse 14, now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth and put away.

Gods with your father served in the other side of the flood, and in Egypt and serve, ye, the Lord, and if it seemed evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day, whom ye will serve, whether the gods with your father served, that were in the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell, but as for me, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. By the way, I can almost imagine Joshua, as he says that, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, thinking back to when they were about to come into Canaan land, and there were many spies.

And remember how many spies there were that went into Canaan land? 12 spies came in, 10 spies said, we're not going to be able to do it. 2 spies also known as Joshua and Caleb came out and said, we can do it. And the people of Israel wanted to stone them, looking exodus, it's true. He wanted, the people wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua. But I can see him standing up and saying, no, as for me and my house, I am standing on what God has told me to do and to be and as for me and my house, I don't care what everyone else says.

For me and my house, we are going to serve the Lord. Continue. Verse 16, and the people answered, Joshua 24-16, and the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods. For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the

land of Egypt from the house of bondage, in which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went and among all the people through whom we passed. Skip down to verse 19, or the bottom of 18, I'm sorry, therefore the people say this, therefore will we also serve the Lord for he is our God.

Take note what Joshua says in the next verse in verse 19, and Joshua said into them, you cannot serve the Lord. Then he gives clarity on why. For he is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. Then he gives what happens if you do not follow the Lord. Verse 20, if you or ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt and consume you. After that, he has done you good. The people say this in verse 21, Joshua may not know, but we will serve the Lord.

Joshua says in the people, you are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen you the Lord to serve him, and they said, we are witnesses, laying our hands on the Bible as it was. We are witnesses. We swear. We are witnesses. We will do it. Verse 23, Joshua says, now, therefore, put away the strange gods which are among you and incline your heart into the Lord God of Israel. The people said unto Joshua, the Lord, our God, will we serve? And his voice will we obey? And you will see in the latter part, Joshua makes a covenant with them.

And it later says that he dies. They bury him along with Joseph's bones. And we see the concluding end of Joshua's life. But then you jump over to Judges, and you see what happens after. Flip a page over, right over into Judges, and tell us that we will be using our Bibles. Into Judges, you'll see. I'm not going to read all of the chapter 1 of Judges. But essentially, the people of Visual start carrying out what God had commanded them to do. They go out and start conquering certain areas that God has given them and told them they can have if they would just do it.

And they do some of it. But we'll see later on in the chapter, we'll address that later, that they don't quite do all that God had commanded them. And they settle for less than. They settle for less than. One of the things I want to take note of firstly is compromise leads to refusing to put away. Compromise leads to refusing to put away. Joshua called the people to turn from their gods and the elders say, oh, but the Lord is our God. It's interesting, isn't it? They say, oh, the Lords are God, but then Joshua calls them out. He says, but wait, you can't serve the Lord. He's a holy God. He's a jealous God.

You have to serve Him only. Joshua says, here's the ultimatum. Here is the ultimatum. You serve the Lord, or you will ultimately perish. You'll be taken by the others around you. Here's the ultimatum, but he says, but for me, I'm not falling to those idols. That's not happening. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. The people had already given in to the pressures around them. They were already serving other gods that they had brought with them to Egypt. They were already serving them all the while, saying, I am serving the Lord. I am serving the Lord.

If you look at chapter 2, your Bible is again. Judges chapter 2 says, this is after it seems based on what we can read in Scripture. The angel of the Lord speaks unto the children of Israel about the sin that they are in. This is what seems to be after Joshua has died. It says in verse 4, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. They were sorrowful. By the way, you know what's so interesting from what I've been studying is that this is the first and last time. That I can tell, and I may be wrong, but from what I can tell, that this is the first and last time the people of Israel weep over their own sin in the Book of Judges.

Terrifying, isn't it? This seems to be the first and last time in the Book of Judges that they weep over their own sin. And it says, the people cried out to the Lord and they turned back to the Lord. And it says in chapter 2, that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua. And then what else does it say? I'm trying to find the verse here. I'm sorry. 7, yes, thank you.

And all the days of the elders then outlive Joshua. So you have a man that's a leader of the country, a man who is working in the supernatural power of God who is not doing on his own.

It's not natural. It is supernatural. God's working in, if you look at the chapter 1, he talks about even hornets helping the people of Israel take and conquer Canaan land. They didn't have to do anything. Hornets drove people out. That's incredible. Isn't it? Incredible. There were some hornets out here just yesterday. And I was nervous to take, I got some gas in a cup and put it up over them. But we're not talking about a dozen hornets. We're talking about thousands and thousands of enough to make a bunch of people flee, flee a city.

You don't, you don't call that natural. That's supernatural. That is something that God has helped them conquer. But we must understand that compromise led them to refuse to put away the gods that they wanted to follow. Even though they had seen what God had done. Isn't that incredible? They had seen, well, Joshua did. Joshua had seen all the things that God had done at the Red Sea, how he gave them mana and quail. And then they start murmuring and complaining. And then they have to wander in the wilderness. And all those who are 20 and above die besides Joshua and Caleb. That's what Scripture says.

And so now we have a new generation coming up that has not seen or presumably hasn't seen, unless they were a little child, has not seen the work of the Lord at the Red Sea and the killing of the Philistines and mana and quail. But what they have seen is God opening the Jordan Sea so they could walk into Canaanland and the ability to conquer the people of the Canaanland. They saw God move, they saw Jericho's walls fall down. So we cannot sit back and say, well, they didn't see what God had done.

No, we can know that they saw what God had done. And yet they were still refusing to put away their gods based on Joshua chapter 24. Here's the problem. When a dad generation died, the generation right after Joshua,

when that generation died, Scripture says that they knew not the Lord and they served other gods. It's like a light bulb except it's not a light bulb moment. They were working in the supernatural and now they were in the natural. Secondly, I want us to note that compromise starts through incomplete obedience.

It can start in many other ways, but this is just what I can see here based on Scripture. We've heard the phrase incomplete obedience. All of us as a kid, I know what it means when you probably do too, when you are obeying. But I did it, sort of, or the phrase, or go clean your room and what do I do? I throw all the stuff in my laundry in the laundry basket and then everything else gets shoved into the bed. Did I clean my room? Well, sort of. Maybe they said, don't eat any cookies before supper.

But then I look back and say mom didn't say cookie, so that means I can eat one cookie. She said plural cookies. So I'm going to eat one cookie because that means I'm not disobeying, right? See what I mean? In complete obedience. These relights were walking in incomplete obedience. How do we know this? Look at Judges chapter 1. Let's go back to Judges chapter 1, verse 27. See, they went and conquered and took many of the Canaan area. But verse 27 said, neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants.

And then you look at verse 29. Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites, verse 38. Neither did Zedulum drive out the inhabitants of Kitran, verse 31. Neither did Asher and you get the point. You'll see it all the way towards, I believe it's verse 33. So what were they supposed to do? They were supposed to drive out the inhabitants of Kitran. They were supposed to drive out the people of Canaan. They were supposed that God had told them to do that. And so they instead of doing it, if you look at the end of chapter 20, sorry, chapter 1, you'll see that verse 34 and the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley.

That sounds like they're getting conquered now instead of Israel conquering others, doesn't it? So you have a people who are not willing to obey what God has called them to do or they did obey, but it wasn't complete obedience. And we see that is the start of compromise. We see all the tribes that of the list of those who did not fully do what God had commanded. They did some, but not all. We see a man who does this exact same thing. We see a pattern in scripture, by the way.

A man we all know is Saul. He does not walk in obedience. It was more incomplete obedience. He was supposed to kill Amalek and utterly destroy it. We're talking King, woman, child. You say, wow, that's terrible. No, not really, because we've got a people who are absolute hatred towards God. You talk about child sacrifices. You talk about immense evil. And God says destroy it. Period. He was talking animals, says in 1 Samuel chapter 15, and Saul smote the Amalekites until they came to serve.

And it says verse 8 of 1 Samuel chapter 15. He says he took Agag the King of the Amalekites alive. And he utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword, but Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings and the lambs and all that was good would not be utterly destroyed by them. But everything that was vile and refuse, they destroyed utterly. It's okay. Go ahead and grab it. One thing you'll notice, if you look later on in 1 Samuel chapter 15, 1 Samuel chapter 15, Samuel comes and meets Saul.

And this is what he does. He attacks Saul, not physically, but he says, what are you doing? How? Scripture says this. Samuel says this. What is this bleeding that I hear? What is this noise that I hear? What is all? Obviously it's not a phone ringing. No, but Samuel comes to Saul and says, what? I hear sheep. And then you hear what Saul says. He says, oh, the people. Look at it. Read it 1 Samuel chapter 15. He blames the people for his obedience. Samuel later says this, to obey is better than sacrifice, to harken than the fat of rams.

What was Saul doing? He was compromising. He said, I did it partially. Therefore it's obedience. I did it halfway. Therefore I did it. Right? Not no. The answer is no. When God says to do something and we do it halfway, is that obedience? The answer is absolutely not. If you went to a mechanic and you asked them to change your oil, and they went in and they unscrewed the oil filter, and obviously when you unscrew the oil filter, all the oil goes out. You unscrew the oil filter, and they put a new oil filter back on, and they say, you're good to go. And you pay them the money? Christian, what do you think would happen?

They would get a mile. They would, or something like that. You would have an engine that is kaput, because what you had hired them to do in completion, they did halfway. They didn't do it all. What's interesting is compromise, based on the Miriam Webster's dictionary, they say it's a settlement of differences, or by consent, reached by mutual concessions. I agree with what they're talking about, but I'm going to shift it a little bit differently. Compromise is not just, hey, Brian, I have a vehicle, I want to sell to you for $7,000, and you say, no, I want to pay $6,000.

Five, okay, never mind. Okay, well, let's compromise. Can we compromise? Can we meet in the middle? What's a good compromise? I want $7,000, and you want $5,000, what's a good meet? $5,000? No, let's go $6,000. We say that's compromise, because we came and we gave up, each of us gave up something, and we came to an agreement. This is the issue. When it comes to compromising the spiritual life, only one side gives up, and that's us. We give up what God has called us to do for us to feel better, or to rationalize, or as it says, to concede.

Compromise isn't always good. It's ultimately compromise is settling for less than. Whether it be less than what God has called us to do, we're talking about almost every area of life, compromise. What the people of Israel were doing was settling for less than what God had commanded, and covering up under the umbrella of obedience. They said, we're okay, we did it. No. Compromise. It starts with incompletely obedience, and we

see that in judges, chapter 1. Thirdly, compromise, the compromising slope was gradual.

The people of Israel didn't immediately compromise, and just say, wake up one morning and say, I'm not serving the Lord, I am serving by all. I'm done. Actually, if you read the passage of Scripture, you'll see that it says that the people of the Amorites, the people of Canaan, they start living in the cities. Actually, Scripture says in judges that they allow the people of Canaan land to be their slaves and their servants, and they allow them into their homes, and now they're living in their cities.

Now you start saying, now they're no longer just out there beyond the region of Canaan, but now they're living in their borders, and now they're living inside their cities, and now the people themselves are living inside of their homes, and they're saying, we're compromising because we're getting something out of it. We get a free slave or a servant that can serve us and serve our every winds. You see a pattern here? What compromise does is it lets incremental obedience, or rather compromise, and it rationalizes until it ultimately destroys.

The people of Israel didn't immediately compromise, they said, I want other nations to serve me. What one generation tolerated, the next generation accepted, and then practiced. We see this today, by the way. All we got to do is look at, I'm going to call them out, because it's every right. All we got to do is look at the United Methodist Church. It's true. What one time was tolerated, or we accept you, come on, again, I am not saying we shouldn't allow people into our homes, and into our churches, or even into our homes, and love on them, but when I say accept, does that mean we are allowing them, and saying we agree with it, absolutely not.

But once we start accepting something, and we tolerate it, we accept it, and then we start allowing it into our home, and now it becomes a practice. Christians should never, ever, ever tolerate sin, ever. Period.

Typically it starts in the gray areas, though. Compromise typically starts in the gray. Why? I think the devil has a reason for that, because the devil doesn't say, hey, you should go out and do that, because I know it's sin, and you won't do it. No, he's not going to do that. He's going to say, well, what about this? It's not that bad.

Didn't God say? Typically it starts in the gray areas, and I want to address this specifically. The opposite of compromise isn't conservatism. Sometimes we use conservatism as the epitome of what it is to be. We are to be conservative. The answer is no. We are to be godly. Holinesses, anyway, I won't go there. Conservatism isn't the answer either. It isn't nostalgia. It isn't what we think, or what the ways used to be. The opposite of compromise is wholehearted obedience to God, wholehearted, nothing wavering, nothing shifting, nothing.

So it's interesting, I talk to the young people Wednesday night about Caleb. One thing is so interesting about Caleb, I'm referring to Caleb in Joshua. Caleb, you'll see, if you read back, when they were interacting with, before they went into Canaan land, it says that he holy served the Lord, not H-O-L-Y-W-H-O-L-Y, and it says it three times in the same chapter, three times, that Caleb holy served the Lord. Okay, wait. Does that mean he was half-hearted in his obedience? No. No. You think you can be half-hearted and get ready to be stoned and say, I am half-hearted, stoned me. No. No. You're all in. No matter what it is, you're all in.

You're not willing to compromise and be willing to hear what others say and agree with them and ultimately practice those things. But I want us to know this too. I want to be very careful about this. Sometimes the opposite of compromise, the reason why I'm saying opposite of compromise is sometimes it's hard to define what that looks like, but I want us to know this. Sometimes the opposite of compromise is viewed as preservation. We've got to preserve this. Or else it's not going to be the

same. We've got to preserve it. Is there some truth to it? The answer is yes.

But if that's our goal, we're missing the mark. If preservation is our goal, we're missing the mark. Preservation, I think, of preservation imagery for me is an Egyptian mummy that I'm trying to preserve. I'm trying to make sure it doesn't decay anymore. So we just try and cover things up and just make things look better. The problem with preserving is that the idea of preserving is it's a keeping from decaying. What I'm trying to say is we're not talking about preservation as the opposite of compromise. We're trying to say that God, wholehearted service to God, is the opposite of compromise.

To try and hold on to something like preservation as a cop out. It just doesn't work that way. What I'm trying to say tonight is I'm not trying to protect something that was in the past. What I'm saying is there's some truth to it. We can't throw everything out. The baby out with the bath water. So let's not throw everything out. Let's not go on the opposite side of the fence. What I'm trying to do is protect us from something where my future generations and me included is that there's something not decaying that I'm trying to preserve, but something that is alive and vibrant, something that is flourishing, something that is Christ honoring and glorifying, something that is wholeheartedly the Lord's.

Should we protect our kids? Yes, I'm not saying we shouldn't protect them. I'm not saying we shouldn't help them to focus on, that's not my point. My point is if our focus is preserved to preserve what we have, we're missing the mark. If we are wanting the opposite of compromise, it is something that is alive and flourishing and not dead. We see that Israel allowed culture, the culture around them, the gods around them, the influences around them to creep in and influence and ultimately destroy the family and an entire, yes, I said an entire generation.

I'm not interested in embalming, so to speak, the church of 50 years ago or 10 years ago, I'm more interested in making sure that the fire of the Holy Spirit doesn't go out, that there's something that is alive, that the generation sees in us and they see why we do what we do and they are hungry for why we do what we do. It doesn't leave my family. I don't want it to leave my family. I want my family and the generations after to follow after me and follow ultimately after Christ.

I want them to follow after biblical truth, after holiness, after prayer, after the presence of God in a consistent, daily ritual and a consistent life basis. I want them to follow the authority of Scripture. Now some of us are saying, but that's the basics. Yeah, the point is when a compromise creeps in, the basics go out the window. When a compromise creeps in, eventually the basics go out of there. We see it with Israel. One thing I'm going to get here on a little bit of an edge and I know I will, but I feel like I need to speak this.

Pastor Spivey spoke several weeks ago, he's been speaking on Romans chapter 12 and why it matters to be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. And it really matters what we listen to, what we watch, what we partake in, what Scripture says. There's a song that says, oh be careful little eyes, what you see. The rest of it says, oh be careful little ears, what you hear. Is it being careful because we want to preserve? No. And yes. It's a bit of a trick question.

Our basis for it is not preservation, but we are trying to preserve something for the next generation and see something that is incredible, that is vibrant, that is alive. That is important, what we hear, what we listen to, what we watch in the same way. The Israelites were allowing Amorites and Canaanite nations to live as their neighbors and live among them because it caused influences into their life that eventually turned them away from God. Oh, it doesn't really matter. It isn't that bad or it helps us.

Oh, there's only a few, oh what we need to skip that scene. Oh, that song is e-rated but if we listen to it a different way, it can cut out all the bad language. Really? Are we trying to get to the edge and live as close as we can to the Amorites and the Canaanites? Having forbidden. I don't want that. And in fact, the closer we move to the line, almost guaranteed, and we see it with the people of Israel, that they will step past the line. The point is not condemning. It's not my point. My point is not condemn of everything.

My point is because I believe in condemning it, if we just condemn, condemn, condemn, condemn. I don't believe that's helpful long term either because then it just feels like it's a list of rules and regulations and things that we have to abide by or if someone drives by and they hear me listen to this song, they're going to feel bad. I'm saying we're living a life that is so in tune with the Holy Spirit that is so engaged with the Holy Spirit that we're not wanting to compromise.

We're wanting to stay as far away from the cliff and the line as possible because we want all that God has for us and we want our family and our next generation. What is the cost of compromise? What's the cost? Well, ultimately or eventually it leads to the degrading of spirituality. I'm talking about spiritual compromise and really it can be in many ways other areas as well. Right? The generations suffered. The generations suffered and we're doing all that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. The people of Israel allowed compromise that later led to their nation turning to other gods.

So what's interesting is you'll see this all through the book of Judges. If you read it is an incredible book. I've already read it a couple of times. This is the last couple of months. That you'll see a consistent pattern. Again, I've mentioned this before. The people call to the Lord after they've been conquered. And the Lord answers, it says the Lord answers them and the Lord sends them a deliverer when a judge and the judge helps them conquer. Scripture says that they live for 20 years at peace. They live

for 40 years at peace. And then it says every, and I mean every, every single time the people of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord every time.

It worked for a little bit. But then they allowed that back into their lives and then they started worshiping other gods. It was a continual for, I believe it was 400 years, a pattern. They served the Lord. God did mighty things through them. They conquered. They went and did all that God had. And God dropped the walls of Jericho, just amazing things. And then the next thing you know, they're serving the other gods and there's other countries coming out and destroying them and taking them as slaves.

We see that. That's the cost ultimately of compromise. I want us to also know, compromise doesn't, the results of compromise doesn't always happen in our generation. It doesn't. The result of compromise can happen the next generation or even the generation after. That's our decisions. Lord, help me. I'm reminded of, I want Titus to, I pray this over him every night. Lord, may be as his name means, a man of honor. May he be a man that loves the Lord with all of his heart. May he be a man that serves the Lord with all of his heart, all of his days and he doesn't give up on what he knows to be right.

I want that for my children, but I've got to live it out. Lord, help me. May I not, may I not be compromising in the little things. There's an illustration I'd like to share in the little, towards the closing here. I want you to think of a fire. I've just built up a fire and I've taken my time to build it up and I've put leaves on it and now I have a roaring fire and I'm, and there's wind blowing in and I'm taking my body and sort of shielding it so that it doesn't blow out that fire.

I took a lot of time to get that fire going and I'm blowing on it and trying to keep it revived and I'm putting more wood on it. And someone comes by and says, why are you trying to protect that fire? What are you trying to do? And they say, why are you so obsessed with preserving that old pile of

wood? What's the whole point? Say, no, I'm not preserving the wood. I'm protecting the fire. The wood can change. It could be any kind of spruce, oak, whatever it might be. I'm trying to protect it. The fire is the point. Is the point building the fire? The point wasn't building the fire. The point itself was the fire. I need the fire. I need the fire for cooking. I need the fire for multiple things.

And ultimately, if we're over here just letting the wind blow out the fire of the Holy Spirit in our lives, yes, we are to protect it. And yes, it matters what we put into the fire of our lives. It matters. Scripture talks about, let no wicked thing come before my eyes. What is that? That is us putting things into the fire. That is us figuring out what is going into our life, what is influencing us, what is impacting us, what is the fire in our lives. I want us to ask these questions in conclusion. I want us to ask ourselves these questions. And I'm asking myself these questions as well.

What is something I get fired up about? And if that's the case, does that mean it's my priority? Are there areas I am not being careful to keep the careful watch of or over? Am I on fire for Jesus like I should? If not, what is inhibiting it? And how can I grow? Is there anything that is dampening and inhibiting the fire of the Holy Spirit within to burn brightly for Him and for others? Would I be like a Joshua and would I still make the choice to visibly, would I still make the choice in front of me, whatever that might be, to watch, to look at, to listen to?

Would I make that choice if Jesus was visibly standing beside me? It's a good question. There's a phrase years ago, what WJD, what would Jesus do? What happens if everyone behind me adopts this compromise and takes it a step further? Am I okay with people modeling exactly what I do and will exactly what I do lead them to love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength? I mean everything I do. Am I living a life that anyone could follow and have a deep, vibrant life in Christ?

My point is not, I said this earlier, my point here is not to condemn, but this is for me. This is what God's been speaking to me about. Where am I needing to shore up some things that even in and of themselves may not be compromised, but I want to make sure that my generation and my children make it not just to heaven, but that they bring, they serve the Lord with all of their hearts and they bring others with them, that they serve the Lord with all of their heart. I don't want my generation to be the one or even my children's generation to be the one that is doing evil on the side of the Lord. Lord, help me. Lord, help me not to be that.

I don't want compromise. I don't want being on the edge. I want to be all in and I want to be careful. I want to be careful with my life. Is careful easy. The answer is no. Is careful always popular. Also, no. Is careful going to push us out of some circles. The answer is yes. Is careful going to make life easier in some regards. Probably not necessarily. Are you going to have to stand up to certain other people? The answer is yes. Are you going to have to set aside some things that maybe you even enjoy so that your future generation can serve the Lord wholeheartedly. The answer is also yes.

But it's not that it's a list of rules. It's not the point. The point is that we want to serve the Lord and my children to serve the Lord all the way in. Wholeheartedly. Every part, not just half, not just, well, I changed the oil and I didn't, but I didn't put the oil back in. No, all in. We're talking about changing the oil, cleaning off the top of the engine. We're talking about doing above and beyond to make sure our children and myself included will take others with me and serve the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and be like a Joshua that says as for me, yes, me, as for me in my house.

I don't care what everyone else does. Ultimately, because it starts here. As for me in my house, we will serve the Lord. How many fathers, thank you that you're calling us to live a life of holy, holy living. You're calling us to not live a life of compromise, but live a life that is all in for Jesus

wholeheartedly. You're, we're holy in. May we set aside. May we take this to heart. May this be a time where we don't just take this and hear it, but let it pass one through ear and out the other.

But may it continue to bounce around in our minds and may you, your spirit, work through it. May you work in my life, Lord, show and see if there be any wicked way in me or any compromising way in me. And may I live and we live in a life that is on fire for Jesus and the work that he has called us to do and to be in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you for your attention this evening. You are dismissed.

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