

How to Know God's Will

- You guys night out. Welcome to it. You guys glad to be here. What a great group. So good to see you guys so glad to be with you. If you're new or joining us online. My name is Mark. One of the pastors here at the church, and we tend to go through books of the Bible. Right now, we're in the book of Genesis. And then for real men, we look at leadership lessons for God's men. And so just quickly too, on your way out. If you want, there's a free study guide. This is part two. It has a commentary, memory verse, discussion, questions. Our hope prayer and goal is that you would learn the Bible, and you would use it to lead in whatever sphere of influence that God has given you. But if you're married, you can use it with your wife. If you got kids, you can use it with your kids. It's just a tool to help you learn God's word. But here's a big idea as we're going through Genesis. It is a generational study in men leading, or failing to lead themselves and their families. That is in large part what Genesis is. It's a case study. What happens when this guy makes these decisions? And how does that continue for generations to have a legacy? That's either a blessing or a curse. And so what we're looking at right now is a guy named Abraham. And Abraham is kind of the prototypical man of faith in the Bible. He appears around 300 times in the Bible, and he has some good days and he has some bad days. On his good days, he hears from the Lord and he obeys and it goes really well. On his bad days, he just acts, he doesn't think or pray. He doesn't build an altar. God doesn't speak to him. He almost gives away the promised land. He gives his wife away to join a harem with a cult leader. You know, I mean, you're doing great compared to this guy. He's had some rough days. And things go well when he hears from God, and things go very poorly when he doesn't hear from God. And one of the most important that you, and I do as men, we make decisions. That's what a leader is. That's what a leader does. When an opportunity comes, when an obstacle comes, when a crisis comes. You and I, as men with ourselves, our families, our spheres of influence, our businesses, our ministries, we've gotta make decisions. And for most men, those are the most stressful occasions. Those are the most difficult decisions. And so what I wanted to talk about was how to know God's will. And we see this with Abraham. I'll give you a few examples. So in chapter 12:1, God spoke to him and said, "Go." So God told him what to do. He heard from God and he obey. In chapter 12 verse 7, it says that the Lord appear to him. So God showed up. In chapter 12, 13, 22, Abraham builds an altar. So he stops and he worships God and he prays with God and he listens to God. And this is his equivalent of going to church. In chapter 15, it says the word of the Lord came to him in a vision. So we looked at this last weekend. God gave him a vision of the future. Revealing what was about to happen. Says in chapter 15 verse 4, that the word of the Lord came to Abraham. So he's gonna speak to him again. At chapter 16, an angel of the Lord appears to him. So God sends another divine being. An angel means messenger. So there is a directive for him to obey. It says in chapter 18 verse 1, that the Lord appeared to him again. And the chapter 19 verse 1, two angels appeared to him. So over and over and over the life of Abraham is opportunity, and obstacle. Decision needs to be made. He's the leader. Is he gonna hear from God? If so, it'll be blessed. If he doesn't hear from God, and he just acts, it'll be cursed. And you and I, as men, we live here all the time. And right now, part of the hard difficulty in being a leader today is. It used be that you could forecast into the future and predict. How many of you know that those days are over. Amen. How many of you are like, I don't know where the economy's going. I don't know where the government is

going. I don't know where the nation is going. I'm pretty sure down, you know, but I'm not exactly sure how fast. And sometimes when we make decisions, we feel a little safer. If we have some data, if we have some evidence, if we have some insight. And right now it's really hard to know what the heck is gonna happen to our nation. Let alone our planet. Amen. And so you're like, "Well, gosh, I just can't make a decision. I need to talk to the Lord. And if the Lord knows the future, and he knows what's coming and I don't. Maybe he will tell me what to do so that I could avert whatever crisis is coming, and pursue whatever opportunity is coming." So I wanna talk just a bit about how to know God's will. And let me say, this is the most important thing. The most important thing is not being successful. It's being in God's will. The most important thing is not getting your way. It's being in God's will. The most important thing is not being in control. It's being in God's will. And if you're in God's will you're in the place that God will bless and help you. And if you're not in God's will, even if it's not a bad place, he won't bless or help you because you're not being obedient. And so ultimately here's how you can know God's will, there's two ways, two categories that God speaks. What's called general revelation and special revelation. And I'll hit these categorically. General revelation, it's available to all people. So even non-Christians get this revelation, and it's how God reveals. That's what revelation is. It's how God communicates. And it's available to everyone, everywhere, all the time. And it tends to be far less specific. That's why it's general. The information is general, and it's generally available. And there are four categories. First is creation. When you look at the world, and the way that God made it. There are certain rhythms, and routines that we're just to abide by. These are called natural laws. It says this in Romans 1:19 through 20, what can be known about God is plain to them. Because he has shown it to them. He said, God has said some things through creation. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, and the things that have been made so that they're without excuse. So the first thing is you look at the world that God made, and it reflects something of the character of God. Just like a piece of art reflects something of the artist. As we look at the world, this is where we get doctors. We get science, we get, you know, the laws of nature and the laws of gravity. And sometimes it's like, you know what? I'm just gonna go to the doctor, and I'm gonna have him pull my blood work. I got a decision to make about, you know, how my life is going to go. I'm gonna go to my doctor. You know what they're gonna do? They're gonna take my temperature. They're gonna pull my blood work. They're gonna put me on a scale. The scale never lies, but is always disappointing. We'll deal with reality now. I can't see the scale. So the doctor will tell me what the number is, you know. And what you're dealing with there is creation. You're saying God made the world, and he organized it. And we can learn things from the world that God made, including the body that God made. And that helps us to make a decision. If you go to your doctor, and they're like, "You need to change your diet." Guess what you need to do? Change your diet. It's not always hyper spiritual sometimes it's very practical. In addition to creation, and this is where you'd get an architect. This is where you would get an engineer. This is where you would get a scientist, or you would get a medical doctor. You would get somebody who's a professional dealing with creation to give you some more information to help you make a decision. Sorry, I'm losing my voice. But I did this some years ago. I wasn't healthy. I weighed a lot more, and I'm not little. Like I'd never been accused of being skinny or quiet. You know, I obviously never been accused of those things. But

I weighed a lot more, and I just wasn't healthy. I wasn't sleeping well. I didn't feel good. I had sinus infections. I just was constantly not well. And I went to a doctor, and what he said was you gotta change your whole life. You need to eat different food. I was firmly committed my first 20 years to what I call the eto diet. I'd eat anything that ended in eto. Cheetos, Fritos, Doritos, taquitos. I'm full eto diet, and eto means obese. And so that's the pattern I was going for. And I wasn't hydrated enough. And I was drinking too much caffeine, and I go to a doctor. And I've got some decisions to make about my life, and my health. And what he said was you need to just deal with reality. The way your body was made by God. You're not caring for it. That's why you're sick, and you're hurting yourself. Sometimes as well, God speaks through our conscience. And so creation is an external witness. Conscience is an internal witness. Romans 2:14 and 15, Gentiles talking about non-Christians who do not have the law. Meaning they don't have the Bible. By nature do what the law requires. They show that the work of the laws are done on their hearts, and their conscious bearing witness. Even if you don't know the Lord, you know that certain things are right and wrong, right? How many of you, if a man is hitting a child, we all know that's wrong. Why do we all know that's wrong? Because it's wrong. Because God made us with a conscience. There are certain things that we just know are wrong, and God works through our conscience. Now, if you're a Christian, in addition to your conscience, you've got the holy spirit. And oftentimes the holy spirit will work through what you might know as your gut. Your gut is like, "I don't know. I don't feel right about that. I got check on my spirit. That doesn't seem right." Or you know what? I'm good with that. I think that's a good idea. And sometimes God speaks through our conscience, and you don't have a reason, but you have a conviction. And that conviction is from God. And for some of you, it'll be certain things that you have a conviction about. Some of you have a conviction of, I don't drink any alcohol. That's your conviction. That's a good decision. If you've had a problem with it, then you shouldn't touch it. That's fine. Others of you you'll have certain convictions about how you educate your kids, or where you live or what kind of church you go to or how you do life, or how much debt you go into or how you handle your business. Internal convictions. Your conscience is given to you as a gift from God. Your conscience won't get you into heaven. It'll keep you from a little bit of hell. How many of you, you knew something was... You're like, "I don't feel right about it." And you did it. And you're like, "Oh, it was not a good idea." And let me say this, if you're married, guess who also has a conscience, your wife. So you gotta work on decisions together. I always say I have have a very deep conscience, and it lives in my wife Grace. That's where my conscience tends to live. So all the dumb ideas I've made, I just made 'em without checking with Grace. And she's a very intuitive, sensing, feeler type of decision maker. I'm more like a logical linear. Give me the facts. Let me make a decision. She's she's like, "Let me pray. Let me fast. Let me see how I feel." I was like, "I feel hairy. What does that say about the decision? I don't know how to process that." And so we're better making the decisions together. And sometimes when you're married, and you've gotta come to a decision. You bring different strengths in the decision making. Don't let those be points of conflict. Let those be points of strength. Don't say, "Well, I did all the research before we moved to Arizona." Give you an example. I did all the research. I looked at the housing market. I looked at population migration. I looked at growth. I looked at education for the kids and school and school choice and you know, religious freedom and airport and drive time to the mountains. I did all. I did a great job, and I presented it to Grace.

And she's like, "It doesn't matter." I was like, "Why?" She's like, "I haven't prayed about it." I was like, "Oh, yeah, we should." And so I said, "But I already did all the research." 'Cause I'm dealing in creation. The world of all the facts, right? She's dealing in conscience, all of the feelings. I have all the facts, at least I think I do. And she needs to feel, she needs time in her conscience. And here's what I told her. I said, "Honey, the first plan I gave her was we're going to California. We're moving to California." She's like, "Did the Lord say?" I was like, "I don't know. I just ran the numbers, and there's a building available. And I've got a huge opportunity. Massive, massive, massive opportunity. I think it'd be awesome." My wife said, she said, "I'm not moving to California." I was like, "Well, then I guess I'm not either." I said, "Well, honey, why do you wanna move to California?" And I gave her the sales pitch. This was years ago by the way. Today you couldn't put together a case for California today, okay? If so you're in a miracle territory now. You're like, "This is a good plan." It's not a good plan. It's a terrible plan. And so that's why nobody's driving to Cal. Like, if you wanna go to California right now, there's nobody on the road. All right, but if you're coming this way, it's gonna be in a log jam. And so I told my wife. I said, "Here's all. She's said, "Honey, I don't feel right about it. I just don't have a peace. My conscience, I just don't feel good about this." She's like, "Mark, I can't do that. I can't move to California. I can't move our family to California. I don't care what the opportunity is. I don't care what the numbers are. I don't care, you know, what the real estate offer is. I don't care." She's like, "I just don't feel right about it." And I was thinking to myself, "Okay, but what's your reason? You single guys, a little secret. Your girl doesn't always have a reason. She has an opinion, but she may not have a reason. And my wife is like, "I'm not okay." Now here's what I do know with my wife. She loves the Lord. She walks to the Lord, and she's intuitive. And I was like, "Okay, I'll submit to that." So then I did my case and I presented it to her on Arizona. Okay, let's go to Arizona. She's like, "I need to check my conscience. I gotta see how I feel about this." Okay, so we moved to Arizona. True, false Arizona was a better plan? Oh, can you imagine me in California? Terrible plan every day would be a zombie apocalypse. Okay, so in addition to conscience, God also speaks sometimes through what the Bible calls providence. And providence is actually a theological word. It means that God is sovereign, and God is good. And sometimes God orchestrates events in life to reveal something to you, or to bring you into an opportunity or season. So there's an occasion in Ruth chapter 2. So Ruth, her husband dies. She and her mother-in-law move to the nation of Israel. They're widows. They're broke. They're poor. I mean, it's a tragic story. And it says she just so happened to appear in the field of a man named Boaz. And in the Hebrew rather it's literally, and it just so happened. What a quinky dink! Guess what? She ended up in front of a guy named Boaz, and it's Hebrew humor. And it is no, that was God's providence. They could have ended up anywhere in the nation of Israel. She ends up in front of the one guy who's godly, integrous, hardworking, generous, loves the Lord, protects and defends women, and ends up becoming her husband. And they give birth to a child that leads to Jesus Christ. That's a really good day for a homeless girl. She happened to bump into the right guy. Sometimes things in life, God works providentially. That's how he speaks to you. Okay, when I was in a high school. I took a Bible as lit class at a public high school. Some of you are like, "Well, what did you learn?" About the Bible in public school. Nothing. But I took the Bible as lit class, 'cause it was an easy grade. And the girl sat in front of me, and there was this cute blonde girl. That I just thought that was adorable, but I'd never met her. And the girl

who sits in front of me, I start talking to her. And she's like, "Yeah, my best friend is Grace." I was like, "Oh." Now I didn't know the Lord. But I knew that this was from the Lord. And so they grew up across the street from one another. They had known one another from childhood. I was like, "Oh you're Grace's friend, lifelong friend. The cute blonde girl. Who's about to be single." That was my prophecy. But I was like, "I would love to meet her." She's like, "Oh, I'd love to introduce you." So Grace and I will be faithfully married 30 years this August. And it started with a girl who grew up across the street from her sitting in the desk in front of me. That was God's providence. How many view things in your life? You're like, "God just did that. God put that together. God figured that out," right? I mean we, one time bought a house. I was at a park. There was literally a street in a neighborhood that Grace wanted to live in, and we were praying. And I kid you not, I was at the park. I can remember I was at the park or Grace at the park. Their kids were playing on the swings, and talking to this other family. And they're like, "Oh yeah, we got a house we're putting on the market." Really? Where is it? It was exactly where we wanted to buy the house. We bought the house before it went to market. Under value because we bumped into the couple at the park that had the house for sale on the street we wanted to buy on. There are certain things in life. They're not accidents. They're providence. There are certain things in life you're like, "God seems to be putting this one together." That's how God speaks through providence. And then also wise counsel. And wise counsel I'll give you scripture proverb 24:6, by wise guidance or wise counsel you can wage war. In an abundance of counselors, there is victory. Wise counsel is where you seek out people that have wisdom that you need. And there's something that I call the mentor myth. The mentor myth is I just need to find the guy who will mentor me. The truth is there's no one guy who can tell you everything you need to know. In baseball, there's a bullpen. In a bullpen, there's a rightie. There's a leftie. There's a guy who throws 100 miles an hour. There's a guy who's a knuckle baller. There's a guy who's good for seven innings. There's a guy who's good for, you know, one inning. Everybody's a specialist. And you call in from the bullpen, whatever the guy is that best meets the need of the moment. If all you have is one mentor, they can't fulfill all of those roles. One guy's good with money. He's really good with money. Another guy, great marriage. Another guy, great kids. Another guy, world class grandpa. Another guy, he gets real estate. He knows how to get you a loan, and gets you started on your real estate portfolio. Another guy, medical doctor, health, nutrition, exercise, diet, wellness. Gosh that guy's got it nailed down. Another guy, Bible guy. He's a nerd. All his friends are dead, and he reads their books. He's that guy. Okay, and the issue is, well, who do you call? Well, the issue is, well, what do you need to learn? But wise counsel it's figuring out who's in your bullpen. So I actually use this language. There's certain men in my life, I'll tell him this story. and I'll ask him, "Will you be in my bullpen?" They'll say, "What does that mean?" It means I don't need to meet with you every Tuesday for coffee. I'm not gonna do that. You're busy. But if I need something, can I have your cell number, and call or text you? And if I need something, can I ask you and will you help me? Will you be available? So I've got a bullpen of these guys. They're older mentors, and their wise counsel. What happens if you don't have wise counsel? You just ask whoever's in front of you. How many of you, you've gotten counsel, but not wise counsel? Or how many of you you've... You're like, "Hey, I'm struggling with this. Can I talk?" And as soon as you're talking, you're like, "I just invited them in. Oh, what have I done?" I really don't want them in my business. Or sometimes we just default to family. Is

that always wise counsel? No. You're like, "Hey, you know our sex life isn't that great. And you know, I've been watching soul to soul, and I got a few ideas and my wife won't try anything." And your mother-in-law's like, "I don't think I want to speak into this," right" So you know, so there are certain things that you want a little privacy. Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Amen. Okay, says the one guy who's got a traumatized mother-in-law, okay? So here's what's so great. Guess what? This room is filled with wise counsel, and sometimes to have wise counsel doesn't mean you got it right? It means you got it wrong, but you learn from it, right? So the guy's like I was married. My marriage fell apart. Ah, here's all the mistakes I made, lessons I learned. Tell the guy who's engaged. You just showed him where all the landmines are that he could drive over. You had a business. Like I had a business, and I didn't set it up right. And my business partner gutted me, and I lost everything. And now I've had to rebuild Oh, you're starting a company. Let me talk to you about how to set this thing up, okay? You and I are here. And one of the primary reasons is to find wise counsel. But let me say this as a man, whose responsibility is this? This is yours. And sometimes passive guys will call me like, "I need a mentor." You're a man. Go find one. Yeah, go find dinner, and a wife and a mentor and a Bible and a belt while you're at it. Like all of those things will be super helpful for you, but that's your responsibility. You're not little boys. And we're not here to babysit you. You're grown men. We're here so that you can meet each other. And I would encourage you young guys be looking for guys who have wise counsel. What do you do for a job? What's your background? What's your experience? What do you know? What do you do? And don't just gravitate toward the guys who got it all right. Find the guys that also got it wrong the first time. But they're getting it right now. 'Cause sometimes those guys have got the best insights, and that's the benefit of a group like this. There are guys in the room they're getting married for the first time. Find the guys who have a good marriage. And I mean, one of our mentee came up to me recently. He's been married I think 63 years. He was right a side of the stage a few weeks ago. He came up to me with wise counsel. I don't even know if he knew it. He said, "You're gonna be married 30 years this year." I said, "Yeah." He said, "The next 30 years of the good ones." He's like the first 30 years are good. He said the next 30 years, they're awesome. I was like, "I'm so glad to hear that," right? 'Cause I've never been 60 years into a marriage, but you're there telling me that I got a lot to look forward to. Thank you. Okay, that's wise counsel Unwise counsel. It's gonna be terrible. So if you're a single guy, find a married guy. If you're a married guy, find a good dad. If you're a dad, find a good grandpa. If you're running a company, find a guy with a bigger company. If you're running the ministry, find a guy with a bigger ministry. If you know a little bit of the Bible, find a guy who knows a lot more about the Bible, right? If your health isn't good. Find a guy who looks like he's got a gym membership, and you can tell these guys. They have no necks. They're easy to spot, right? And if you're a guy trying to figure out, how do I get into this real estate market? Find the guy who's the realtor. Find the guy who is the mortgage broker in the room, and they're all here. And just ask, "Okay, how do I do this? What are my options?" Those are four ways that God speaks, and helps us make decisions through general revelation. Creation, conscience, providence, and wise counsel. Special revelation are four categories that

are available in addition. So non-Christians have the first four categories. Christians have an additional four categories. So we're doubly blessed with how God reveals, and speaks to us to help us make decisions. Number one, obviously it's scripture. All scripture is God breathed and profitable we read. And so at the end of the day, if you wanna make good decisions, you need to be where you gotta be a Bible guy. If you don't have a Bible, we'll give you one of these. A big ESV leather bound study Bible. We chopped down trees. A cow gave its life. I mean, there's been a lot done here for you. We love you that much. I don't know what these are? 100 bucks. We'll just give you one. If you'll read it. Okay, if you don't have a good Bible. Let us give you a great study Bible. My whole life changed. I was 17 years of age. That girl Grace bought me my first really nice Bible with my name on it. And in college I opened it, and I started reading it. And God's word changed my life. And I love the Bible. I'm Bible guy. Totally. And so some people are like, "Well, how do you discipline yourself to read the Bible?" I don't know. I just like it. Like I've never had to discipline myself to eat ice cream. There's never been a day where I was like, "Remind yourself to eat ice cream." Like, "I'm always up for that," you know? So I actually really like the Bible, and here's what I like about it. I find that God teaches me all the time, and he reveals stuff and he helps me. I mean, when I first got married, I was in college. My pastor was like, "Hey, we're gonna do a class on how to date and get married." I was like, "Awesome." 'Cause I have no idea what I'm doing. God talks about this. I would love to know what he had to say. We go to get married. My pastor's like, "Come in for the pre-marital class." Great. Because I've never been married. I don't know what I'm doing. So, you know, you're married, and you're gonna tell me what God says about marriage. I'd love to know what God says about marriage. 'Cause I wanna do marriage the way God says so that God will bless it, and help us have a good marriage. When my kids came, I'm like, "Oh boy, I gotta find kids stuff in here. I gotta figure out what to do with these kids." And so God's word speaks to all of life principally, and some of it it speaks to very specifically. And oftentimes as you're struggling to figure out, "Okay, God, what do you want me to do? What's the decision? How should I process this?" You're in the Bible. The Bible is a living book. The Bible says that it is living and active, and it activates life in you. And you're like, "I know what to do. 'Cause I just heard from God through his word." And so the big idea is this, the more decisions you've gotta make, the more scriptures you need to study, 'cause you gotta hear from God. And so for us as Christians, the Bible is the a metaphorical Supreme Court of highest authority. There are lower lesser courts of revelation, and authority that God speaks through as we are studying. But everything is tested by the Bible. So if we think, "Okay, this is what I need to do. But it disagrees with the Bible." Then the answer is no, because this is the highest authority. But in addition, God does speak. And we see this in the life of Abraham, through supernatural revelation. We saw this week in Genesis 15, he had a vision. That's when you're awake. You're gonna see guys in Genesis that have a dream. That's when you're asleep. Sometimes there's a miracle. Sometimes an angel shows up. Sometimes God speaks to you audibly in a voice. Sometimes there are supernatural, incredible ways, special ways that God shows up, and says something. Now when you get these, the Bible says in 1st John don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits because in addition to God, there's demons and they are pretending to speak for God. They counterfeit and they lie. So just because you think you hear something or see something. You need to test it to make sure it's the real thing, and not a counterfeit. But we know and we believe that God still does this. I'll give

you an example. So I was 19 in college. Some of you know my story, I was 19 in college, and I went to my first men's retreat with my church, incredible church. I loved my first church. And my first pastor is a great guy, changed my life. And some of you are like, "I hate the church." I love the church. The church taught me everything I didn't know. And church changed my life. So I love church. So pastor's like, "All right, we're having a men's retreat. All the men need to go." I was like, "I'm a man. I'll go." So I went, and they said, "Hey, you all gotta go spend some time, you know, praying and listening to the Lord." Okay, so I'm brand new Christian. I don't know what that means. I'm like, "Okay." So I'm just going for a walk, and I'm just talking out loud to God. And he spoke to me audibly. He said, "Marry Grace, preach the Bible, train men, plant churches." He said four things. I didn't even know God could do that. I wasn't in like a charismatic Pentecostal woo praise flag. You know, I wasn't in that church. It was just a regular old, good Bible church. So I go to my pastor. I'm like, "I think God talked to me." I was like, "What'd he say?" I said, "Marry grace." I was like, "She's a cute pastor's daughter. I love her with all my heart." Preach the Bible, train men, and plant churches." He said that was from God. That was from God. God spoke to you. He's like, "You need to do that for the rest of your life." That was 22 years ago. Guess what? Or excuse me, 32 years ago. Public school not good at math. 32 years ago. Guess what? I'm still doing four things that God told me when I was 19-years-old. And I'm gonna keep doing those things unless he tells me something else. And some of you will be like, "How do you know it was God?" Well, first of all, he said to marry a girl. So that's an indicator that God spoke. He said to preach the Bible, and the not the Quran. He said to train men, you know? And again, very binary gender categories, and plant churches. And if he said plant strip clubs, and marry a dude and preach the Quran. Maybe then it wasn't the holy spirit. You know, maybe not. So just as an example, so God still sometimes speaks supernaturally. How many of you guys God's never really done this for you? Like I never gotten like a special one. How many of you guys are like, "It happens sometimes." Okay, and this is why we talk about it together. We say, "Oh, have you heard anything? Did God say anything? Did he show you anything?" And then number three, conversational listening prayer. Jesus says it this way in John 10:27, my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. Conversational listening prayer is this. Prayer is two things. It's talking to the Lord, and it's listening to the Lord. 'Cause that's a relationship. Okay, so you're like, "Okay, Lord. Here's what I'm thinking. Anything you want to tell me?" And Jesus says my sheep hear my voice. And so there's sometimes you're like, "Okay, that was from the Lord. That's what he said to me. That's what he said to me." So you need to know for me, like I spend one to two days a week per prayer hiking in the mountains. That's my Sabbath. I get in the Bronco. I go up to the mountains. I find a quiet spot remote, and I hike. And I pray. On the way in I talk to the Lord, and on the way out I listen to the Lord. That's me. My soul desperately needs that. And sometimes, you know, I feel like God gives me an impression, or he speaks to my soul. It's not usually audibly. Other times I just feel like it's a time for me to unburden, and talk with the Lord. But it's conversational and listening prayer. Yeah, and sometimes God gives me something very specific. And I'll just tell you guys this. I've like to have meetings in my life. So on Monday Grace and I have a sync meeting where we organize our schedules. Friday, we have date night. On Monday, most weeks I get lunch with my daughter. Tuesday, I get lunch with my other daughter. Wednesday, I get lunch with my son. Wednesday night, I get dinner and some coaching with my other son. And then our youngest son is at home,

and so I get time with him as well. And for me, I have a appointment every week with God. Just like I've set up meeting with every member of my family. I want to make sure I'm talking to everybody in my family. And I'm listening to everybody in my family so we can have a relationship. Same is true with God. 'Cause I'm not just the father of my children. I'm the son of my father. And I would be devastated as a dad if my kids are like dad, "I'm so busy. I don't have time to meet you. And I don't have time to talk to you. And dad there's nothing I wanna run by you. And I don't want your input on any of my decisions." As a dad, I would be devastated. You don't wanna see me. You don't want to talk to me. You don't want to hear from me. You're too busy to have me in your life. How many of you are like, "That's devastating?" And so for me it's like, "Okay, God, you're my father. I really wanna meet with my kids so I can talk to them, and listen to them. If you're my father, I desperately need to meet with you and hear from you. And since you're my father, I know you wanna meet with me, and hear from me. I know that I have a good dad. My father's a good father." So I have a meeting every week. I literally schedule it with the Lord. And it's usually like a four hour prayer hike up in the mountains. I turn my cell phone off, and I just prayer hike. And I listen and I talk to the Lord. Let me say your soul needs that. And as men, a lot of the time we think, "Well, I'm just too busy." And what I would say is, you know, Martin Luther, once at, he said, "To people who say I'm too busy to pray." He said, "You're too busy not to pray." If you're so busy that you don't have time to hear from God, then how do you even know what you're doing is the right thing. And are you doing things that God doesn't even want you to do. Until you meet with God, and figure out here's what he wants me to do. And how he wants me to do it. Why are you so busy? You gotta check with him first. 'Cause oftentimes what we do, we do things that he hasn't asked us to do, or we do them in ways that he's not told us to do them. And we exhaust ourselves. And then lastly, holy spirit conviction and leading. If you are a Christian, the holy spirit lives inside of you and he leads you and he guides you and he speaks to you. He reveals the word of God to you. He'll convict your conscience. The holy spirit will use all of these other modes of revelation to help you come to know God's will. But it says in Acts 15:28. It has seemed good to the holy spirit into us. And basically the church had a decision to make, and they're like, "Seemed good to us. We asked the holy spirit, and he said it was good with him." Okay, and what that is is that's the leading of the holy spirit. And so I'll give you an example. When we got to Arizona, and we had to figure out. Okay, where do we live? Where do the kids go to school? What do we do for a job? Do we plant a church? Where do we plant a church? We had a lot of questions. And how many of you know, if you get some of these wrong life gets really jammed up fast. Like we're living in a bad house, in the wrong neighborhood. Our kids are in a horrible school. And we started a ministry that failed, and we didn't... Oh, boy. I mean, we had a lot of decisions to make. So here's what we did as a family. We came together around the dinner table for family meetings. And I had a prayer book, and I would ask the kids, "Hey, what do we need to be praying about?" And they'd be like, "Pray I get a school. Pray I get a friend. Pray I get a baseball team. Pray I get this or that." It came to pray we can get a church building. Pray we can launch a church. You know, pray that I can find a spouse. Pray that I can... And all these things. So we'll just write 'em down. And then what we would do, we would pray together as a family. And then what we would do is we would write down those prayer requests, and what's really cool. We just kept seeing that God, the holy spirit led us. God led us into good decisions. God led us into good schools. God led us into a good

house. God led us into a good church. And the answer is, well, how did that all happen? Like we just asked the Lord, and the leading of the holy spirit led us. That's all I can say. So like when it came to the kids' school, we landed here and we got here in the middle of the summer. So most of the schools were already wait listed and full. And when we moved here we had kids in elementary, middle school, high school, and college. Like how do we get all... And we don't even know the... I mean, we don't know anybody here. We don't know anything. Like I don't know what school to get 'em in. All the good schools are wait listed, 'cause you guys know what the good schools are, and you took all the slots. So then us newbies were on the outside, and it's musical chairs. There's no chair for my kids. And so we start applying to schools and touring schools and we're stressed. And we're like, "Holy spirit, you gotta lead us. We don't know where to put the kids." And there was one school that was available, and we prayed about it. And grace said, "I just don't feel in my spirit. I have a pause." And I've learned that the holy spirit speaks to my wife. I was like, "Okay, honey, I'll honor that." And then we put the kids in different schools, and we would've been on totally different schedules, different parts of the valley, different days off, different holidays. We took the kids to the school. One of my sons wouldn't even get outta the car. He's freaking out. It's that kid. If you've ever looked at a kid, you're like, "That's a terrible kid. What's their dad like?" Well, he leads men's ministry. He teaches men how to be fathers. So that was my kid. He wouldn't even get outta the car. He had his legs spread. He put, you know how they have the little hook on top of the door to hold onto. He had his toe in there, like he is locked in fighting me. And I'm trying to drag my kid out of the car. He's like, "This is not my school." And I was like, "That's a word from the Lord." You know, I take that as a conviction of the holy spirit. So, and then something great happened. There was a great Christian school, and none of my kids could get in. But there was one grade that had so many kids that they opened up a new class. So then my kid got in that made us an active family. And then a few days before school, all of the slots for all of my kids open, and they all got to go to the same school. And it's been a great experience. It's been a great Christian school. But even that just like, "Man, I just moved my family here." And if my kids hate their school and don't have friends. They're gonna look back, and think that this was really a cruel decision that their dad made. And instead the holy spirit led us, and he led the decision partially through my wife and her saying, "That's not the school. I don't know why. I just have a conviction from the holy spirit," okay? And my kid saying, "That's not my school." And one kid declaring war. That is not my school. Okay, but the holy spirit led through the decision. And the point is this what can happen for us men when we've got a decision to make. We use one of these means by which God speaks, and it works. So then we try and make every decision the same way. And the truth is different decisions will require different means by which to hear from God, to arrive at as well. Again, back to the story of Abraham. Sometimes God speaks to him. Sometimes God speaks to him through providence. Like when he lets Lot choose the land, and Lot chooses the land close to Sodom. But that blesses him with a promise land. Sometimes God speaks to Abraham through a vision. He gets a vision. Sometimes he speaks to him through a dream. Sometimes he speaks to him through another person who brings wise counsel. As you look at the life of father Abraham, the days that he makes good decisions, he hears from the Lord. The days he makes bad decisions, he doesn't hear it from the Lord. He just makes his own decision. We love you. We're honored to have you. It's an honor to teach you. You matter. Your marriage matters.

Your children matter. Your business matters. Your ministry matters. Your legacy matters. And you have decisions to make. And I hope and pray that in this room you find some guys, who can be part of that wise counsel. Let me pray for you. Father, thanks for an opportunity to teach, and to share a little bit from the scriptures. And God, I pray for the men that God, as we make decisions, and some of us have got really big decisions to make right now. Some of us see big decisions coming in the future. Some of us have got decisions to make Lord that they seem little, but actually if we don't get it right, it could be a big problem. And God, I just thank you for all the creative ways that you speak and reveal and lead. And God thank you that you see the future, we don't. Thank you that we don't know the future, but we know the one who does. And God, I pray for my friends and my brothers. And I pray that God, you would lead them. That you would guide them. That in their various decision making seasons, that you would make it clear to them what your will is. So that they could walk in it confidently, and that they would be blessed, blessed, blessed in Jesus' good name. Amen.