

Saddleback Valley Community Church

Interview with Pastor Rick Warren and Pastor John Piper

SCRIPT

May 1, 2011

On May 1, respected author and speaker John Piper sat down with Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church. Piper quizzed Warren on the doctrine surrounding his book, "Purpose Driven Life." Piper presents Warren with direct and relevant questions about his influences, why he wrote the book, and how he defends the declarations he makes.

Watch as Piper and Pastor Rick discuss topics such as the glory of God, whether negative life circumstances are caused by God, and more. This informative and inspiring interview gives deeper insight in to the author and pastor.

TRANSCRIPT: Interview with Pastor Rick Warren and Pastor John Piper

[PIPER]: My name's John Piper and I'm here with Rick Warren in the studios at Saddleback Church, here in Southern California. And this is a finishing of something we started last fall—

[WARREN]: That's exactly right.

[PIPER]: —when we didn't get to—

[WARREN]: It's a promise that we made.

[PIPER]: Yeah, and thanks for fulfilling the promise.

[WARREN]: Amen. Sure.

[PIPER]: It's a really great honor to do this here. And so, let me set it up because I've got a way I want to do this and—

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: —you don't even know yet how we're doing it, but you've agreed to do it. I want to focus, Rick, on doctrine.

[WARREN]: Fine.

[PIPER]: I want to focus on *The Purpose Driven Life*.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: Everything I have to ask comes—all these pages here are—from *The Purpose Driven Life*. I read it with a fine-tooth comb.

[WARREN]: All right.

[PIPER]: And I don't know how often you are seriously *and* appreciatively interviewed concerning doctrine.

[WARREN]: Not very often.

[PIPER]: Because you are known for a lot of other things. And so what I want to do to set it up is to say that I value the other things that you're committed to besides biblical doctrine and it's for the sake of those things that I care about foundations.

[WARREN]: Well, and I get interviewed on that stuff all the time.

[PIPER]: Yeah. And so you've said things like—not right wing, not left wing, the whole bird.

[WARREN]: Yeah, right.

[PIPER]: I like knocking down stereotypes of evangelicals on social issues. And it seems to me that if I care and you care that what you are standing for at that level is there with a Christ—exalting core in a hundred years, the foundations better be good. That’s what we’re going to talk about. We’re going to talk about foundations.

[WARREN]: Good.

[PIPER]: So . . . But let me mention *The PEACE Plan*; Pursuing reconciliation, Equipping servant leaders, Assisting the poor, Caring for the sick, Educating the next generation. Now what I want to say is, who could not love those five commitments? And therefore, doctrine, in my mind, is not a distraction from or in competition with those kinds of commitments—

[WARREN]: It’s foundation.

[PIPER]: —but foundations.

[WARREN]: Actually, it’s the driver.

[PIPER]: Yes. And *The Purpose Driven Life* . . . Here is one more agenda that I have besides strengthening foundations or making them explicit.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: I read *The Purpose Driven Life* very carefully. This is 20 pages of notes.

[WARREN]: Wow.

[PIPER]: And I have read critiques of it. And one of my agendas is to do an *appreciative critique*. And it will, I think, feel to you—

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: I hope it does—mainly appreciative. Because frankly, I’m appalled at the kinds of slanders that have been brought against this book by people whose methods of critique, if they were consistently applied to the Bible, would undo it as the Word of God. I really—I’m one of these reformed types and my type tends to get on your case pretty often. And when I read the book, I thought, “What’s the issue here?” So I want to get you—I want to just get you talking—

[WARREN]: Good.

[PIPER]: —about things that are there—

[WARREN]: Good.

[PIPER]: —that are, I think, *really* significant.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: So I'm going to do a bunch of quoting from the book—

[WARREN]: That's fine.

[PIPER]: —and then I'm going to pitch you the ball and let you talk a little more about it. So let's start where the book starts and where I love to start, namely, the glory of God.

[WARREN]: The glory of God, that's exactly right.

[PIPER]: Page 17, "It's not about you. If you want to know why you were placed on the planet, you must begin with God."

Page 53, "The ultimate goal of the universe is to show the glory of God."

Page 53, later on, "What is the glory of God? It is who God is. It is the essence of his nature, the weight of his importance, the radiance of his splendor, the demonstration of his power, the atmosphere of his presence."

Page 54, "We are commanded to recognize his glory, honor his glory, declare his glory, praise his glory, reflect his glory, and live for his glory."

Page 268, "Our goal is to make God look good in the universe."

Page 101, "Heartless praise is not praise at all. It is worthless, an insult to God."

So there is a sampling that makes my spine tingle with gladness, okay. Now here are a few questions.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: Where did this focus come from or, any special influences or, since we talked about this two years ago at [Ralph Winter](#)'s funeral, any influence from [Jonathan Edwards](#)? Just, however—the roots of it all.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: But don't talk too long because I've got 20 pages.

[WARREN]: Sure. Okay. Fine.

Well, definitely [Jonathan] Edwards is an influence. Edwards is, without a doubt, the most brilliant mind America ever produced. I'm not talking about theologian. I'm talking about mind and everybody. I put him above Einstein and everybody else.

I think you have talked, you know, it is passionate, enlightened intellect. And he used his mind—I have read through the complete sets of Jonathan Edwards which is about, I don't know, 22 volumes and they're about 800 pages each. He clearly was an influence on me.

But I think actually out of my Baptist background is—I have read—you know, my father was a Baptist pastor, my grandfather. My great grandfather, I think I've told you before, was led to Christ by [Charles Spurgeon](#) and sent to America as a church planter. And so I still have books from four generations.

I actually preached on this this morning about the multi-generational blessing of having grandfathers and great-grandfathers pray for you before you are even born. And I know I'm floating on the benefit of other people. I do not deserve the blessing I've got. And I was talking today about starting that legacy, maybe your parents weren't Christians, and moving into that.

But it's very clear that the heavens declare the glory of God. We learn a lot about the glory of God without even scriptures. I mean, we know God is organized. We know God likes variety. We know God is powerful, and all these things, so the heavens declare the glory of God.

But I will tell you this, I know I've taken some shots from [John MacArthur](#) on this, but I will tell you that his book many years ago when I was a teenager, he talked about—he's got a chapter in one of his books on the seventeen ways we bring glory to God. I've never forgotten that. In fact, I've preached that message in which he talks about this brings glory to God, even your sanctification and all of those ways—bearing much fruit, we glory to God. And I taught that myself for many years.

When I was in high school, I wrote a message. It was a two-hour message and I taught it all over California on what it means to bring glory to God. So it's been in my heart, really from teenager years.

[PIPER]: One of the connotations of kavod, the Hebrew [word for] glory is weight.

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: David Wells laments—

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: —that the reality of God lies lightly on the American church.

Now I'd like to know if you agree with that, how do you avoid fostering an atmosphere of trifling, or flippancy, or breezy superficiality when it comes to the weight of God or the weight of the glory of God?

[WARREN]: Well, in the first place, I think it goes back to, my hermeneutic [a method or principle of interpretation] is when I see verses in scripture that tend to—are apparent contradictions, I don't believe they are contradictions. I believe them both. I believe them both. I believe, take up your cross, deny yourself and follow me. And I believe, come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. They are different sides of same thing.

And I believe that the weight of glory is a serious, you know, the—the what I call the “WOE,” “LO,” “GO” text of, you know, I saw the Lord seated on his throne and “WOE” is me for I’m a man of unclean lips. “LO,” an angel touched my nape. And then “GO,” the word of cleansing, the word of confession, cleansing, and commission. I believe that’s part of the glory of God.

I also believe what [Irenaeus](#) said, “The glory of God is the human being fully alive.” And so when I am playing with my grandchildren, that brings glory to God. So I don’t think that glory to God is simply serious. I do think that there is glory of God in laughter, I believe it all. And when I look at opposite passages, I believe them *both*.

[PIPER]: This is a very theocentric emphasis here as opposed to, say, Christocentric.

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: So my question is, would you—I ask this question because it was asked to me at the Gospel Coalition on a panel the other night. They said, “Has your God centered message become more or less Christocentric or Christ-oriented?”

And I told the story of how in the last ten years or so, I have felt impulses in me partly because of what I’ve seen in scripture as the cross being the center of everything and partly because of the Islamic influence in the world where God talk doesn’t cut it any more.

[WARREN]: Right, it doesn’t.

[PIPER]: Christ talk is crucial. So my question is, any—if you wrote it today, would it be the same—

[WARREN]: Oh, no.

[PIPER]: —or do you find—

[WARREN]: Absolutely not. In the first place, I never intended *The Purpose Driven Life* to be read by unbelievers. I was presuming that people already had a certain basis of scripture because I didn’t actually write it as a book. I wrote it as the workbook for our “40-Days of Purpose,” which is our annual spiritual-growth campaign, which is not an evangelistic campaign. It’s a spiritual growth emphasis that we’ve done every year for 30 years.

And so rather than writing the book and creating a campaign around it, I did it for the exact opposite. I was writing it for my people. It was only at the end that I thought an unbeliever may read this. I better throw something in here about salvation. And actually, if I had known how many unbelievers were going to read it, I would have explained salvation far much more in detail. Really, I admit, it was a cursory expression of it.

Now I believe, “In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” I believe that we are in Christ, we are hid with Christ in God and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit so, in essence, for Satan to get at me, he’s got to go through the Trinity.

So I, 100 percent, agree with you that we have to be even more Christocentric because of the influence of Islam today. You know, I frequently speak to Muslim groups. Now what do you expect a guy who's got the gift of evangelism? I spend most of my time speaking to people who totally disagree with me. I speak to gays. I speak to atheists. I speak to secularists. I speak to Muslims because I'm trying to build a bridge between my heart and theirs so Jesus can walk across and they'll come to know Christ.

I think Muslims in many ways are often like the “Corneliuses” of scripture who have a heart for God. They want to do the right thing, but a lot times—have you heard of Jesus? Have you heard of Jesus? And when people say, “Well, we worship the same God.” I say, “Well, hold on just a minute. My God looks like Jesus.”

[PIPER]: Yeah.

[WARREN]: Okay. So if your God doesn't look like Jesus, we don't worship the same God. Sorry.

[PIPER]: I'm going to come back to religions and the centrality of Jesus in a minute. But staying close to the glory of God, let me go to the next thing, I mean *sovereignty* of God.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: Amazing statements here. I love them. So let me celebrate for a moment while you talk.

Page 111, “God is all powerful. He is in control.”

Page 195, “Our hope is a certainty based on the truths that God is in complete control of our universe and that he loves us.”

Page 94, “God uses everything for good in our lives.”

Page 193, “God has a purpose behind every problem.”

Page 194, “Regardless of the cause, none of your problems could happen without God's permission. Everything that happens to a child of God, his Father filtered and he intends to use it for the good of—even—even when Satan and others mean it for bad because God is sovereignly in control. Accidents are just incidents in God's good plan for you.”

Page 273, “Your weaknesses are not an accident, but deliberately allowed”—a very interesting phrase, “*deliberately allowed*”—“them in your life for the purpose of demonstrating His power through you.”

Two more. 195, “There is a grand designer behind everything. God's plan for your life, all that happens to you including your mistakes, your sins, and your hurts.”

And 196, “This promise is only for God's children. It is not for everyone. All things work for bad for those living in opposition to God and insist on having their own way.”

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: So question—

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: How did you come to such a, I would call, high or strong view of God’s purposeful sovereignty?

[WARREN]: Well—

[PIPER]: Those statements would—a lot of people would gag on those statements.

[WARREN]: Well, yeah, they do. They do. From the very beginning, I started preaching when I was 16-years-old so I began studying scripture very seriously. I had done over 100 revivals in Baptist churches before I was 20.

So I’m studying the scripture as a kid and I’m noticing that Christians often want to excuse God from things God doesn’t need excusing from. When he says, “Am I not responsible for the blind? Am I not responsible?” God assumes much more responsibility. We’re afraid to give him that responsibility.

Now my personal view on this is that Romans 8:28 makes no sense without Romans 8:29. “For whom he did for know he predestined to become conformed to the image of his son, that we might become the first born among many brethren.”

To me, predestination—now I know some people are going to disagree with this—but is as much about sanctification as it is about salvation; that we are predestined to become conformed to the image of his son.

And what I found on this is that, how does God make us like his son? How does he make us like Jesus if that’s God’s number one purpose to make us like Christ? Well, it’s not like we’re walking down the street one day and, zap, we’re zapped and all of a sudden, I no longer worry anymore or I’m always patient with everybody. I’m always Christ like.

There is no pill. There is no conference. There is no book that can do that kind of sanctification. I have found both from scripture and from experience that God allows us in the exact opposite situation in order to teach us character.

Now what is Jesus Christ? Well, the fruit of the spirit is a good example. Jesus is total love, total joy, total peace, total patience, gentleness, goodness faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

How does God teach me love By putting me around unlovely people. How does God teach me joy, in the middle of grief, not happiness, which is based on happenings and happiness. How does God teach me peace? Not when I’m out fishing and everything’s going my way and I say, “It doesn’t get any better than this,” but in the middle of chaos. How does God teach me patience, by putting me in his waiting room and forcing me? So the exact opposite cause me—that those are part of the sovereignty of God too.

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[PIPER]: Right. And you've—in that narration, you used two different kind the verbs. You said “put me” and you've said “allowed me.” And you've got—I can't believe are accidental phrases.

[WARREN]: They're not.

[PIPER]: You took a long—

[WARREN]: They're deliberate.

[PIPER]: You took a long time to write this book. You said the phrase, “Your weaknesses are not an accident, but deliberately allowed.”

[WARREN]: Yes.

[PIPER]: Now here is my theological take—

[WARREN]: Yes, I believe that.

[PIPER]: —on that statement. You are not an open theist. You—

[WARREN]: Not at all. Obviously not.

[PIPER]: —think God knows the future. So he knows that something bad is coming.

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: He could keep you from it.

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: And so what you mean by “permit” is he doesn't keep you from it.

[WARREN]: Doesn't keep you from it.

[PIPER]: He let's you—

[WARREN]: But I would go even further than that. I'm going to say that God custom-designed my weaknesses.

Now I'm not saying he's custom—I'm not making God responsible for my sin. I do not believe God is responsible for my sin. Some people may, but I believe that my own weaknesses are Father filtered. And just as much as God touched Jacob's hip and he walked with a limp the rest of his life, that there—I have certain emotional weaknesses that are there to keep me dependent upon God. They are governors.

[PIPER]: Let's take sins because you said “There is a grand designer behind everything” —

[WARREN]: Yeah.

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[PIPER]: —“God’s plan for your life and all that happens to you including your mistakes, your sins.” Now—

[WARREN]: Yes.

[PIPER]: —sins are somehow folded into the plan?

[WARREN]: Of course, they are because He is sovereign. And the clearest way I can say it is when I’m teaching on abortion. And I will say it this way. There are accidental parents, but there are no accidental children. There are illegitimate parents, but there are no illegitimate children. *You may not* have planned your kid, but God did, okay. And I believe that with all of my heart.

[PIPER]: Even though it might have been fornication that brought the kid about?

[WARREN]: Read the genealogy of Jesus and you have to see how the four women in that genealogy, God used their sin for his glory.

[PIPER]: Right, so you meant it for evil, God meant it for good, could be written as a big banner over all the sins of our lives?

[WARREN]: Absolutely everything.

[PIPER]: So you might admit it’s sinful—

[WARREN]: Exactly.

[PIPER]: —but God is “IT,” God meant “IT.”

[WARREN]: Genesis 50:20 applies to every area of life.

[PIPER]: Yeah. How do you speak just into tragic situations? You come into a situation where everybody who’s read these things and takes them seriously knows what you believe. You are walking into—well, you did it yesterday. So maybe use yesterday for an example.

You walk into a heart attack, or a stillbirth, or something and speak. How does the sovereignty of God inform the way you talk?

[WARREN]: Well, before I get to the doctrinal part, I first start at the human part which is simply sympathy that I listen. My first word is not, “God can bring good out of this.” I’m going to get them there. There is no doubt about that’s where I’m going with it, but I don’t start with that. I first weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice, be sympathetic, show tenderness and brotherly kindness—all the scriptures that talked about sympathizing.

I love the verse in Job where it says, “A man deserves the devotion of his friends even when he forsakes the Almighty.”

Now what that verse means to me is, even when—if I were to say, “You know, right now, I don’t believe in God.” I still need John Piper to be my friend. And you say, “I can believe God for you right now. I’m going to hold you up while you are ranting and railing.” And God can handle my ranting and railing because he certainly handled David’s and Job’s and so many others.

So my first reaction in a pastoral care is not to explain. And again, I don’t think the primary purpose of the Bible is to explain suffering, I never have. Because the actual explanations are often inadequate. I think that the primary purpose of scripture is to say I’m all you need in this suffering and I need comfort. God does not owe me an explanation for what he does in my life.

And if I’m looking for that to feel better about my suffering, I’m not going to get it.

[PIPER]: But when you say that, I think what you mean is he doesn’t need to give you detailed explanation about why *this* suffering, at *this moment*, in *this time*—

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: —but you do have big explanations—

[WARREN]: Oh, of course I do.

[PIPER]: —the big one of why they’re—because you’ve just said he uses it for this, and this, and this.

[WARREN]: Well, I have two explanations. First, I have the explanation of sin. The fact that in the fall, literally *everything* is broken, okay. *Nothing* on this planet works. Every body is broken—none of our bodies work perfectly. Every relationship is broken. The weather is broken. I don’t have a problem with hurricanes. Nothing works on this planet.

This is not earth, this is heaven—this is not heaven, this is earth. And that’s why we are to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Why? Because God’s perfect will is done perfectly in heaven, okay. And so I am to pray that’s done here.

And so I have the explanation of sin. Everything’s broken, so I should not expect anything. No marriage is going to work. You put two sinners together, you are not going to have a perfect relationship. I have that. But I have—even greater than that, I have the greater glory of God, the history is his story. That he is in charge and, ultimately, he knows what he’s doing. I can get the miniature explanations in heaven.

[PIPER]: Yeah, okay. One more thing on the sovereignty of God because this phrase, “This promise is only for God’s children”—

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: —Romans 8:28. “It is not for everyone. All things work for bad for those who live in opposition.”

So I just jotted down here, what does that mean? What is the bad? And I assume you mean a person who just until the end of his days, he's resisting and he dies without Christ, without God.

[WARREN]: Well, the Bible makes real clear that if I am not receptive to the grace of God, I'm headed for wrath. But more than just hell and wrath—and obviously I do believe in hell. Jesus spoke more about hell than he did about heaven. I trust him as the authority, not you, me or anybody else. And if hell is not real then Jesus was a liar, okay. And God has a lot of explaining to do on his justice and things like that.

But more than that, go back on that question. Read it again to me.

[PIPER]: What does it mean that, “All things work for bad”?

[WARREN]: Well, they clearly aren't working for good because God owes me nothing. He doesn't have to work anything for good in my life. That's only for those who are called according to his purpose.

[PIPER]: So when *The Purpose Driven Life*, written originally for believers—

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: —is rooted profoundly in 8:28, 29—

[WARREN]: That's totally based on—that is the central text, really, of the whole book. Romans 8:28 and 29, “For those he foreknew, he predestined to become conformed to the image of his son.” It's about becoming like Christ.

[PIPER]: Why do you think—I mean, a book doesn't sell 40, 50, whatever million copies unless unbelievers are reading it.

[WARREN]: Yeah, they are.

[PIPER]: And are they stumbling over a sentence like, things are going to go bad for us if we don't get saved?

[WARREN]: Well, I think everybody does selective reading, okay. I think believers—everybody has a filter and that's why it's real easy for critics to see things from their perspective and then I'm going, well, I didn't mean that at all. And believers do the same—unbelievers.

[PIPER]: Here is a question that probably would trouble a lot of people about you.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: Trying to figure you out in public, Larry King and Steve Colbert or whatever his name is.

[WARREN]: Yes, Stephen Colbert, right.

[PIPER]: Colbert. Do you—do you hedge on the sovereignty of God when you are in that kind of setting?

[WARREN]: Well, I don't think so. I think if you go and look at those examples—Larry King has asked me very pointedly, for instance, about homosexuality two or three times and I make no bones about it. I said, no. There's a right and there's a wrong.

And I said, "Larry, let's don't even argue this from scripture." I said, "Take a human body, a male and a female. It's obvious certain parts are meant to go together and there is a purpose and a design for it and there is a result of that. I rest my case." So I'm not going—I don't have to defend God. You know, it's like Spurgeon said, with the scriptures.

Now what I would like to say, since you brought that up about my public appearances, everybody needs to understand there is one thing that motivates me, it is the global glory of God. I am first and foremost a missionary. I am an evangelist and I'm a missionary.

So for instance, when I have done political things, I couldn't care less about politics. I have *zero* interest in politics, *really*. And they don't allure me. I have no interest in them because if I believed that the law could change people's behavior, I'd become a politician, okay. But only Christ can change the heart.

So why do I accept Larry King and the inaugurations of the last two presidents, things like that? Because I am trying to—it was actually for international consumption, not national.

In the last eight years, I have had almost 15,000 of my members overseas in this PEACE Plan. And we were making a commitment to go to every nation, all 195 nations. So I had people in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, and many other places where they're not well accepted.

When I accepted the invitation to do the president's inauguration, who I clearly don't agree with, just like I would accept an invitation to Larry King or whatever, it's because I knew every—on that inauguration—every national leader, every king and prince around the world was watching that show, okay. And I thought if I have a team that's in a country and they get in trouble, they can hold up a picture, This is the president of the United States and this is my pastor. It may be able to get them out.

So it really had nothing to do with national consumption. My motivation is really all about mission.

[PIPER]: Let me shift gears, not entirely from sovereignty of God, but just to push it up a level and ask you a question about election.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: Would I be right—here is my question. Would I be right to infer from your Biblical commitments that you—that your view of God’s sovereignty that you embrace the doctrine of unconditional election?

[WARREN]: Yes, I do. Of course I do.

[PIPER]: In other words, God can, does choose who will be saved before the foundation of the world; would that be right?

[WARREN]: Yes. My qualifier on that is, I say if I find a verse that tends to say something else, “A whosoever will may come,” I believe them both. I don’t—my faith, my hermeneutics does not demand that I correlate every verse.

In other words, there are often verses that appear—I’m a John 3:16 Christian. “I believe God so loved the world,” I do believe that. And I believe that whosoever believes in him shall not perish. But I also believed, you know, predestined from the foundation of the earth. So to me, I don’t—I’m able to hold tensions in my mind rather than having to explain them and so I—to me, I don’t fit in a real good box in that I believe them *both*.

[PIPER]: Yeah. And you wouldn’t—when you say you don’t feel obliged to correlate them, let me restate that and see if you agree.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: You don’t think that they ever contradict each other?

[WARREN]: I do not. I think any apparent contradiction in scripture is my limited capacity. Me trying to understand God is like an ant trying to understand the Internet. I don’t have the brain capacity.

[PIPER]: It seems to me that in the Arminian-Calvinistic debates over the centuries, Calvinists have spoken like you just did and Arminians tend to feel like they need to negate unconditional election. Is that true? I mean, do you probably get that sense?

[WARREN]: That’s probably true. And I—instead of saying, “Can I see both and”

[PIPER]: Right.

[WARREN]: In other words, there is two kinds of thinking. There is conjunctive thinking and there is disjunctive thinking. Disjunctive thinking says it has to be either/or. Now clearly, there are some either/or’s on either I trust Christ or I don’t. I’m either pregnant or I’m not.

But a lot of thinking in scripture when it comes to theology is, in my opinion, conjunctive thinking. It’s both and.

[PIPER]: Right. And my experience—

[WARREN]: I believe that and I believe that.

[PIPER]: And we're wired—everyone's wired differently.

[WARREN]: Yeah, sure.

[PIPER]: When I see these two, I am pressed, if I can—and sometimes you can't—to push them down until the root merges.

[WARREN]: Until you get the root.

[PIPER]: Until the root merges. You say, the reason there is no—they look like—

[WARREN]: They look like opposites, right.

[PIPER]: —whosoever will may come is an absolute truth—

[WARREN]: Yes.

[PIPER]: —and chosen before the foundation of the world is the absolute truth and you just—some are driven—

[WARREN]: :—they'll get them down.

[PIPER]: I think theology is an effort—

[WARREN]: That's why we need guys like you.

[PIPER]: Here is an interesting thing, the importance of eternity in your book. A few quotes.

Page 9, this book, "The most important"—"Most important is to prepare you for eternity."

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: Verse 34, "You weren't put on earth to be remembered, you were put here to prepare for eternity."

Verse—page—verse—I feel like this is not the Bible.

[WARREN]: Yeah, right. Right.

[PIPER]: Page 38, "To make the most of your life, you must keep the vision of eternity continually in your mind and the value of it in your heart."

Page 283, two more, "Telling others how they can have eternal life is the greatest thing you can do for them."

And one more, 295, "The eternal salvation of a single soul is more important than anything else you will ever achieve in life."

So before—and don't just focus on eternal salvation. It seems to me that you are saying for life to make sense, for life to be lived to its fullest, you need to keep eternity in view. Most Americans don't agree with that at all.

Now how do you—first of all, how does that work for you? And then to say to the world, you want the fullest life, keep eternity in view. Why?

[WARREN]: Well, I actually preached on that this morning where I was talking about, the number one problem in our society today is short-term thinking. The only thing that matters is here and the only thing that matters is now and America's inability to delay gratification because we do not have eternity thinking.

To me, thinking with the mind of Christ means to be thinking in light of eternity which is what Colossians is all about, okay, and that our lives are hid with Christ and in God and that eternity—we're going to spend far more time on the other side of death than this side.

We get 80 years maybe—at the most 100. Trillions of years in eternity. This life is preparation for the next. This is the warm-up act. This is the dress rehearsal. This is the get ready. This is the first lap around the track before the real race begins because it is in eternity.

Now the question people ask is, "Well, if we're going to go spend eternity, why do we do this little time here on earth first? Why didn't God just create us and take us directly to heaven?"

Well, the first place, he wanted us to choose to love him. I believe that, love is a choice. I believe that we *love*—that if I'm forced to love you then I don't know that I've really loved you. But what I'm saying is that God wants us to practice on earth what we're going to do forever in eternity.

And what we're going to do in eternity is four things. The Bible's real clear about this. First, we're going to worship in eternity. We're going to worship in eternity. So what does God want me to do while we're here on earth? Practice, practice worshipping so when I get there.

Second, we're going to fellowship in eternity. We know that because that's all that's going to be there is believers. What does God want us to do here? Practice learning how to love, learning how to fellowship here.

Third thing, we're going to serve in eternity. We're not going to sit around on clouds. You know, this whole idea of, you know, heaven is wear a white robe with angels and play a harp. To me that would be hell. I can't think of anything more boring. You know, a multicolored God who created this world is not going to put us in a white heaven, I guarantee you. But we're going to serve him in heaven, okay. So what does God want us to do? Practice, okay.

And we are actually going—I believe we’re going to grow in heaven. I believe we’re going to keep growing. The Bible says one day we shall see him as he is. We shall become like him. That’s going to be obviously becoming not gods, obviously. I don’t believe that. That’s the oldest lie in the scripture, but becoming godly, okay, becoming like him.

Actually, what we can’t do in heaven is sin and witness. And obviously God didn’t leave us here to sin. So I’ve often said, “Why does God leave us here on earth once we accept Christ?” Once we’re in the family, why didn’t he just kill us? I mean, why leave us here? Well, because he’s working on our character through these trials and these tribulations. We’re learning to practice what we’re going to do in heaven.

So really, the kingdom mindset is actually the eternity mindset. And it’s not just about eternal life. Eternal life is getting ready for that.

[PIPER]: How do you conceive of eternity? Here’s the specific question, heaven is usually used as the word where we’re going and where we will be. What’s your understanding of the new heavens, the new earth? Where do we wind up after the resurrection?

[WARREN]: You know, I—that’s a good question. I do know I’m going to heaven. I have no idea about that. I have read all of the scriptures and the passages that define paradise and, you know, pars and things like that. To me what matters is I’m going to be with Jesus and I’m going to be in his presence. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. At that point, you know, those on earth, some to judgment, some to salvation. In other words, what I’m saying is that I think some people want—I think one day Madonna is going to say Jesus is Lord. One day Muhammad is going to say Jesus is Lord. Hitler will say Jesus is Lord, but to me, heaven is a real place. I don’t believe it’s state of being. I believe it is a real place and I believe it is a place where we’re going to do these things.

There is going to be reuniting. There are certainly going to be rewards. The Bible makes that really clear that there are rewards in heaven. I believe there is reassignment, reassignment. In other words, “Faithful in little things, I will trust you in much. And if you have not been faithful with that which is not his own, who will give you your own? And if you’ve been unfaithful with unrighteous mammon, who is going to trust you with the true riches of heaven?”

[PIPER]: So are you saying that you kind of leave open whether we wind up on the new earth?

[WARREN]: I do. I do. I honestly haven’t studied it. I have not studied it as deeply as I should because, you know, it’s trite to say that—you know, like on the second coming, I’m not on the time and place. I’m on the welcome committee. And really, I need to explain this to people who will watch this because I’ve taken some hits for—some of the things I’ve said seem to devalue prophesy, okay, and I’ve taken a lot of criticism on that.

And I make my statements on the basis of two statements of Jesus. First, Jesus says in Matthew 25, “No man knows the day nor the hour, neither the angels *nor the Son*, but only the Father which is in heaven.”

Jesus didn't know when he was coming back. I'm crazy for me to try to think—Jesus himself in that scripture—only “the Father which is in heaven.”

[PIPER]: So you don't think that, say, The PEACE Plan or the labors to make life better here is going to be a continuity of improvement that goes into a kingdom?

[WARREN]: Oh, I'm definitely not post-Millennial, no. And I do not believe in bringing in the kingdom by human means in no sense of the matter.

Now I do believe that the kingdom of God is present wherever Jesus is king. That's my definition of the kingdom of God. If Jesus is king in heaven then the kingdom of God is in heaven. If Jesus is king on a reign on earth then the kingdom of heaven is on earth. If Jesus is king in my heart then the kingdom of God is in me. It's wherever Jesus is king.

So I don't kid myself. Jesus said, “The poor you'll have with you always.” So our efforts to help the poor does not mean we're going to eradicate poverty.

[PIPER]: So the way you create an attractive heaven or future or eternity is by calling heaven a place because we're going to have new bodies.

[WARREN]: Absolutely, resurrected bodies.

[PIPER]: Resurrected bodies. Jesus ate fish after he resurrected.

[WARREN]: And walked through walls.

[PIPER]: So you're just—you're taking it at least that far, we're going to have resurrected bodies. Lion will lie down with the lamb means?

[WARREN]: Well, lion will lay down with the lamb. I don't have a problem with that.

[PIPER]: In heaven?

[WARREN]: Yes.

[PIPER]: They go to heaven? Do animals go to heaven?

[WARREN]: You know, I assume. I don't know. That's one of those questions I'm asked more often than anything else, “Will my dog will go to heaven?” And I say, “Well, the lion will lay down with the lamb.”

[PIPER]: Somewhere.

[WARREN]: Somewhere. It could be here on earth.

[PIPER]: Let's go to the Gospel. This is the sinner. And even though you said that you didn't write the book primarily for unbelievers and you would write it differently if you knew so many millions would read it, never the less, I want to argue that the Gospel is here and I want to read it and then we'll talk a little bit about the nature of the Gospel.

Page 55, in order to have a Gospel, we have to have some bad news to be saved from.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: “All sin at root is failing to give God glory.”

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: “It is loving anything else more than God.” I’m loving this.

[WARREN]: Idolatry.

[PIPER]: “Refusing to bring glory to God is prideful rebellion and it is the sin that caused Satan’s fall and ours too.”

Now what’s the good news over against that dreadful, sinful condition that we all bring?

Page 295, “What is the good news? The good news shows how God makes people right with himself. That it begins and ends with faith, for God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself no longer counting people’s sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. The good news is that when we trust Christ—when we trust God’s grace to save us through what Jesus did”—

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: “Our sins are forgiven, we get a purpose for living and we are promised a future in heaven.” When Jesus stretched his arms out wide on the cross, he was saying, “I love you this much.”

Page 112, “If God never did anything else for you, he would still deserve your continual praise for the rest of your life because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. God’s son died for you. This is the greatest reason for worship.”

Or page 58, “All you need to do is receive and believe. The Bible promises to all who received him, to those who believed in his name,” John 1:12, “he gave the right to become the children of God. Believe God has chosen you to have a relationship with Jesus who died on the cross for you. Receive Jesus into your life as your Lord and savior. Friendship with God is possible only because the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus.”

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: One more.

“The only thing that will matter at the judgment is did you accept what Jesus did for you and did you learn to love and trust him. The dearest thing to the heart of God is the death of the son of God.”

TRANSCRIPT: Interview with Pastor Rick Warren and Pastor John Piper

So now here I am, I'm rejoicing and exalting in the orientation of the Gospel on the cross on the death of Jesus. You say, "What Jesus did for you."

Now I assume that when you say you would do something more, what—here's the more I'd like to hear a little more about is, you don't describe actually what happened when he died.

[WARREN]: I don't. I don't.

[PIPER]: And so talk just a—

[WARREN]: I didn't explain justification. I didn't explain him who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God, that is salvation. I certainly believe in the imputed righteousness of God. Not imparted, but imputed, no doubt about it. That's—

[PIPER]: Let me just jump in right there because what one of my later pages was, do you think it matters significantly to make that—Roman Catholics would tend to say that justification is the impartation of—

[WARREN]: Right, I know.

[PIPER]: —of righteousness and Protestants have historically said it's the imputation of alien righteousness and you've just said that matters?

[WARREN]: Oh, absolutely it matters. It's absolutely significant to the matters.

What I would do differently was the prayer that I wrote in this thing, because I have taken shots where I said, now—because I felt like I explained the cross. I even do a chapter on Jesus suffering in there. But when I come down, I said, "Believe and receive." And I say pray this prayer, "Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you."

Now the basis of that prayer is simply John 1:12. "To them, you know, he gave the right to become the children of God to those who believe in his name, who receive him."

And people have attacked me saying, "Wait a minute, there is no word"—the word *repentance*, "is not in that prayer." Do I believe in repentance? Of course I believe in repentance. Repentance is the basic message of the New Testament. Metanoia is the message of every one of the apostles. And I could take you from Matthew to Revelation and show you how every single man preached repentance.

[PIPER]: I'm going to help you here because I don't—I was reading it with that criticism in mind. So let me read a couple of things and then you pick up—

[WARREN]: Sure, sure.

[PIPER]: I want to read repentance there, even though you might say you'd say more, but—

[WARREN]: Right. It's not prayer. That's what they're looking for.

[PIPER]: Okay. At any rate, here is the way you say—you've defined repentance, To be like Christ you must develop the mind of Christ. The New Testament calls the mental shift repentance which in Greek literally means to change your mind, to repent whenever you change the way you think by adopting how God thinks about yourself, about sin, about God, about other people, life, your future, everything else, you take on a Christ outlook."

Or one more, "Offering yourself to God is what worship is all about. This act of personal surrender is called many things, consecration, making Jesus your Lord, taking up your cross, denying yourself, yielding your spirit.

So what I wrote here is missing was the quotations of repent, the verb repent—

[WARREN]: Exactly.

[PIPER]: —wasn't there. You know that the Christian life is one continual conformity of the mind.

[WARREN]: Right, right.

[PIPER]: Get it from this, to this, turn, turn, turn. Repentance is everywhere in this book in that sense.

[WARREN]: Right. And again, the question I would ask the people—first place, some of the criticisms that people have said, I happen to agree with. And well, you could have said more in explaining justification. I agree with that, but I wasn't writing it for non-believers. I was writing it to my church who I already knew were there.

But when I got—when I thought, oh, I better throw in a little bit on salvation and it really came back as an afterthought, I kind of tossed it in.

But I would question this, do you have to say certain words in order to be saved? Because if you do then the thief on the cross wasn't saved. And I can give you 100 other people in scriptures because the thief on the cross simply said, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus said, "Today you'll be with me in paradise." Where is the repentance? He didn't ever say the word. And I could give you 100 other examples where Jesus says, "Believe in the Lord"—or Paul, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

[PIPER]: I wonder if that's the root of my good friend and—John MacArthur whom I love and esteem and respect behind his question or critique on that level might be, do you really believe that in order to be saved, to be regenerate, there needs to be evidence of a changed life?

[WARREN]: Of course. Absolutely. Of course.

[PIPER]: You can't live like the devil. You can't believe—like easy to believe—he wrote a whole book, the Gospel of Jesus.

[WARREN]: Exactly, right.

[PIPER]: What did you think of that book?

[WARREN]: I thought it was a great book.

[PIPER]: I thought it was a great book too. And it got him into big trouble because it looked like, you know, it was making salvation dependent on works when in fact, it was saying that, I think, that the fruit of the new birth better be real.

[WARREN]: You know, it's really funny because, for instance, Os Guinness wrote another book about the mega church called "Dining with the Devil," and some people thought that Os was actually writing about Saddleback. People didn't realize, Os was on my staff, okay. And he wasn't talking about Saddleback.

And one of the problems is, when a church is large, it often gets lumped into other large churches. I could name some other well-known churches that we have nothing in common with, okay, in terms of our view of discipleship, our view of salvation. The only thing we have in common is we both happen to be big.

And so I would just say, this is not your father's Saddleback or this is not your father's mega church. Some of those things are different. But I do believe in, obviously—in fact, if you listen to my preaching seminar, I have a three-day preaching seminar, and I have an entire sentence on you are not preaching the sermon—session on you are not preaching the Gospel unless you are preaching repentance. In fact, it is the fundamental message of Christianity, it is the change, it is the metanoia.

Now here is what I disagree with some people. Some people think repentance means change in behavior. And I tell you that that is the fruit of repentance, not the root. There is not a single Greek lexicon that says repentance means change, stop doing bad.

[PIPER]: Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance.

[WARREN]: That's exactly what John the Baptist taught and that's what all the others taught too in that repentance is the way I change my mind.

The modern word for repentance is paradigm shift. I used to think this way about my sin, now I think this way.

[PIPER]: But you wouldn't say probably—I can hear people over my shoulder saying you can have a wonderfully changed mind and everything stays the same in your life.

[WARREN]: No, of course not.

[PIPER]: You're still sleeping with your girlfriend, you are still stealing at the office, you're still reporting late to work.

[WARREN]: And that's why the Bible says, By their fruit you shall know them. But it is the fruit of repentance, not the root. In other words, it is—it is not my behavioral change that saves me. That is the proof that I have been saved, no doubt about it. And my change does come with, I see God differently, I see—

And here is the interesting thing. For me when I repented, it was *not* a negative. People act like repentance is a negative word. To me it's the most positive word. It's actually an act of joy. I turned from darkness to light. From hopelessness to hope. From guilt to forgiveness. From me-running-my-life to Christ-running-my-life.

[PIPER]: So an implication, I think, would be that as you preach to professing to believers which I do every Sunday—

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: —I don't think I'm contradicting their security in Christ, their Romans 8:28, "Those will be justified and glorified," security by warning them if they continue in such and such or if they do this, they won't enter the kingdom of heaven?

[WARREN]: This goes back to where—of course not, not at all. In fact, again, I believe, "For by grace you're saved through faith, not of yourselves." You know, it's not of works, there's no mention of both. And I also believe, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

[PIPER]: Right.

[WARREN]: I have no problem with both of those verses.

[PIPER]: Right, right.

[WARREN]: I have no problem.

[PIPER]: Okay. Well, I hope that helps some folks because I saw that here.

Just a few more on the Gospel.

Do you think that—and maybe this has already been answered—justification by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, to the glory of God alone—the solas—

[WARREN]: Yeah, the *solas*.

[PIPER]: —that's a big solid summary of the Gospel?

[WARREN]: Absolutely. I believe in the *five solas*. One hundred percent believe in the five solas. And I am—to those of you who know about this— I'm a monergist [someone that believes in the doctrine that says spiritual renewal is exclusively the activity of the Holy Spirit]. I don't call myself a Calvinist, I don't. I have to say that, I don't call my—but I am a monergist in that I believe that it is not of my works, it is—it's one-sided.

[PIPER]: Right. Right. Do you dislike the name Calvinism because of key doctrines that are wrong or because of connotations it would carry?

[WARREN]: Only the connotations. And I say this in true love, but I wish that those who believe in the doctrines of grace would be more gracious. That's all I'd say.

[PIPER]: So you don't have a problem saying I embrace the doctrines of grace, but I'd rather not be connected with some people who—

[WARREN]: You know, again, I don't call myself—you know, my background is Baptist and I'm proud of that, but I don't go around calling myself a Baptist all the time either. I'm a John 3:16 Christian. I'm an evangelical. I believe the doctrines of grace.

[PIPER]: And justification, we've touched on.

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: Imputation matters to you.

[WARREN]: Absolutely matters.

[PIPER]: It's right at the core of the Gospel.

[WARREN]: It IS the core of the Gospel.

[PIPER]: So you don't—

[WARREN]: “Him who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God.”

[PIPER]: 2 Corinthians 5:19 is right at the core. And I just want to underline it because today I think even in evangelicalism—

[WARREN]: They're wishy washy on that.

[PIPER]: Well, there's not only wishy-washy, let's just said it's not in the Bible; that imputation is not there. I could name names of people you know—

[WARREN]: I know.

[PIPER]: —and I know that are breaking my heart that they have departed from what we always thought was historic Protestant Christian—

[WARREN]: And biblical.

[PIPER]: And biblical teaching to say what you need is the forgiveness of sins and for the imputation of your sins to go into Jesus. You don't need the imputation of his righteousness to go into you.

[WARREN]: Yes. And I will say this, obviously there have been historically many different theories of the atonement and I think each of them has a part. But I think fundamentally it is the substitutionary understanding that God—Jesus took our payment and you can't understand. Yes, he did defeat the works of the devil. Yes, he is an example of love and sacrifice. And I believe all of these are pictures.

But the fundamental one, that *was* my problem. And I just Tweeted it this morning. I just literally Tweeted it this morning that said, "The reason Jesus came to earth is because the law could not do what we needed it to do!"

[PIPER]: I saw that.

[WARREN]: —and only Jesus could do it.

[PIPER]: Right, right. So substitution is right at the heart. And say a word about propitiation—meaning, was God angry at all human beings because of their sin and wrath rested upon us. And he loved us enough so that he would insert/intrude his son between his own wrath and us so that he became a curse for us and the wrath is diverted onto the son from us. Is what I've just described—

[WARREN]: Well, you just said it perfectly.

Last year, in the seven weeks before Easter, I did The Seven Last Words of the Cross, okay. And I preached through that right up to Easter. And the doctrine of propitiation, you cannot have Jesus saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," without understanding propitiation.

The Bible says at that point, God looks down on his own son and he says, "Son, you know I have said in numbers I will by no means clear the guilty, not even you, not even you."

[PIPER]: Right.

[WARREN]: And so he took that wrath on himself. And at that moment he says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And if you don't understand it, you don't understand how much God loves.

[PIPER]: Amen.

Let's go to *prevenient grace*, the grace that brings me to Christ and that enables me to do what I need to do.

Here is the one place where I found a sentence that Rick Warren said that I stumbled over.

[WARREN]: Okay. I retract it.

[PIPER]: We'll see. We'll see. I mean, it's—so here is what I mean. Not everybody will understand where I'm coming from. Let me—you said on page 174—this is not the problem one.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: I'll get there in a minute.

“It is the Holy Spirit's job to produce Christ like character in you.” Amen. You are a monergist. You just said that.

You want to just in two sentences define it?

[WARREN]: Oh go ahead.

[PIPER]: Okay. Never mind. We'll get there without defining it explicitly. The *Bible* says, “God is working in you,” and you are quoting here Philippians 2:13.

[WARREN]: Right.

[PIPER]: “God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power.” So when I read that, I thought, Great. Loved that sentence. It seems Biblical to me. And then you continue to speak carefully with the word “through,” at least I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt here.

[WARREN]: Sure. Sure.

[PIPER]: On page 174, you say “How does this happen in your life? Through the choices we make”—and I'm totally a choice guy. I mean, we do make choices, absolutely and they matter. And something's happening through them. “We choose to do the right thing in situations and then trust God's spirit to give us his power, love, and faith and wisdom to do it.

Now at that point, I'm thinking, what's coming first here and how is this working? Now here comes the sentence that I big a “No” in. It's the only place I wrote a big “No,” I think.

“The Holy Spirit releases his power the moment you take a step of faith. Obedience unlocks God's power. God waits for you to act first.”

[WARREN]: Yeah. Let me explain that. I hear where you are going on that. I would not apply that to sanctification. I think that's a misapplication and I probably should have clarified that better. Because what I'm saying there is I'm thinking of the children of Israel stepping into the Jordan.

Now that wasn't their choice. God had told them to do it so there's an obedience there. And it was only after they stepped in, the wave parted.

And I think there have been many examples in my life where God has asked me to risk—take a risk—and then he does the miracle. I would not apply that across the board as the sanctification, not at all.

[PIPER]: Okay. That’s really, really helpful. So let me restate what I heard in the first quote and see if you mean it the way I’m understanding it. It says in Philippians 2, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” And then it gives this ground clause “For God is the one who is working in you to will and to work.”

So I’m concluding monergism in sanctification to mean that if I do choose to stop stealing things at the office or to stop cheating on my tax report or to stop looking at pornography, my choices to do that have been prior-enabled—

[WARREN]: Absolutely.

[PIPER]: By the work of the Holy Spirit.

[WARREN]: In fact—well, as I believe, you don’t have the power to make those good choices.

[PIPER]: Right.

[WARREN]: My decision-making power is broken, I believe this, okay. And this is why we teach this in what we call our Celebrate Recovery program, that will power isn’t going to work because your will is broken and I cannot choose to do the things that I want to do. That’s Roman 7.

[PIPER]: So let’s clarify that. Even after you are born again and have a new nature, you are dependent on the Holy Spirit to awaken, prompt, enable the good that God calls us to do.

[WARREN]: Yes, I do believe that. But what I believe is—I love the phrase Paul uses when he says, “Work out your salvation, for it is God who is working in.”

Now there is a working out and a working in, in the same verse, okay. Now what is work out? Well, notice, he doesn’t say work for. That’s important. He doesn’t say work for either your salvation or your sanctification. He says work out what God is working in.

The only way I can explain this is when I go to a gymnasium, when I work out, I’m not working to create muscle. I’m working—what I’m doing there is I’m working out the muscle God has already given me. If God hadn’t given me the muscle, there is nothing to work out.

Do you understand what I’m saying?

[PIPER]: Yeah, yeah. And more muscle grows, but muscle had to be there to get you started.

[WARREN]: I can grow the muscle through some working out, but I can’t create—

[PIPER]: Muscle.

TRANSCRIPT: Interview with Pastor Rick Warren and Pastor John Piper

[WARREN]: —muscle. The muscle initially came from God. And so to me, the working out is not working for, it is—it’s basically exercising what God gave you.

[PIPER]: Yeah, and the nerves came from God.

[WARREN]: Yeah, it all came from God.

[PIPER]: And the explosive synapses—

[WARREN]: And the blood.

[PIPER]: —between them.

[WARREN]: And as that passage says, the desire to go to the gym.

[PIPER]: That’s right. Now implication for total depravity, or whatever that is, *depravity*. Would I be right to infer from what you’ve said about the new birth that you believe that our inability to awaken ourselves to faith and to begin this glorious purpose driven life, we can’t? We can’t do it without God’s sovereign—

[WARREN]: I just go back to scripture and, “That not of yourselves.” I rest my case. And that not of yourselves.

[PIPER]: And “That” meaning faith?

[WARREN]: Even the faith.

[PIPER]: Even the faith.

[WARREN]: Even the faith. And, “That not of yourselves.”

[PIPER]: So total depravity in that way of saying it would mean totally unable to get my salvation started?

[WARREN]: Exactly.

[PIPER]: I think that’s—

[WARREN]: I totally believe that.

[PIPER]: Some people take total to mean you do as many bad things as you could do. And clearly, you could do more bad things as an unbeliever than you do do, but that’s not the point. The point is I’m totally unable.

[WARREN]: Again, I don’t use total depravity as much as I like to say total inability.

[PIPER]: Yeah. That’s even more devastating.

[WARREN]: To me, it means—well, I used this as an illustration last week. We had Easter and we had one of the miners who was here from the Chilean mine. Okay. 33 men trapped for 69 days, 2,000 feet below the ground, okay. Now one of them as a Christian and over the next 69 days, 22 of those guys came to Christ. He came and shared his story.

But the illustration that I used was now the—they were—they were unable to pay for their own salvation, okay. They, for all intents and purposes, are dead and don't even know it. They are dead and don't know it. They are trapped, they are doomed, there's no way getting out. They can't say, "Well, really, I don't need the government because I've got a spoon and I'm going to dig my way out of this hole." It isn't going to happen.

Now on the other hand, coming this direction, they are coming down to save them. And the important thing that they need to understand is no way would they ever be able to repay or afford it. This salvation, this rescue is going to take tens of millions of dollars. And in ten lifetimes, they could never afford or pay for their freedom, their salvation, their liberation, their redemption, their rescue, whatever synonym.

[PIPER]: You've touched on hell already. Let me read what you said and then just get you to say yes to it or whatever more you want to say.

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: Page 27, "While life on earth offers many choices, eternity offers only two, heaven or hell."

[WARREN]: I like that. I should write that down. That's good.

[PIPER]: Yeah, you should. It's well said. You say a lot of things well.

"If you love and trust God's son Jesus, you will be invited to spend the rest of eternity with him. On the other hand, if you reject his love, forgiveness, and salvation, you will spend eternity apart from God."

Page 112, "Why did God allow Jesus to endure ghastly mistreatment? So you could be spared from eternity in hell and so share glory forever."

Page 232, "The Bible warns unbelievers, he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves," and you put Romans 2:8.

And one more, page 284, "We must remember that no matter how contented or successful people appear to be, without Christ they are hopelessly lost and headed for eternal separation from God."

So it just seems clear to me that this is a terrible thing you really do believe in because the Bible teaches it. And I would just ask, what's—in your mind, what's the nature of it? And hear—I just want people who are hearing this to know that this is one of the hardest and most painful things. We shouldn't fight without crying, you know. I mean, there are people who are going to deny hell they are doing that as we speak.

But there is so much light-weight criticism of the argument. I just read it again yesterday in some newspaper that we're all over Trevin Wax because of his particular comment and I thought.

So anyway, the atmosphere of this moment in this conversation—

[WARREN]: Well, that is a stumbling block, there's no doubt about it.

[PIPER]: Yes. What is it? What is hell?

[WARREN]: Well, I believe that literal hell. Jesus believed in a literal hell. Jesus talked about flames of fire. I believe in that. But to me, hell is eternal separation from God. It's ultimate loneliness.

This myth that people are going to see each other in hell. That they're going to party in hell, that's just—it is unloving to not tell the people the truth when you know it's there. And so we cannot wage on this. And I can say with a clear conscience that in all of the public interviews, every time I've been asked about hell, I shoot straight on it. Yes, it's real. Yes, Jesus talked about it. People will go there.

I was speaking at Aspen Institute one time, which is the brainiacs of the world. And a woman gets up and she says to me, "I'm Jewish. I'm not going to accept Jesus as my savior. Am I going to hell?"

Now everything in my human nature wants to back pedal and make it safe and make it comfortable and say the politically correct thing, but I can't do that because I fear God's disapproval more than I fear hers. And I also love her enough to tell her the truth. Now—

[PIPER]: So what did you say?

[WARREN]: Well, I'll tell you, the way I said it is a way that takes it off of me because it tends—we often, when people bring up—and I would say this to pastors. Don't make this your opinion versus their opinion. Lay it off on Jesus every time.

And so I said this, this is what I said to her, "Everybody's betting their life on something," okay. Atheists are betting there is no God. Buddhists are betting on Buddha. I'm betting my life that Jesus Christ was not a liar, that Jesus Christ was telling the truth.

Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father, but by me." Now I didn't say that, he said it. "I am the way"—not a good way, not the best way, not one of the ways, not a nice way—"I *am* the way, the truth and the life." No one comes—I'm betting my life that he was telling the truth.

Now see what I did? I took it off of me and making me the authority and, well, that's your word against mine. I said, wait a minute. I'm just saying I'm putting my trust that Jesus, who split history into AD and BC, is not a liar.

[PIPER]: Yeah, that's good. Is it conscious to torment their conscience?

[WARREN]: Oh, I believe it is and I believe it's eternal.

[PIPER]: Can anybody get out—

[WARREN]: No.

[PIPER]: —once they are there?

[WARREN]: No. Of course not. No.

[PIPER]: So you are not a Universalist?

[WARREN]: Absolutely not a Universalist and I don't believe in purgatory, which, obviously, isn't in scripture. No. This is—the option is not—which is what motivates me to evangelism.

People need to understand why do I go spend time with people I don't agree with? Why do I hang out with gays? Why do I hang out with atheists? Why do I hang out with crooked politicians or, as Jesus would, with prostitutes and tax collectors?

I'm an evangelist, okay, and I am motivated by the fact that in the next 365 days, 136,000 Californians will die and most of them will go into an eternity without Christ. In the next 365 days, 2.4 million Americans will die; most of them will go into eternity without Christ. In the next 365 days, 74 million people in the world will go into eternity without Christ and without hope. I can't live with that. I can't—my—love compels us to care about that.

[PIPER]: The implication of what I hear you saying, which was on my next page so you are tracking right with my mind, is the eternal destiny of those who have never *heard*.

Do you believe that there is another way for a person who's never heard of Jesus to be saved or must he hear the Gospel and believe it to be saved?

[WARREN]: Jesus made it really clear, “Go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to do all that I've commanded you and lo I'm with you always,” time after time again.

If you can be saved without Christ, missions is a crock. We're better off not to go. We're better off not to have PEACE Plan.

And again, why am I doing the “P,” which is two P's, by the way. It's **P**romote reconciliation and **P**lant churches. We **P**lant churches to **P**romote reconciliation. We don't just promote reconciliation. These are the five things Jesus did. There are some things that Jesus did we can't do like die for the sins of mankind, the redemption of all through his precious blood. But Jesus did say, “I have given you an example, now go and do likewise.” And he—Jesus planted a church, he equipped servant leaders. And what he did on there is he loved everybody. He fed the 5,000. He trained the 70. He disciplined the 12. And he mentored 3.

Now in—even in the 12, only Peter and James and John get to go in the Garden of Gethsemane. Only Peter, James, and John get to go on the Mount of Transfiguration. Only Peter, James and John get to see Peter’s mother-in-law healed. And in Galatians, Paul calls Peter, James and John—it’s a different James—the pillars of the church. Obviously, it worked because, you know, we’re all here, okay.

So Jesus **P**lanted a church, he **E**quipped leaders, he **A**ssisted the poor. The Bible says, you know, the first message—his first public recorded message is Luke 4. He’s in his hometown. Now he’s already been ministering for a year. We always preach and then go do it. Jesus did it for a year and then announces his agenda. And his announcement of the agenda is the Isaiah passage.

And the very first thing he says, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he’s appointed me to preach good news to the poor.” Does God love—have favorites? Yes, he does. He loves the poor. I believe that. I believe that 2,000 verses in the Bible talk about the poor and God saying, “If you care about the poor, I will bless you.” So he cares about the poor, he **C**ares for the sick.

And Jesus went into every village. It says he went teaching, preaching, and healing. I believe that Jesus’ threefold ministry was preaching, which is evangelism and edification; teaching, which is education; and healing, which is, in our sense healthcare. In other words, he cared about not just the spirit, but also the mind and the body.

It is not by accident that the first school and the first hospital in every nation in the world is started by Christians because we have a preaching, teaching, and healing faith. And then he educated the next generation. Let the children come to me. They are the kingdom of God. If you want to do the kingdom of God, you must care about children’s ministry in my opinion.

Now none of those things are going to bring in the Millennium. I don’t—I’m not kidding myself, but I’m using those as a bridge to do the eternity issue.

[PIPER]: The extent of the atonement is the most *vexed* doctrines?

[WARREN]: You and I have talked about this. It’s the one I have the most problem with in the typical tulip.

[PIPER]: Yeah, of the doctrines of the grace. So I’ll read something you wrote. And there is two ways to take what you wrote. I could take it in my way, but I doubt if it’s your way. I wonder.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: Frankly, I think—I’ve said to various people who stumble over this so-called fourth point, I said, if you give me 15 minutes, we can agree.

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: But let's try it. It won't take 15 minutes.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: You said, "If you want to be used by God"—this is page 288—"you must care about what God cares about. What he cares about most is the redemption of the people he made. He wants his lost children found."

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: Interesting phrase, "He wants his lost children found," which could mean everybody on the planet or it could mean John 11:52 where Caiphus says, "Better that one die for the nation"—

[WARREN]: For the nation, right.

[PIPER]: —and then John says, he was speaking about prophesy, "that he would die, that he might gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." Then you said nothing matters more than God and then the cross.

Now if I were to take that my way and interpret it in the light of John 11:52, Christ died to gather into one the children of God scattered around, the sheep that are scattered out there, the elect.

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: So in that sense, the death of Christ has a divine purposefulness that it really did achieve the faith and the end gathering of the sheep. And I think I can say that that would be called *particular redemption* or *limited atonement*—

[WARREN]: Sure.

[PIPER]: —without denying that the cross makes possible and purchases a bona fide offer for every person on the planet so that you can look a person right in the face—

[WARREN]: Well, we're a lot closer than I thought we were.

[PIPER]: —and say—you could even say—and I could quote John Murray on this, he's vintage reform, and say, "Christ died for you," meaning not that he effectively accomplished your propitiation—

[WARREN]: Got it.

[PIPER]: —but that he died such that his arms are extended to you saying, "If you will come, if you will come, it's yours." This is yours. So I feel like I can talk like the atonement is there beckoning everyone while believing the new—when Jesus said this cup is the new covenant—

[WARREN]: Right, right.

[PIPER]: —well, the new covenant is when he writes the law in my heart and draws me to himself and puts the fear of God in me. I think he bought my conversion, which means he didn't do that for everybody.

So there are designs in the cross that are for his elect, but there are also designs in the cross that are for everybody. So there is John Piper's effort to—

[WARREN]: We're a lot closer than I thought we were on that one because I do believe, "Again, this goes back to my hermeneutic of when I have two different passages, I believe them both. I believe Ephesians 5," Christ died for the church and gave his life for her. I believe that with all my heart. I also believe Peter, "God is not willing that any should perish." I think he wants people to be saved. And I believe in John 3:16.

So when you say who does Christ die for? He died for the church, okay. I don't think God's death on the cross through Christ was a failure, if you are saying that. I do not believe that anybody he intended to die for is failing in that area.

[PIPER]: Is going to hell?

[WARREN]: Absolutely not. No. But on the other hand, I don't believe in Universalism either, that his salvation automatically assumes everybody's going to be there, which some people have interpreted the Romans passage of as Adam, "In Adam all died, in Christ all should be made." I don't interpret that in a Universalist way.

I like the way you say it, John. I'd like to hear more about it.

[PIPER]: Well, we'll talk again.

[WARREN]: All right.

[PIPER]: Implications for the world—we're almost done.

[WARREN]: Okay.

[PIPER]: Implications for the world of your strong view on *holiness*, which I like.

Page 214, "You won't be able to say no to the devil unless you have said yes to Christ."

Now you love the world and you speak to the world as much as you speak to believers. Does that imply the world, that is the nonbeliever, is always doing the bidding of the devil?

[WARREN]: Of course they are. What I believe is my righteousness is as filthy rags. My goodness is not good enough. In fact, I preached on this on Easter and I talked about—I said, you know, here in Southern California, everybody thinks they've got the good life. And the good life means looking good, feeling good, and having the goods. I said, "There is one

problem with the good life, it's not good enough. It's not good enough. My righteousness are as filthy rags."

And you know, yeah, if you want to judge yourself by Hitler, sure, you're better than Hitler. In fact, if you want to judge yourself by me, sure, you're probably better than me. But we've all fallen short of the glory of God, which is a perfect standard. And the issue is not are you better than someone. I have no doubt you are probably better than me. But it's like we're all swimming to Hawaii and some people swim a mile and five, but nobody's going to make it to Hawaii. So it isn't going to happen.

[PIPER]: Rick, underneath everything we've been talking about as we draw towards the end is the *Bible*.

[WARREN]: Amen.

[PIPER]: And here are some quotes from *The Purpose Driven Life*.

Page 90, "You can't love God unless you know him and you can't know him without knowing his Word. The *Bible* says God revealed himself to Samuel through his word." I love that—1 Samuel 3:21.

[WARREN]: Isn't that a great passage?

[PIPER]: It's just informative of the way I think about knowing God. God still uses that method today.

Page 101, "Worship must be based on the truth of the scripture."

Page 186, "To be a healthy disciple of Jesus, feeding on God's Word must be your first priority."

Page 188, "We can't watch television for three hours and then read the Bible for three minutes and expect to grow."

Page 215, "If you don't have any Bible verses memorized, you've got no bullets in your gun."

[WARREN]: Yeah.

[PIPER]: How do you describe your understanding of its authority and truthfulness? What words do you like to us?

[WARREN]: Well, first place, it's inerrant. I believe the scripture is without error in its original autographs, as a Tweeted the other day. I don't believe my interpretation's inerrant. I don't believe anybody else's interpretation is inerrant, but I do believe the scripture is inerrant. I believe in the plenary, verbal plenary inspiration of scripture, without a doubt. I come from classic Baptist background, which holds a high view of scripture.

But more than that, I have tried for 32 years to teach people to be self-feeders, not just simply to listen to the Word of God; I don't think that's enough. I think many times pastors are feeding them good word, but they're not teaching them to be self-feeders.

It's interesting, the very first book I wrote, I wrote in college 35 years ago, and it was a book on *12 Bible Study Methods*, on how to study scripture. One of the verses that dominates Saddleback for 31 years is Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." However, knowledge is not enough.

And I think I've shared with you before, I actually believe that there are levels of scripture—I mean, levels of understanding the scripture. That we start with knowledge, which is knowing the what of scripture, but then we must move to perspective, which is knowing the why, okay.

The Bible says about Moses, it says in Psalms, "The people of Israel knew the acts of God, but Moses knew the ways of God." I differentiate between knowledge and perspective. Knowledge is knowing the content of scripture, who is Jacob, what is the doctrine of hell, heaven, and everything else. That's the knowing the what.

Most people don't know that Saddleback has a 72-week systematic theology course that is required for every small group member and every staff member. And I've had over 15,000 people go through this 72-week systematic study. I would take doctrinal knowledge of any 500 Saddleback members and compare it to any 500 members of any other church and we'd beat them.

[PIPER]: I've heard you say that.

[WARREN]: I have no fear on that. We're probably one of the few churches in America that memorizes the Bible verse every week. This week it was Lamentations 3:24.

So teaching hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and meditating. But then the fundamental thing that we do at this church is, be doers of the Word, not hearers only.

I had a guy ask me one time, he said, "What's the best translation?" He goes, "Do I need a Living Bible? And I said, You ought to be a Living Bible." I said, "You are either a Bible or a liable."

And so the scripture is the only authority for our lives. It's not scripture plus anything else. And it is—it is our guidebook for all rule and practice.

[PIPER]: One of the differences between—I think between you and me, although, I don't listen to you every Sunday and you don't listen to me every Sunday, is that in my expositional approach, I tend to have a passion for wanting people to see how I got what I got. I don't get that you are driven by that same passion.

[WARREN]: Not on the Sunday morning services. On mid-week that we did for many years—and of course now. What most people don't know is that we have more people in Bible study

than we have on the weekends. I told you this, we've 32,000 people in our small groups studying scripture and we often do book-by-book studies, but 22,000 on the weekend.

What I'm interested in, when somebody comes on Sunday morning—see, I believe worship can be a witness. I don't think you have to water it down, but I do think you have to be clear. And I see Sunday morning sometimes like an emergency room. Somebody's coming in and he's bleeding to death. His wife has left him, his kids are on drugs, he's lost his thing.

And I'm going, okay. I got to first get the Word to him that relates to him at that point and then he goes, "Wow, that helped. What else do you got in that book."

[PIPER]: Okay.

[WARREN]: But let me just say this, I do think that God doesn't care how you deal with the text as long as you get to the text. And I think it is a misnomer to say exposition is only book-by-book. I think there is verse-by-verse and verse-with-verse.

There are some things, like if you are going to teach on abortion, you can't just take one text. You have to take multiple texts, but you have to expose the text while you are there.

[PIPER]: Totally, totally agree with that. Let's wrap it up within five minutes and I've got two more things.

This is almost the same as what we've been talking about, *doctrinal depth*.

You say worship—page 102, "Worship must be both accurate and authentic. God pleasing worship is deeply emotional and deeply doctrinal."

[WARREN]: Doctrinal, that's right.

[PIPER]: And 146, "Many church fellowships and small groups remain superficial because they are afraid of conflict."

So you are committed to deepening doctrine and not being afraid of conflict.

[WARREN]: Not at all.

[PIPER]: But Sunday morning is not tend to where you see that, the deepening of doctrine?

[WARREN]: Sunday morning—a lot of people think it's not deep because I don't use theological terms. I once taught a 12-week series on sanctification without ever using the word. I taught an eight-week series on incarnation without ever using the word. I did a 12-week series on grace—obviously, grace was an easy word to use—but when I did the names of God, you can use the names of God without having to dig into explaining now Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Tiskenu, Jehovah Rapha, let's explain all these terms.

So what I like to do, as I've said, I like to teach theology without telling people it's theology and without using theological terms.

But here is my question, what creates deep preaching? That's my question, what is *deep* preaching? And I would say it's not *deep* until it gets to the heart and the character of the person. That I could teach through Revelation—

[PIPER]: Including God.

[WARREN]: Including God, that's what I'm talking about.

If you get to the heart and nature of God, you get to the heart and nature of God, I could teach through Revelation and explain all of the meaning of everything and not be deep.

Today, a lot of people equate deep preaching, meaning I explain the background. Well, that's not deep at all. Deep is life transforming. Simple does not mean shallow. Simple does not mean simplistic. Simple does not mean, you know, it's lightweight. Simple means it's clear.

Paul says, "I'm afraid you've complicated the Gospel. I'm afraid that you get away from the simplicity of the Gospel." And actually, you can—it's easy to complicated the Gospel and it's easy to confuse people. And I could—you know, I've got a doctorate and I could easily preach in a way people would walk out and go, Whew, boy, that was deep. Well, that wasn't deep, it was just muddy.

[PIPER]: Yeah, confusing.

[WARREN]: Okay. Here is the difference between simple and simplistic. Simplistic is—simple is, "This is the day the Lord has made. Let's rejoice and be glad." Simplistic is, "Have a nice day."

There is deep theological truth behind this is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad. Simplistic is, have a nice day.

[PIPER]: I have one more thing I want to say, but I want to make sure before we go away that if you are hoping I would go somewhere I didn't go. Anything just kind of burning to get out that you think, "Oh." I thought he was going to ask this and I didn't get a chance to say it about *The Purpose Driven Life* or about doctrine or about anything?

[WARREN]: No. This is good. I'm having fun.

[PIPER]: Me too.

[WARREN]: We go go on for another couple hours.

[PIPER]: We won't. I've got to get on a plane.

Page 214, last quote—oh, this is from the biography that you said you haven't read.

[WARREN]: I've never read it.

[PIPER]: That's okay.

[WARREN]: Never read it.

[PIPER]: A former staffer says, "Rick had really sensed a sacred trust, a sense of stewardship of life. I wrote Amen right there."

You are the probably—and I would like to pray for your humility because you are challenged more than anybody perhaps, but we all struggle, but you are the most publicly influential pastor in the world perhaps.

You've written a book that has sold, I suppose, as a non-fiction hard book more than any other book in history outside the Bible, something like that anyway. It's a good seller.

That's an incredible trust. That's an incredibly sacred trust and I want to end with an exhortation and a prayer for those who are watching this.

My prayer, Rick, and exhortation is that with your place in history in American church and in the global church is fixed. It's just fixed. You don't need to do anymore. Everybody knows what's up here and how God has—I believe *God* has blessed Saddleback and God has blessed *The Purpose Driven Life*.

With that firmly fixed, my plea is that, according to what you just said, you take the next 20 years and really gather these hundreds of thousands of pastors who look your way and press them down deep. Press them into doctrine and press them into the Word, into the deep glories of God. Leave a legacy, not just of breadth and not just of global impact *now*, but leave a legacy of *depth* that will last for generations and *centuries*.

I love you.

[WARREN]: I love you too.

[PIPER]: I admire you.

[WARREN]: Thank you.

[PIPER]: I'm glad you are my friend and there will be hard days yet to come. You have hard days now.

[WARREN]: You know my hard days, yeah.

[PIPER]: We both know what people don't know about each of each other's hard days. And I would like to just simply strengthen your hand and encourage your heart and underline the beauties of the truths that we've spent the last hour-and-a-half talking about.

[WARREN]: Well, I'm deeply touched by what you just said, John. I mean, I really am. I'm not just making this up.

I believe there are two great themes in scripture: Salvation and stewardship. You know, I believe that one day we'll stand before the Lord and he's going to ask a couple questions. The first one is, "What did you do with my son Jesus?" That's it, "What did you do with my son Jesus?"

And the second one—that's the question of salvation. The second one is the question of stewardship which is, "What did you do with what I gave you?" I didn't ask for this notoriety and, actually, it's been—it's scared me to death. It's quite a pain.

And when the book became the big hit that it was, it brought an enormous amount of attention and an enormous amount of money and both of them scared me because I didn't want to be a celebrity. When I started Saddleback, I said, I'm never going on the radio or television. I wasn't going to put my services—because I didn't want to be a celebrity. I think always being in the spotlight blinds you.

And I know enough about my own heart, of the temptations and I—I am grateful honestly for the thorns in the flesh that many people don't know about that actually force me to be dependent upon God. And that's part of that sovereign pain, okay. The part of the limp is God, if he's going to strengthen you, then he's also going to touch your hips or you walk with a limp the rest of your life. And I've got limps and I've talked to you about them and I've told others about them too.

And when I began to pray, I said, "Lord, show me what to do with the money and show me what to do with the fame." And God taught me what I call the stewardship of affluence and the stewardship of influence. He gave me two passages, the one in Corinthians and the one in Psalm 72.

The one in Corinthians is the passage where he says, "Those who teach the Gospel should make a living by the Gospel," but, Paul says, "I will not accept that right because I want to serve the Gospel for free so I'm a slave to no man."

And most people—it's pretty widely known now that Kay and I—and when literally tens of millions of dollars came in, you write this book, I could have bought an island and retired and had people serve me little glasses of iced tea with umbrellas. But when you write a book and the first sentence says, "It's not about you," then you know the money is not for you.

I had no idea how often I was going to be tested by that sentences. I'm often tested nine or ten times a day. And I'll walk into a room and I think, "It's not about you." And I'll get praised and I'll think, "It's not about you." And I'll get criticized and I'll say, "It's not about you." And I never knew how much I was going to be tested on that thing.

And I'm begging the people who watch this, please pray for me. I would rather stick a knife in my heart than dishonor the name of God.

[PIPER]: So you formed a foundation?

[WARREN]: Yeah, we did two things.

[PIPER]: Short.

[WARREN]: Okay. Number one, we decided we're not changing our lifestyle one bit. I still live in the same house I've lived in for 19 years. I drive an 11-year-old Ford. I wear a watch that I paid for 17 bucks for at Wal-Mart, okay. I could have bought 1,000 Bentleys, but we—I live—you know, I don't—I've saved thousands by not wearing socks.

I stopped taking a salary eight years ago. We added up all the church had paid me in 25 years and I gave it back and we became reverse titheers. We started this 35-years ago raising our tithe by 1 percent a year at least. Now we never told anybody for 30 years. And you know, some years when we got a pay raise, I'd raise our tithe 4 or 5 percent years. And years we were financially short, we raised it a half a percent. Today—we raised it another percent this last year. We give away 91 and we live on 9.

Now that was actually the easy part—is give away the money, and that's a whole lot of fun. I don't really have big needs. If I got a good pair of jeans and a T-shirt, I'm fine. So that was the easy part.

The hard part was what do I do with this attention, okay. The money, actually, was pretty easy. And you know, the money, sex and power, you know, "Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life," I haven't had a problem, thank God—and the *Bible* says, "Let him who stands take heed lest he falls"—with sexual lust or immature—or things like that because I set parameters around my life like Billy Graham did 35 years ago.

I've never been in a room with a woman who's not my wife, ever, alone in 31 years, never. I don't even get in a—in an elevator with my secretary. They know this. People know this. If I'm driving down the street and I see a member who's a woman on a—with a car problem, I don't stop. I call and I say—I send somebody else. I want—people say that's going overboard. I'd rather go overboard than be thrown overboard.

So the problem has not been money and the problem has not been sex, but the pride issue is so subtle and even when you don't know it.

So the other issue is the issue of affluence—I mean, influence. Psalm 72 sounds like the most selfish prayer ever prayed. It's Solomon's prayer for more influence. And when you pray this prayer, it sounds more selfish than Jabez' prayer.

He says, "God, I want you to make me famous. I want you to spread of fame of my name to many lands. I want you to give me power. I want other king to know who I am," until you read the reason. He says, "So that the king may support the widow and orphan, defend the defenseless," speak up for the oppressed. He talks about all the marginalized society, the immigrant. And out of that said the purpose of influence is to speak up for those who have no influence.

And so I've really spent the last decade overseas. I tried to get out of America in many ways to spend times in the villages where they didn't know me. But I covet your prayers because this thing could take me down and I'm very aware of it.

[PIPER]: Let's pray.

Father in heaven, that's a good place to stop. And I ask now for me and for Rick Warren, in particular, that you would protect us from the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and this pride and possessions.

[WARREN]: Amen.

[PIPER]: And that the celebrity thing, the influence thing would not have a light that blinds our eyes.

[WARREN]: Amen.

[PIPER]: Oh, that Christ would be our light.

[WARREN]: Amen.

[PIPER]: In his light do we see light.

[WARREN]: Amen.

[PIPER]: So guard Rick from pride and grant that the glories of the truth that we have just celebrated and articulated would continue to inform everything we preach, everything we do. We long that Christ would be exulted and that the mission would go forward and that millions of people would pass from death to life. And that underneath all the efforts would be your Holy Word and your Holy Scriptures and above all things would be your glory shining bright, just a point of the universe.

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

[WARREN]: Amen.

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