



## MASTERING MESSAGE TRANSITIONS

Most preachers and communicators understand the importance of transitions. The best messages are journeys. Great communicators create and tell stories that engage their entire audience from the beginning to the point of the message and through the landing. No successful story happens without quality transitions between ideas.

I think of transitions as the curves or turns from one road (idea or section) to the next.

Transitions matter because they allow our audience to stay on our message journey without additional effort. Great messages have many ideas and concepts and transitions seamlessly thread each idea to the next.

This resource contains three messages I've preached at other churches. I've highlighted each major and minor transition in **GREEN** to show their significance and quantity.

### BOOK GAVIN

I frequently preach in churches and speak to businesses and organizations. If you'd like to inquire about my availability, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Rivertown Community Church – What America Needs Now  
Part # 1 of 2 – “Revoked Citizenship?”

GREEN HIGHLIGHTS SHOW ALL THE TRANSITIONAL STATEMENTS

BLUE BOXES SHOW WHAT I PLACED ON SIDE SCREENS OR THE TEACHING SCREEN

**Bottom Line:** What Americans Need Now is Citizenship Beyond America.

**Key Idea:** People are made to worship. Unfortunately, what we worship becomes our idol, and in this world, we have lots of idol options, our country included. In this message, we’ll see what Jesus, Peter, Paul, and some others have to say about our worship.

**CONNECTION** – The Lord’s Prayer: Kingdom, Power, and Glory.

- A. **THE LORD’S PRAYER:** Have you heard or memorized the Lord's prayer? "Now I lay me down to sleep..."

"Now I lay me down to sleep..."

Not that one!

**Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

<sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

In the NIV and most other translations, this is where the prayer ends. “But deliver us from evil.” And this is actually how Jesus ended the prayer, too. But some translators realized that we needed more so it sounded like a real prayer AND so that it could be sung better. So you’ll see this part in translations like the KJV:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

This is called the “doxology.”

- B. **WHY THE ADDITION?** Why did we add this ending?
- Sounds weird without the KJV ending! But I wonder if we added this as a reminder of sorts.
  - Think about what Jesus suggests in this prayer:

**Matthew 6:9b-13 (NIV)**

<sup>9b</sup> “Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,

your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.  
<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.'

c. Basically, Jesus wants us to remember a few things. Primarily:

**Matthew 6:13 (KJV)**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

This is all about you, not me. Your Kingdom over my kingdom. Your power over my power. Your glory, not my glory.

*TRANSITION: Even though the "kingdom, power, and glory" wasn't Matthew's original Greek text, I kinda like the addition. And I'll tell you why.*

**TENSION** – Kingdoms," "Power," and "Glory" are the stuff we idolize and worship.

A. **WE NEED THE REMINDER:** If left to my own devices, I'd live like:

For MINE is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.

- a. Seeking "Kingdoms," "Power," and "Glory" has been an issue from the beginning... Adam and Eve. And it still is today.
- b. "Kingdoms," "Power," and "Glory" are the stuff we desire. We crave.
- c. Think about all the ways we see people pursuing their kingdom, their power, and their glory.

We seek our kingdom through careers, businesses, personal brands, and accumulating wealth and material possessions.

We seek power through jobs that offer control and decision-making authority or from politics and social activism.

We seek glory through public recognition, fame, and achievements.

B. **OUR KINGDOM, POWER, AND GLORY:** Let me give you an example from the Bible that you may recognize. Just like our lives, there's a pretty consistent pattern in scripture showing how people want to be in power, want to have influence, want to be prosperous, and want to have security. And even if God gives me some of those things, I'll try to achieve even more through worldly means.

- a. One day, Jesus is with his Disciples. During their conversation, Jesus predicted that he would suffer and die.

**Matthew 16:21-23 (NIV)**

<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be **killed** and on the third day be raised to life.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to **rebuke** him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall **never** happen to you!”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a **stumbling block** to me; you do not have in mind the **concerns of God**, but merely **human concerns**.”

- b. Basically, Peter wanted to keep this movement moving. He didn’t want to hear anything about Jesus dying. Why? Partially because he liked Jesus. And mostly because it would affect HIS kingdom, power, and glory.
  - c. **This is us. We are all Peter. Even when we seem to be putting Jesus first, we’re often thinking of ourselves.**
- C. **10 COMMANDMENTS:** We tend to consistently get this wrong personally. But we also mess it up corporately, collectively, and nationally.

**God is really big on this “kingdom, power, and glory” stuff.** For example, when Israel left Egypt to become a nation, God gave them the Ten Commandments.

#### **Exodus 20:1 – 5 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> And God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup> “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

<sup>3</sup> “You shall have **no other gods** before me.

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself an **image** in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup> You shall not **bow down** to them or **worship** them.

- a. The first two commandments were a reminder that God is God and we are not. God's Kingdom is not our kingdom, and his power and glory are to be feared and awed.
- b. Basically...

#### **Matthew 6:13 (KJV)**

For thine is the **kingdom**, and the **power**, and the **glory**, for ever. Amen.

- c. Do you remember what happened when Moses received these 10 commandments? He went up to Mount Sinai to meet with God. When he came down, do you remember what the Jewish people had done? They melted down all their gold and made a calf to worship!

Moses came down with the **Top 10** to find Israel breaking the **top 2!**

- D. **WHAT DOES AMERICA NEED NOW?** **Nothing has really changed.** We are still a group of worshipers. We are idolizers. Our innate, God-given desire to worship is where we tend to create our greatest problems, though.
- a. In our lives and the lives around us, we struggle with worshipping idols, but we often cannot see it.

- b. We aren't melting down our gold necklaces to create little animals, but we are just as guilty as the Jews in the desert.
- c. It's not hard to identify an idol, though. We just have to follow our thoughts and behaviors a bit. For instance, if we went out on the streets and asked random people:

What does America **need** now?

- d. Since we're in a perpetual political season, I suspect many people would say: "I'll tell you what we need now! Four more years of Trump!" "Four more years of Biden!" "Four new years of RFK!" "Or how about Micky Mouse
- e. Or maybe we'd hear, "Less immigrants!" "More guns!" "Less guns!" "Better jobs!" "Lower interest rates!" "To make America a 'Christian Nation'!"
- f. How is all of this working out for us? How is all of this making Christianity look? How is the seeking of our kingdom, our power, and our glory making anything better?

Is this helping **MINE** or **THINE**?

- E. **WE WORSHIP WHAT WE WANT:** Take a moment and think about how you'd answer that question: What does America need now? How you answer what we want tells you something important.

What we **want** reveals what we **worship**.

- a. Every time we answer a question like this, we reveal something we crave that helps *our* kingdom, *our* power, or *our* glory.
- b. The more we want it, the more we worship it. The more we decide it's needed, the greater the idol becomes.

*TRANSITION: This issue is nearly impossible to cure completely. Worship and idolatry of earthly kingdoms, power, influence, security, wealth, and power are part of our human condition. At the same time, idolatry is ruining our lives.*

*As a follower of Jesus, we're offered a different way.*

*Or a different perspective.*

**TRUTH** – Paul suggests that we fix our eyes on eternity, not today.

- A. **THE UNSEEN VERSUS THE SEEN:** We all tend to focus on what's in front of us. If the question is "What does America need?", we're immediately drawn to what we perceive to be the problems and issues in America.

Living in this country keeps this country in focus. While living on this planet, it can feel impossible not to focus on the issues on this planet! We tend to fixate on what in front of us.

2,000 years ago, the Christians in the city of Corinth were doing the same thing.

Corinth was a major city in ancient Greece, known for its **wealth**, **commerce**, and **immorality**.

It was a cosmopolitan hub with a mix of cultures and religions, which often led to moral and spiritual challenges for the Christian community.

The Corinthian church struggled with various issues, including divisions and conflicts.

The early Christians, including those in Corinth, faced persecution and social ostracism.

This could have been a source of discouragement and suffering.

Paul also knew Corinth was full of false teachers who were leading the believers astray.

These false teachers often focused on outward appearances and temporary gains.

Sound like anywhere you know today???

a. With all of that in mind, Paul tells them:

### 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Basically, stop looking at what's in front of you and lift your eyes to what's above you.

- B. **AMERICAN IDOL:** Let's bring this into our current American Christian context. We have a crisis in American Christianity. Our crisis comes down to an obsession with desiring and worshipping a worldly identity.

Instead of fixing our eyes on the unseen, "since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal, "we have become fixated on the here and now.

- a. Peter suggested that instead of seeing ourselves as exiles in a metaphorical Babylon, we have embraced our earthly and temporary citizenship.

*TRANSITION: Maybe what America needs is a spiritual change of venue. We can get so wrapped up in "making America a Christian nation" or "electing parties that we see as 'Christian' (or more Christian than the other guys), that we completely miss the unseen.*

### APPLICATION – Acknowledge our citizenship.

- A. **A BETTER AMERICAN IDOL:** I don't know if you've realized this, or maybe too many of us have just forgotten this of late, but this isn't our home. If you're a follower of Jesus, your "home" isn't America. You're not "American."

Jesus, Paul, Peter, and a few others say that we belong somewhere else:

### John 18:36 (NIV)

<sup>36</sup> Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

From Peter...

### 1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and

into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you...

From Paul...

**Ephesians 2:19 (NIV)**

<sup>19</sup>Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household...

Again, from Paul...

**Philippians 3:20 (NIV)**

<sup>20</sup>But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...

**B. BACK TO OUR QUESTION: So if we can go back to our question:**

What does America need now?

Perhaps the answer is...

What does America need now?

A different citizenship.

A better backyard. A better perspective on this world and our temporary time here.

Here's the point:

We spend nearly all our energy trying to grow our kingdom, power, and glory in this temporary world, but we don't belong to this world.

We strive for an identity here. We seek to be known and have influence here. We want more power here. We want our kingdom to come; our will to be done.

No wonder we're perpetually frustrated with politics, people, places, things...

What's "seen" cannot satisfy.

*TRANSITION: Looking around, we know this is true. No amount of personal kingdom, power, or glory is enough to fulfill us.*

**LANDING – Let's add an eternal filter.**

**A. PRIORITIES:** I'm not suggesting that you don't vote or ignore issues. What Jesus, Peter, Paul, and everyone else in Scripture is suggesting is that:

Christians should filter everything in this seen world through the lens of what's unseen.

- a. In our attempts to build our own kingdoms and gain power and glory, we are often left unfulfilled and frustrated. Worse, we damage God's kingdom, power, and glory.
- b. We must shift our focus from earthly pursuits to heavenly priorities.
- c. In the end, no candidate or party or amendment or anything else in this temporal life will matter.

d. Because, as Jesus said:

**John 14:2-3 (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

**PRAYER**



## Southside Church – What The World Needs Now “Self-Control”

**Bottom Line:** The only thing in our control is where we place our trust.

**Key Idea:** When we place our faith in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, we receive a new capability: Self-control. But not the kind of self-control that allows us to keep New Year’s Resolutions better than non-believers or stick to diets better. We can place our trust in more significant quantities in the only one worthy of our trust.

**GREEN HIGHLIGHTS SHOW ALL THE TRANSITIONAL STATEMENTS**

**BLUE BOXES SHOW WHAT I PLACED ON SIDE SCREENS OR THE TEACHING SCREEN**

**CONNECTION** – Connection around the concept of trust.

### A. **TRUST FALLS:** (BEGIN WITH PICTURE)

#### High Ropes Course Picture

If you’ve ever experienced a ropes course as a camper at a summer camp or maybe for an organizational team-building activity, you know that climbing up a tree and crossing over wires 40 feet off the ground is not where you begin the experience. All high-ropes courses start on the ground with what they call “low ropes,” which is ironic because there aren’t any ropes involved yet.

The low ropes are all about building and establishing something with the people who will be holding you on a rope when you’re dangling from a wire 40 feet in the air.

Often, the first thing you do for low ropes is “trust falls.”

#### Trust Falls

Have you ever done one of these? A trust fall consists of standing stiff as a board and falling backward, allowing a person you’ve just met but now trust to catch you.

The goal of trust falls is establishing \_\_\_\_\_.

Any guesses???

The goal of trust falls is establishing **trust**.

The goal of the trust fall is to gain a little trust on the ground so that when you’re in the air, you feel a bit more trust in the people who’ve promised not to let you die.

**TRANSITION:** Turns out, trust isn’t something only needed when you’re hanging by a rope with your life in the hands of a fellow camper or coworker.

**TENSION** – Life feels out of control when we cannot trust, so we attempt to control what is always beyond our control.

- A. **LACK OF TRUST:** If you work or have ever worked in an unhealthy place, you probably assessed why it was so bad. You spent time criticizing your boss... a lot of time. You felt frustrated by your coworkers and customers. Maybe you felt the products weren't good enough. But when everything was said and done, you arrived at the reason things were so bad:

Lack of trust

I consult with marketplace leaders and organizations. The ONE topic that we inevitably deal with is trust. Or a lack of trust.

- B. **WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE:** We've all experienced a "lack of trust" situation. They aren't hard to find. For instance: Workplace dynamics, relationships, mental health, conspiracy theories...
- WORKPLACE DYNAMICS: Terrible workplaces suffer from a lack of trust.
  - RELATIONSHIPS: Difficult relationships suffer from a lack of trust... (expound on this: Marriage, child/parent, friendship)
  - MENTAL HEALTH: Trust issues can contribute to anxiety, stress, and depression. Constantly doubting others or feeling betrayed can take a significant emotional toll.
  - CONSPIRACY THEORIES: A lack of trust in institutions can indeed be a significant factor in the rise and spread of conspiracy theories. When people feel that they cannot rely on the information provided by governments, media, corporations, and other institutions, they may be more susceptible to alternative explanations that seem to offer insight or knowledge that these institutions are perceived to suppress or distort.

We may not always pinpoint the issue as trust, but when we peel back all the layers of unhealth, a lack of trust is often the issue.

- C. **NO WONDER TRUST IS CHALLENGING TO FIND:** It seems we should just all choose to trust more. That would really help! But what really is "trust?"

Trust implies a willingness to accept outcomes as they come, rooted in the belief that things will work out for good, either through the natural reliability of systems and people or through divine intervention.

Well, no wonder we have such a hard time with trust!

When you really think about it: Trust perceived is never guaranteed

Trust perceived is never guaranteed.

When we place trust in anyone or anything, we do so in faith. We hope and believe our trust is warranted and will prove faithful.

"I trust no one, not even myself."

– Joseph Stalin

**So, back to our problem:** We cannot live without trust. At the same time, too many people have let us down too many times.

D. **WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING:** Leaving us with basically two options:

We either **trust** others...

Or...

We either **trust** others or  
trust our ability to **control** others.

Basically, we trust them or us. That's our options.

E. **TAKING CONTROL:** Our lack of trust is why we all tend to be control freaks.

When things feel out of control, we want to regain control by taking control.

Examples: I can't trust my kids, so I... Spouse. Boss. Neighbor.

a. I can't trust my kids...control them. I can't trust my boss...control them. I cannot trust ...

b. Trust and control are inversely correlated. The more we trust, the less we feel the need for control. The more trust we lack, the more control we attempt to exert.

Pretty soon, we find ourselves living in what feels like out-of-control chaos, and our solution is to exert control.

F. **TO SUMMARIZE:** **But let me ask you. Have you tried to control something or somebody before? How'd that go?** While we attempt to regain control of the chaos by exerting control, we learn the hard way that control is but a myth. Nothing is really within our control.

a. You've tried to control your kids...

b. You've tried to control your boss or your staff or a direct report...

c. You've tried to control a spouse or friend...

**Where does all of this leave us? Quick review:**

**Trust** is required for life.

Without trust, life feels **out of control**.

When life feels out of control, we attempt to take **control**.

But control is a **myth**.

Good **luck**, let's pray...

Let's pray and go home... I'm kidding. But this is how we live.

Trust is the issue. We've got to find a way to direct our trust and control better.

G. **WHAT CAN WE CONTROL?** **Here's some great news, and it does offer us the solution.**

We can control **one** thing.

And it's not your boss or spouse or kid or government...

This one thing we can control is true for work, at school, at home, and in all of our relationships.

TRANSITION: We are at church, so I assume you're waiting for the "Jesus answer." And I have one and I want to share it with you, but we should first acknowledge one principle.

**TRUTH** – If everything is spiritual, perhaps we should place our trust in the one who is in control.

A. **EVERYTHING IS SPIRITUAL:** Everything in life is spiritual.

Everything in life is spiritual.

While we may not see it or admit it, our spiritual worldview fundamentally controls everything in our lives. This means that trust is also spiritual.

B. **SOLOMON CONTEXT:** Solomon was the third king of Israel and was thought to be the wisest person alive at his time. He prayed for wisdom and God granted his wish. Here's something he wrote for us:

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight.

I believe this statement is the solution to every one of our trust problems.

Here's what I mean: Solomon is suggesting what we said a moment ago: We are all going to trust something. Other people, organizations, ourselves, or... our Lord. And, we'll prioritize this trust in the order we believe is most trustworthy.

If everything is indeed spiritual, I wonder if placing our trust in God brings inner control to a life that can feel out of control.

C. **PASSAGE TEACHING:** Solomon's point is this: We don't have a choice not to trust in something. When we trust in the Lord, Solomon doesn't suggest that all the issues of life go away, but that they become less in focus the more we focus on Jesus.

Our "path" may not get easier,  
and the cliffs may not go away,  
but the more we focus on following the Lord,  
the less attention we pay to everything else.

D. **WE CONTROL ONE THING:** As I mentioned earlier, we all can control one thing: Where we place our trust.

We can control one thing:  
Where we place our trust.

TRANSITION: This is why self-control as part of the Fruit of the Spirit is so important for our lives.

**APPLICATION** – The fruit of “self-control” allows us to better control where we place our faith.

- A. **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:** We began this series talking about what Paul called the “Fruit of the Spirit.” This fruit is what we, as Christians, should experience through the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives. Here’s how Paul wrote it out for us:

**Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.

Although we still try, we all know that we cannot control others. We can’t control our boss, spouse, kids, workplace, neighborhood, etc. And we really don’t control ourselves very well, either.

When we placed our faith in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit, we were given a new capability: Self-control. But not the kind of self-control that allows Christians to keep New Year’s Resolutions better than non-believers or stick to diets better. We’ve been given the ability to place our trust in great quantities in the only one worthy of our trust.

**So what does the world need now?**

**What does the world need now?**

More Christians allowing the Holy Spirit to grow their trust in God.

This is what the world has always needed.

- B. **BIBLICAL CHARACTERS:** Adam and Eve struggled to trust in God. Abraham didn’t always trust in God. Jacob had a full-on wrestling match with God! And on and on and on – including us.
- One of the most challenging things for followers of Jesus is to place their full trust in God.
  - This is why we like to call Jesus “Lord” but tend to treat him as a life coach. Lords don’t make suggestions or offer options. They are in charge. They are in control.

- C. **THE ROLE OF FAITH IN SELF-CONTROL:** **Don’t miss this:**

True self-control is a demonstration of faith.

When one trusts God’s sovereignty and timing, there’s less impulse we have to control others.

- D. **QUESTIONS:** We all attempt to control what we cannot trust. This includes ourselves.

Where are you struggling to trust God?

What or who are you trying to control?

The answer to question 2 is how you discover how to answer question 1.

TRANSITION: If trust is a problem, redirecting your faith is the solution. People and things will always let us down. Your Heavenly Father is the only place where trust can be placed and trusted at all times in all ways.

**LANDING** – The only thing in our control is where we place our trust.

- A. **HOW WILL YOU RESPOND:** There is no better day than today to make this decision. For the first time or to reset your faith that's gone astray.

The only thing in our control  
is where we place our trust.

Through the Holy Spirit, you have the capability to grow your trust in Jesus while letting go of your need for control.

**PRAYER**

## Encounter Church – Check Your Heart

### “Guilt”

**Bottom Line:** Godly sorrow heals our hearts.

**Key Idea:** Violating a moral standard, a personal value, or the expectations of others births guilt in our hearts. Yet guilt isn't the issue. It's how we respond to guilt that determines the long-term condition of our hearts.

#### CONNECTION & TENSION – Key connection idea.

A. **LYING:** Lying to my mom when I was 2: I don't have the rock in this hand...see!

“I know you would **never** lie to me!”

I felt SO guilty!! Probably because I WAS so guilty.

**I learned a great lesson that day:**

I hate **feeling** guilty!

Did you think I was going to say, “Don't lie!”?

B. **HOW TO NOT FEEL GUILTY:** **Guilt is a pretty powerful emotion.** It's a complex feeling.

Every time we **violate** a moral standard,  
a personal value, or  
the expectations of others,  
we **feel** guilty.

That's really what guilt is, right? An internal feeling. It's an emotion.

Basically, every time we violate our standards or values or harm others, we experience guilt.

The easiest way to avoid guilt is to avoid doing things that create guilt! Stop lying! Stop stealing. Basically, stop harming yourself and others. Of course, this is impossible. There is no way for us to avoid harming ourselves or others. So, every time we violate a moral standard, a personal value, or the expectations of others, we feel guilty.

C. **WHAT IS GUILT:** **What guilt is doing is establishing a relationship.**

Guilt says, “I **owe** you.”

Whether we realize it or not, this is what we feel in our hearts.

- “I harmed you, so now I owe you.”
- “I lied to you, so now I owe you.”
- “I took from you,” or “I damaged you,” or “I acted only in my best interest.”

Guilt **signals** that we now have  
a **debt-to-debtor** relationship.

- I harmed you, so I owe you an apology.
- I took from you, so now I owe you a repayment.

- I acted selfishly, so now I owe you support and need forgiveness.
- In my case, as a child, I lied to my mom; I felt guilty because I owed her the truth and an apology.

D. **COMING CLEAN:** Yet, while guilt reminds us that we owe someone:

Admitting guilt seems much worse than feeling guilty!

Think about it. I'll go back to my little lie to my mom.

To make it right with my mom, I'd need to

- 1) Swallow my pride and ego,
- 2) Face the potential of rejection, and
- 3) Face some consequences.

Not to mention I might allow shame in.

Rather than pay our debt, we:  
Rationalize, deflect, project, withdraw, downplay,  
overcompensate, or even self-punish.

But none of these things takes the guilt away. None of this makes a difference. Why?

Because:

Paying a debt is how you resolve a debt.

Can you imagine calling your mortgage company and saying, "I've decided to rationalize and downplay my debt. So, we're good, right? Call it even?"

An "I owe you" doesn't go away on its own. We can't ignore it away or forget it away. If our guilt isn't gone, it remains in our hearts.

The greatest consequence of unpaid guilt happens in our hearts.

We think it's about facing the music. Experiencing the consequences. But what happens in our hearts when we allow unresolved guilt to fester does infinitely more damage than the consequences of paying off our debt.

But because we hate the feeling of guilt, we often don't respond correctly. This is where our hearts find trouble.

Guilt eats us alive from the inside.

Guilt is like a festering virus that gets worse and worse when ignored.

E. **GUILT OF THE HEART:** Let me give you an example from the Bible. You can see this so clearly in the life of King David. David was called a "Man after God's own heart," but even that didn't protect his heart from the consequences of unpaid debt: David Context...

**2 Samuel 11:2-5, 26-27 (NIV)**  
<sup>2</sup>One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, <sup>3</sup>and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and



the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”<sup>4</sup> Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home.<sup>5</sup> The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”

- Uh Oh. David feels bad...for himself. He begins working to deal with the guilt.
- He brings Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, home from the war. Keeps him one more night. And then has him killed in battle.
- Eventually, David marries Bathsheba. But that didn’t rectify the guilt. There was a debt to pay.

F. **DAVID’S CONSEQUENCES:** Plenty of terrible things came from David’s poor choices and bad behavior: The death of Uriah. The child died. Family turmoil. Public scandal. But the personal grief and distress might be the worst. He felt guilty.

#### Psalm 38:4 (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> My guilt has overwhelmed me  
like a burden too heavy to bear.

This is what happens when guilt embeds in our hearts. This is the consequence of festering guilt. When we don’t pay the debt, we suffer the consequence – a consequence much worse than the repayment.

**TRANSITION:** In one of his letters, the Apostle Paul dealt with this issue head-on and explained it to the Christians and churches in the city of Corinth.

#### TRUTH – What the Bible teaches on the topic with summary.

A. **CORINTH CONTEXT:** Here’s what Paul wrote:

#### 2 Corinthians 7: (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

- Basically, let’s check our hearts and get rid of the things that might contaminate our lives.

<sup>8</sup> Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it.

- Paul wrote a few letters to the believers and churches in Corinth. In our Bible, we have one of his previous letters – 1 Corinthians. Some scholars believe he wrote up to 2 more letters that we don’t have any longer.
- In 1 Corinthians, Paul came pretty hard at them. He directly addressed their:

#### Calling Out the Corinthian Christians

Divisions and Quarrels,  
Sexual Immorality,  
Lawsuits Among Believers,

Disorder in Worship, and  
Incorrect Doctrine

- Basically, even if I caused you to feel guilty, I don't regret it because you needed to understand how your behavior was in contrast to our calling as Christians.
- He continues...

<sup>8</sup> Even if I caused you **sorrow** by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—<sup>9</sup> yet now I am **happy**, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to **repentance**.

- Paul was happy to hear their guilt led them to *do something*: repentant.
- My Childhood Lie: When I lied to my mom, I felt sorrow. I felt guilty. But my sorrow didn't lead me to do anything. It led me to *feel* something but not really *do* something.
- Paul is happy because his letter not only called out their guilt, but it also led them to do something about it: Repent.
- Repentance: A change of heart that leads to a change of direction.

**Repentance**: A change of **heart** that leads to a change of direction.

- Repentance is a big deal. When we repent, we recognize what we've done and the harm it has caused, we feel remorse, we confess, and we turn in a better direction.
- Repentance is a heart issue. It leads to a change in direction and some important action, but it begins with a heart recognition.
- Remember when we said that guilt says, "I owe you."

Guilt says, "I **owe** you."

- Guilt is an emotion that reminds us we have a debt to pay. This is why Paul is "happy" that their sorrow led to repentance.
- Repentance is the first step to settling our debt.

Repentance is the first step  
to **settle** our debt.

- Repentance goes beyond "I feel bad" to "I need to make this right."
- And apparently, God is cool with this:

For you became sorrowful as God **intended** and so were not harmed in any way by us.

- Paul believes God is perfectly okay with us feeling guilty.
- The problem is, when we feel guilt, we have two choices:

<sup>10</sup> **Godly** sorrow brings **repentance** that leads to salvation and leaves **no regret**, but **worldly** sorrow brings **death**.

- Comparison of Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow...

**Worldly** sorrow causes us  
to address the **pain we feel**.

Godly sorrow drives us to address the pain we've caused and relieves the pain we feel.

- Worldly sorrow doesn't address the real issue: I owe you. So it brings death because it doesn't lead us to action. Emotional death. Like a guilty conscious.
- On the other hand, God "intends" or uses guilt to move us to repentance IF we allow ourselves to experience Godly sorrow.

<sup>11</sup> See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

- Not innocent as in "you've done nothing wrong," but innocent of allowing guilt to fester. Innocent of doing nothing. Innocent of not repaying the debt.
- If we allow Godly sorrow to produce repentance in our hearts, we'll act to repay our debt by:

#### Repaying Our Debt from a Heart of Repentance

Confessing,  
Forgiving,  
Apologizing,  
Seeking to Understand,  
Working to Make Things Right

- Godly sorrow is an "other's focused" guilt.

**TRANSITION:** Guilt says, "I owe you." In selfishness, we try to turn guilt into "You owe me." In selfishness, we attempt to flip guilt, but that doesn't work because it doesn't resolve the guilt. Only Godly sorrow does that.

**APPLICATION** – How this can be applied today.

- A. **TWO OPTIONS:** When it comes to guilt, we have two options. We're going to get life wrong. We're going to harm others and ourselves. We're going to feel guilty. Here are our options:

[Just create these four slides as drawn.]

OUR GUILTY OPTIONS	
Worldly Sorrow Rationalize, deflect, project, withdraw, overcompensate, or even self-punish	Godly Sorrow  Repent

OUR GUILTY OPTIONS	
Worldly Sorrow  Causes us to address the pain we feel.	Godly Sorrow  Drives us to address the pain we've caused and relieves the pain we feel.

OUR GUILTY OPTIONS	
Worldly Sorrow  Leaves us with a guilty conscience and unresolved pain in our heart.	Godly Sorrow  Leads us to a cleansed heart through debt repayment.

OUR GUILTY OPTIONS	
Worldly Sorrow  Brings death.	Godly Sorrow  Brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.

- B. **WE'LL FEEL GUILTY:** **We're all going to feel guilty from time to time.** It's impossible to avoid. We're going to make bad choices. We're going to harm people. We're going to sin. The question is, how will we respond?
- C. **DAVID'S INTERNAL STRUGGLE:** **David recognized this.** David really worked hard to keep his heart in check. Like us, his behaviors, at times, worked against him. He wronged people. He wronged himself. And he wronged God. But he was known as a "Man after God's own heart" because in his guilt, he repented.

**Psalm 32:5 (NIV)**

Message Starter Outline

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<sup>5</sup> Then I **acknowledged** my sin to you  
and did not **cover up** my iniquity.  
I said, “I will **confess**  
my transgressions to the Lord.”  
And you **forgave**  
the guilt of my sin.

This is what Godly sorrow does.

Godly sorrow **heals** our hearts.

**TRANSITION: Our other option only leads to emotional death.**

### **LANDING – How is this memorable and inspirational?**

- A. **WE ARE ALL GUILTY:** What’s most challenging about this message is that it applies to every single one of us. None are immune because all of us have wronged others *and* God. I imagine today there are pockets of guilt hidden away in your heart. There are people you’ve wronged. Choices you’ve made. And while you rationalized and deflected and made excuses, the reality is your heart is hurting because worldly sorrow doesn’t help. Paul’s challenge for us is to move to Godly sorrow. Not just for our future guilt but for our past and current guilt, too.

**Repentance** is the recipe to remove our guilt.

It’s too powerful an emotion to ignore.

Where in your life are you carrying guilt?

What do you need to confess?

Who deserves an apology?

Who do you owe? What do you owe?

My prayer for us all is that when we feel guilt, we’ll pause to process, repent of our sins, and repay our debt.

### **PRAYER**