

PBC20060226PM

What Really Matters

Overcoming The Obstacle Of Overconfidence

1 Corinthians 9:23–10:13

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[Dr. McKinley, message, Overcoming The Obstacle Of Overconfidence]

That'll make a Baptist preacher wanna moonwalk to the pulpit.
[congregation laughter] I'm telling you, I'm exhausted and I gotta preach.
[more laughter] That was fabulous and a..., and it really, really was
[applause] I love CeCe Winans and her wonderful spirit, contagious spirit of faith and love for Christ and a..., I'm not sure Prestonwood will ever be the same, but that's okay [more laughter] and I thank God for that and thank God that each and every one of you are here today and are a part of this gathering this morning, it is a great hour of worship and a great time to just celebrate the joy that we have in Christ. And you know as I was watching and as I was listening to CeCe as she was singing I was just reminded that one of the most positive and one of the most desirable qualities that we observe in others is confidence...confidence. People who have a sense of confidence about who they are and where they are and what they're doing. We all like to be around confident people. We all like to be with people who can build confidence into others and one thing that is sure is that CeCe Winans is someone who sings and uses talents and gifts confidently to the Lord. There isn't anything tentative about her singing. Amen? [Amen!] And you know in much the same way that's one of the things that's needed in every life. It is a sense of confidence about who you are, what you are and what God has called you to do in life. The Christian life is a confident life, it's all about knowing and believing for sure in your relationship with God through our Savior Jesus Christ. Our pastor has been leading in a series of messages that's he's called *What Really Matters* and the focus of this series of messages has been the book of 1st John, because the book of 1st John is all about confidence and assurance. In fact the key verse of 1st John is found in 1st John 5, in verse 13. I've got it on the screen here for you. Let's look at it together. In fact, let's read it out loud together. You ready?

These things I've written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may...

[know] That's good, let's say that one more time.

...that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

The Christian life is not a hope so salvation. It's not a maybe so, it is a know-so experience for every person who takes God at His word and puts there faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, the One and Only Savior of the entire world. And so therefore it is por...important for every Christian to be a confident Christian.

D. L. Moody, a great evangelist of yesteryear said it this way, he said:

"I've never known anyone, anywhere, who has made any significant impact for the kingdom of God, who was not sure of their salvation."

And so you can know for sure that you are saved, you can be confident in your relationship with Christ. So confidence is important in the life of every Christian. Confidence is certainly something that is important in every family and in particular in our children. We wanna build confidence into the lives of our children. We wanna build confident kids in an uncertain world and every parent and grandparent knows the need to inspire and to build confidence into the character and the constitution of your children. I believe it's important that we have a confident church. Churches need to be confident and I might say you look pretty confident this morning. I mean we've been celebrating with a mighty spirit, the grace, the goodness, the wonder of God's love and there's nothing more attractive and magnetic than when people walk into the doors of a church where people are not dull and lifeless and dishearted...heartened, but rather are full of a might spirit of praise, there's something about that that captures the heart, the mind and the attention of others. Tragically we live in a day when many churches have lost their confidence, some because they have lost their confidence in the gospel, the Word of God ad what a tragedy that is. But, many have lost their confidence because there's ineffectiveness and ministry and as a result of that, that church is...is plateaued, that church is declining and there's a lack of spirit and heart in the church, and yet God wants his people, I believe, to be mighty in spirit, living for the glory of God and the powerful testimony of Jesus Christ. But having said all those things about confidence and believing that it is very important I also believe that it is important for us to guard against overconfidence. That is to realize that if we're not careful that spiritual blessing in life can ultimately become a curse in life, that you can ultimately experience the loss of a winning edge, that it's possible for you to believe and to be in an environment where people around you are believing and receiving of God, but ultimately we become defeated by our spiritual victories. And in order to try to keep a church from loosing sight of this and believers from somehow wandering away from the importance of guarding our confidence, that is right, and yet not stepping into overconfidence, that can be destructive.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. 1st Corinthians chapter 9, if you'd join me there in your Bible this morning, because he spoke to them about the obstacle of overconfidence, how to protect spiritual victory, how to guard against spiritual failure after you've experienced great and wonderful spiritual blessing in life. And so turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 9, everyone get a Bible is you can do that this morning, there's

some there in the pew if you need one because we're gonna study a very wonderful passage of Scripture.

Of course, just a few hours from now in Torino, Italy the Olympic Torch is going to be extinguished. The games of 2006 will go in the history books and the record books and some who have been there have realized some incredible dreams. There're been moments that have been captured and I'm sure later today you'll see a...a tremendous number of replays or those moments and...and the realization of a dream in discipline and competitive athletes have gone and given their best and have accomplished wonderful things and stood on the podium and received gold and silver and bronze. It's been wonderful. But there are some things in these games that are going to be remembered and some things in these games that are going to be replayed that some could only wish that they would be forgotten. One such case is that of a very bright and talented young snowboarder by the name of Lindsey Jacob Ellis. Lindsey Jacob Ellis is 19-years-of-age, if I'm not mistaken, she's very gifted and talented and has performed at a very high level, but something happened with Lindsey Jacob Ellis on Friday afternoon, February 17th that will be repeated and replayed again and again and she could only wish that instead of a replay it could be a ~~replay~~...repeat in her life. As a champion snowboarder she started in the competition, having gone through the qualifying rounds and got to the gold medal race, as they came out of the starting gate and the first or second turn, one of the other skaters a..., on the board, actually managed to tip the back of Lindsey Jacob Ellis and what could have been disaster suddenly propelled her forward and she began to break away from the field. She was moving, she was soaring, she was on her way to gold and to victory. In fact as the cameras were following and as the snapshots were being taken you could see Lindsey Jacob Ellis and you didn't even see the field in the screen behind her. But she came over the next to the last hill and as she came over that last hill all she had to do was to land, go one more and across the finish line. She did something that I guess came out of a moment of instinct, being a snowboarder and that was that she quickly gave a little wave to the crowd. She was confident, the gold was hers, it was all done, all she had to do was finish the line, but when she came over you can see there that she positioned herself one way and she came back and when Lindsey Jacob Ellis, from the United States, hit the ground she caught the edge of her snowboard and she flipped off of control, off the side of the course. In the length of time that it took her to spin in the snow and to come up on her feet, the other competitor managed to breeze by and Lindsey Ellis began to chase her, but she lost the gold. She did walk away with a silver medal and the postgame interview was incredible. Initially she said you know I'm not sure exactly what happened, I just made an adjustment and somehow it...it just...it didn't come out right, I made an adjustment. That's what she said, but 2 hours later she said, you know, I just got caught up in the moment, I was just excited and what is so common in some competitions suddenly became devastating in the biggest experience of her life. She's gifted, she's talented and I have been very impressed with the humility and the admission that she's brought to the table to say, you know what, everybody said, hotdog, their right, I was hotdogin, but I will pay the price and TV screens will repeat again and

again and again for years to come the moment that could have been, but the moment that wasn't because of a young woman, though gifted and talented and with a wide open door of opportunity allowed herself to be tripped on something...something called overconfidence. Paul was concerned about that for the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth was blessed, had great preaching, had many great things happening, many changed lives, but Paul knew that there was a danger when you experience blessings and the danger is, is that you begin to take the grace of God for granted. You begin to assume and presume on God's grace and before long rather than living in a life that is focused and confident in Christ, you begin to experience just the opposite, a confidence that goes over the edge and ultimately begins to become destructive in life and walk and faith. I'm convinced this is the greatest danger that we face as a church today. Why? Because we've been so blessed. God has done so many things in so many lives, but if we're not careful we just begin to expect if we show up and great things happen. But we show up without the same fervor, without the same faith, without the same focus that has driven us in days gone by and if we are not careful we will be overcome by the obstacle of overconfidence. So how can we guard against it? Well, this morning I wanna bring you a message that involves both encouragement and warning and I want us to look together beginning in 1st Corinthians 9:24 to see **3 THINGS THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL IDENTIFIED AS BEING THE THINGS THAT MUST BE GUARDED IN LIFE IF WE ARE INDEED GOING TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLE OF OVERCONFIDENCE**. Beginning in verse 24:

²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize: Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul said one of the things that I've realized in life is that if I do not want to be disqualified in the arena of God's blessing then I must be careful to guard the discipline of my life. And this is actually the first of 3 things that Paul identifies. Maybe you've seen all the Visa commercials surrounding the a..., Winter Olympic Games, it's all about what life takes. Life takes risks, like takes friends, like takes all these things. Well, Paul tells us there are 3 things that the Christian life takes if you're gonna guard your confidence and avoid disaster.

And first and foremost is that **LIFE TAKES DISCIPLINE**. The Christian life is a disciplined life. Now, let me very quickly say, because this is so very important, that when I speak of the disciplined life I'm not saying that you can discipline your way to faith. That is I'm not saying that you can discipline yourself, win God's approval and ultimately obtain salvation. Salvation is all by grace. [Ephesians 2:8-9]

For by grace you're saved through faith, and that not of yourself; It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Everyone of us is saved when in faith we embrace God's grace and forgiveness, a finished work accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross. But, when that faith is real in you and real in me faith begins, real faith, begins to discipline my life according to the plan, the purpose and standards of God. I don't live the undisciplined life of the past I now live a disciplined life and Paul said my great fear is that somehow I would let the discipline of my faith begin to fade and to faint. And he said the great injury of that would be I could be disqualified. He says it doesn't matter that I preach sermons, it doesn't matter where I serve, it doesn't matter who I know, what books I've read. You see sometimes we begin to assume and presume upon the places that we go, the sermon notes that we take, the number of Bibles that we have, the Bible studies we've been involved in. We begin to focus on all these things and they're all good and they all have their place, but ladies and gentlemen we can never be content to simply live in the arena of spiritual fallout, the place where God's blessing is and we just come and let fallout fall on us without being people who are faithful day in and day out to live out the discipline of a life of faith.

Lindsey Jacob Ellis wasn't ultimately disqualified, but she ultimately experienced a demotion. What so clearly was a gold moment became silver and she knows it's not because that's how she competed, she knows that it was because she forfeited. And just as a young lady disciplined, think of it, 4 years, that's all she lived for to get to the Olympics, gave to a moment of indulgence. So it can be in your life and my life if we begin to become careless and to indulge things in life that need to be put aside that we might live out discipline. Now, what are the disciplines of the Christian life? Obviously that in and of itself could be a sermon series. But what are some of the **DISCIPLINES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?**

Well, one of those is **PRAYER**. Do you remember a little bit earlier today when CeCe came out here she started talking about God and the need to pray and she said God answers prayer and you said, [Amen!] Now you did a lot better than that for her I just want you to know. [congregation laughter] A whole lot better than that. She said do you believe God answers prayer? And you said... [AMEN!] Amen, okay, that's better, I like that. But let me ask you something are you praying, are you simply content to know that your pastor prays, your church prays, your Bible Fellowship leaders pray, that we have prayer groups and prayer ministries? You see it's easy to believe in something about prayer, but not to practice the discipline of prayer. Why? Because prayer takes concentration and focus and sacrifice to call away from other things that we may devote ourselves to the discipline of prayer.

How bout the **WORD OF GOD?** We all own multiple copies of the Bible. You probably have a lot of different editions. You may have the men's edition, the women's edition, the recovery edition, the leadership edition, the...you know...I mean we got every kind of edition Bible you can imagine today. But the strength of life and faith is in the Word and unless you have a Word driven life, a Word bound shelf of Bibles is not going to make any

difference. You see there's gotta be the Word in life because this is spiritual food to the spiritual life and spiritual faith. So there's the discipline of prayer, the discipline of the Word..

The discipline of **HUMILITY**, not always making myself center stage.

The discipline of **SERVICE**, being willing to make trade-offs in my life for the benefit of others.

There's the discipline of **COMMITMENT** lived out in life. Sometimes it has to do with my family, sometimes it has to do with my church.

There's the discipline of **GIVING**. Yes, giving is a discipline that I am willing to understand that everything that I have has been given to me by God in His grace and it's not for my own personal indulgence, but it is to be disciplined and given back into the work and the ministry of Christ. You see life takes discipline and therefore Paul said my great fear is that I would get caught up in religious motion without maximum impact, that I would run, but I'd just be joggin and I wouldn't care about where I finished in the race. That I would be boxing, but I'd just be shadow boxing, just beating the air. You see, in the ancient world there were 2 cities where the games were held. One, of course, was in Athens in Greece where the Olympic games occurred. But then there were the Isthmian Games that took place in Corinth and so when he wrote this about athletes and games and winning, he was talking exactly about the thing that we've seen. I even visited, last summer, on our trip to Greece the Bema Seat at Corinth, the place where the athletes when they won would stand and get the wreath put on their heads. But he said, you know what, he said some people just go through the motions, but they don't have the heart and the discipline to win. And Paul is reminding us that unfit soldiers don't win battle and that flabby runners cannot win races and that slow boxers don't score in fights and that a careless skier, no matter how gifted or skilled can forfeit an opportunity if we let our success be based on our past rather than our present.

There's a second thing that Paul wants us to see and that is not only that without discipline we can be disqualified, that life takes discipline. But he also tells us that **LIFE TAKES DISCERNMENT**. Discernment, look in chapter 10 in verse 1 and let me remind you that while our English versions of the Bible all have chapter headings and...and verses so that we can find them, they're not there in the original text. It's just one continuous text. It's a letter to Corinth. Now I'm grateful for the chapter divisions, but don't ever let them stop you from seeing the fullness of thought and what he has set up about discipline and disqualification continues as we read chapter 10, verse 1:

¹Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant...

He says I've given you the testimony about my fear that I might live an undisciplined life, he says but let me tell you about my fear for you.

...I don't want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud and they all passed through the sea, they were ²all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and they ate the same spiritual food ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

And then he says in verse 11:

All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

That's a pretty strong clarification that this is for you and this is for me and it's all about what God did in Israel of old and what God wants to do in the church today and that is that God wants a people who are a discerning people. The key word in this passage is the word there we read there in verse 1, unaware. What does it mean to be unaware, to lack discernment?

Well, sometimes we are unaware and we lack discernment **BECAUSE OF DULLNESS**, we're ignorant, we do not know and dullness can be the cause of a loss of discernment in life.

I heard about a pastor, he was preaching through the gospel of Mark and he really wanted the sermon series to make impact and so he decided at the end of a service that he was going to ask for a commitment for a little homework assignment for the congregation. He said, I wanna ask you how many of you would be willing to read through the gospel of Mark this week and come back next week ready to do this study with me, having read through the gospel of Mark? Well, right now our pastor's doin a series in 1st John, there are 5 chapters in 1st John. John do you think you'd do that? Pastor said he wants you to read 5 chapters this week, would you do that John? Yeah, how bout that, that's good. Allen would you do that? Yeah! Randy, where are you, I saw you, would you do that? Let me ask you if the pastor stood up here and said I want a homework assignment, how many of you would read the 5 chapters of 1st John between this week and next week, how many of you would do that? That's great, that's most of us, it's not all of us but it's most of us. We'd be willing to do that. Well, guess what, this pastor got the same response, everybody said pastor we'll do it, we'll go home and read the gospel of Mark. So they went home, came back next Sunday, they're together. Pastor said all right last week when we left I left you with a homework assignment I wanna know, for accountability sake, how many of you read all 17 chapters of the gospel of Mark? And guess what, hands went up all over the auditorium. He said you're all a bunch of liars, there're only 16 chapters in the gospel of Mark. [congregation laughter] You see sometimes we intend to do things, but we don't do them and sometimes there is dullness in life and faith because we don't have discernment. We don't know what's being asked of us, we don't have an understanding of the truth and dullness can be the cause

of the lack of discernment.

There's something else that can cause a lack of discernment and that is when we speak of being unaware, we can also speak of **FORGETFULNESS**. It's not that we don't know, it's that we don't remember, that we've not kept sharp in thinking and recalling. Why do you think that over and over in the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, God says remember, remember, remember? He wants us to remember what He has done and one of the ways to keep the cutting edge of faith and to avoid the obstacle of overconfidence is to always remember with gratitude God's grace in your life. Never lose sight of how big what God has done for you is though you may not have everything going your way today. You see over in chapter 10 again Paul said:

¹I don't want you to be unaware that our fathers passed through the clouds of the sea ²and they were baptized into Moses ³and ate spiritual food ⁴and drank of the spiritual drink, ⁵but God was not pleased.

Why was God not pleased with Israel? Because though God did something incredible for them they had become forgetful towards Him. Now, you remember the Exodus, right? God's people were living in a oppression, they were living under the domain and under the persecution of the Egyptian people and God called a man to come out and to lead them and God called Charlton Hesston to go forward. [congregation laughter] You do know better than that don't you? Do you remember the guy's name that God called? Moses, right? And God called Moses, we just think of Charlton Hesston when we see Moses, and he led them out through the sea and he led them out into the wilderness and there God began to make miraculous provisions, but though God had delivered them and though God had claimed them as His own people for His own purpose they forgot the grace and the power of God. And they turned away from God in the wilderness, they refused to go into the promise land. Why? Because they didn't know what God could do? No, they had forgotten what God had promised to do. And forgetfulness can take away from us the spirit of discernment.

There's something else that can take away a spirit of discernment and that's not only dullness and forgetfulness, but it can also be carelessness. **CARELESSNESS**, that is we forget to be aware and attentive to what God has done. We just believe because God has blessed us, God is gonna keep on blessing and we can just take it for granted and over confidence leads to carelessness and carelessness always leads to defeat.

There is another story coming out of the Olympic Games. It's the story of the one man on the Olympic ski team who had more profile, more visibility and more expectation than anyone else. His name? Bode Miller. If you've been anywhere near a television in the last 17 days you've seen something about bode.com, but Bode Miller had an opportunity to win 5 medals in the Olympics and did not win one. Was it because he was beaten by his competition? No, he was beaten by himself. I didn't make that assessment. I was reading an article this week in MSN by one of the a..., editors there who said,

"Unprepared Bode, blows chances at greatness."

And then he starts the article by saying this:

"It wasn't the beer that he drank before the downhill, his night parties at the Olympics or his love for leather style in the combined Salome that ultimately created struggles for Bode Miller. It was all the beers and all the months leading up to the Olympics and all the years of living his life as recklessly as he skies his races. Bode's known as a man who does it his way and yesterday he said, having failed at his 5th attempt at an Olympic medal, 'I just did it my way, I'm not a martyr, I'm not a do-gooder, I just wanted to go out and rock and man I rocked, for me it's been an awesome two weeks. I got to party and socialize at an Olympic level.'"

Well, woop-de-do, [congregation laughter] you see he made it all about him. Now, I wanna be very careful, this is a talented athlete, he has won at the level of world championships, but I want you to know that the reason that he failed at the Olympics is because he became careless. The article went on to say:

"It takes years of training and dedication to win an Olympic Gold Medal, it doesn't take nearly as many years of taking yourself and your talent for granted to loose it."

Bode's lost it! Bode's not gonna come home and sign endorsements and ride the crest and the wave of yet another great downhill adventure. Bode's coming back shamed and probably soon to be forgotten. Maybe not, maybe he'll change his ways, but it's all been because of a spirit of carelessness. But I want you to know that what we've seen play out in an Olympic athlete is played out in the lives of Christians in this community every single day. Just because God's blessing the church I can be careless and do what I wanna do and it all becomes about me and what I want and what I like and it has nothing to do with God and His glory and the testimony and the witness of His people. It happened to Israel. Look again in chapter 10, verse 7, it says:

And some became idolaters...

And then it says in verse 8:

And do not let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did,...

And then it says in verse 9:

nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted,...

And then it says in verse 10:

nor let us complain, as some of them complained,...

Paul is outlining the things that happened in Israel of old and he's reminding the church at Corinth, but he's reminding us these things happened as examples to them, to be a reminder to us that we need to protect, to be discerning of the work of God and the power of God in our lives. If I could just give words to these acts and actions on behalf of ancient Israel I would have to say that Paul was challenging the fact that they had become **CARELESS IN THEIR AFFECTIONS**. He talked about idolatry, that's careless affection, not giving God my whole heart. It was the very same issue that was written in the book of Revelation chapter 2, when we meet the church at Ephesus and Jesus says: [verse 4]

"You've done many good things, but I have this one thing against you, you have lost your first love."

And Christians in every generation struggled to maintain a spirit and a focus of first love for Christ and the glory of Christ. He also said they were **CARELESS IN ACCEPTANCE**, many of them committed sexual immorality, they just became careless and they became promiscuous. They began to buy into the values of the world. It was common in Egypt for people to sleep with one another, to hook up with one another, to make it all about biology and passion and be little about God's standards of purity and love. And the very things they needed to flee were the very things that they began to accommodate in their lives and instead of fleeing they were flirting. It happened to David, the grand and glorious king of Israel, the man who had a heart for God. He was a mighty warrior, he built a great kingdom, but the Bible tells us in 1st Samuel that: [should be 2nd Samuel]

The day came when the kings were to go out to battle and David stayed home.

And you know what happened? He saw Bathsheba from the roof of the palace. He began to inquire, he gave way to lust and that lust brought death and death and destruction and destruction and defeat in his life. Why? Because of a careless acceptance.

He warned us about **CARELESS AMBITIONS**, he says God led them out into the wilderness, but they got there and they said, you know God's given us manna and God's given us water, but ah, we just don't wanna go any further, we've come far enough, in fact maybe we need to go back to Egypt and get some onions and leeks and garlic. They just lost a sense of ambition for God. Their ambitions were all about themselves and their convenience and their comfort and they just wanted to right here and they wanted to excuse additional commitment in life and that's exactly what can happen in a large church. We're all glad to just be right here, but just don't ask anything more of me. Don't ask me to take a bigger risk with God. But you see it's that discernment that guards against carelessness.

And then he said **CARELESS IN THEIR ATTITUDES**. Isn't it interesting idolatry, immorality and then he says, but some of them were complaining. That doesn't seem like a really big deal does it? I mean you're talking about idolatry, building idols and you're talking about immorality and all

that goes with that and now we're talking about just complaining. In fact if some of you have a King James Version it may say murmured. Does anybody's version say murmured? Some of you yeah! Murmur, that the word, in the English language murmur is an _____. That is it's a word that is like it sounds. In fact I want us just to say that word murmur 3 times together. Can you help me do that? Okay, I'm gonna count to 3 and we're gonna say it 3 times. One-Two-Three Murmur...Murmur...Murmur That's it! [congregation laughter] I think you got the point. That's what we do when we're unhappy, we murmur. We just kind of have a half uttered criticism, a...a half hearted response and there's murmuring and complaint and if we're not careful we will develop a callous rather than a gracious attitude and rather than lifting our voice in praise, we will give our hearts to complaint and to murmuring. You can't always see hardening of the arteries in people's lives, but I've seen a lot of hardening of the attitudes in churches. Dr. George Sweeting said it well:

"Contentious tongues have hindered the work of God a thousand times over, critical tongues have closed church doors, careless tongues have broken hearts and the health of many pastors and leaders. The sins of the tongues have besmirched the pure white garments of the bride of Christ."

You see we've got to be careful. So what is it that makes us undiscerning and unaware? Dullness, the things we don't know. Forgetfulness, the things we should know, but we've just allowed ourselves to put aside and carelessness. Life takes discipline, life takes discernment.

One final thing, **LIFE TAKES DEPENDENCE**. I want you to pull a chair very close. The Christian life day by day, hour by hour, is all about a dependent relationship, me dependent on God. The Lord is the strength of my life. Even though I've been to seminary and studied Greek and Hebrew and theology and have preached hundreds and maybe thousands of sermons at this point in my life, I can live my life no less dependent upon God than the first day that I called upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why Paul says in verse 12:

¹²*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

And then he goes on to say there is:

¹³*No temptation that has overtaken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not let us be tempted above what we are able but with the temptation will make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

I don't know what the tests and the temptations of your life may be right now, but I know that God is faithful and I know that God will make a way for you if you are willing to be dependent upon Him. I am absolutely convinced that the self-reliant Christian will be the sure defeated Christian. And if we're not careful we can easily be defeated by the very victory that God has given to us and has allowed us to experience. So guard your victories. Remember that overconfidence is a temptation that is

always standing at the door in the lives of people who have been exposed and have had experiences spiritually in the context of other believers and therefore life takes discipline, life takes discernment and life takes dependence. Guard your heart!