

August 5/6, 2006

## A Prayer to Resist Temptation

### Psalm 141

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We've been singing what is, in essence, a prayer, knowing that what God wants for us is holiness. He wants us to walk uprightly before Him. But also understand, that's what we want as the people of God. We want to walk pleasing to Him. We want to walk uprightly. But we would also acknowledge that's really hard in a world that bombards us with temptation to walk down a different path—and recognizing on any given day we could make a choice that would significantly affect the rest of our lives.

Years ago when our girls were young, on almost a daily basis if the weather was nice, you could look out the window of our home and watch a young man (late teens, early 20s) walk from his house (which was down on the corner) past our house, down to the corner and back. A journey that would've taken me less than five minutes took him well over an hour.

A few years earlier, when he was in high school, he and some other teenagers decided to do some drinking. A little bit later that night they decided to do some driving, and they crashed. One of the teenagers was killed. This particular teenager suffered such severe brain injuries that it was all he could do to put one foot in front of the other, walking with a cane. Mentally, he was barely able to process the most basic functions of life.

If I said it one time, I said it a hundred times to the girls. It's sobering to realize it was one night; it was one choice. And this will be the rest of his life. That's the reality of temptation. We're not playing games here. The enemy is playing for keeps.

Tomorrow you will be bombarded with a hundred temptations. And if on the right day and you're in the right frame of mind, you could make a choice that would destroy your marriage; it would destroy your children; it could destroy your business. It could bring consequences that would affect you the rest of your life.

Nobody gets up in the morning and says, "I think today I'll ruin my life." But every day, hundreds of people make a choice that does just that.

How do we walk uprightly in a world where we are bombarded with temptation? If you have a Bible this morning, turn with me to Psalm 141. It's a psalm of David. He offers us a prayer to help us resist temptation.

If you were with us last week, you'll notice a lot of similarities between Psalm 140 and Psalm 141. (This is also the last psalm of the summer. The next two weeks are the ministry fair, then back to the book of Acts, on into the fall.)

Verse 1:

**O LORD, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You!  
May my prayer be counted as incense before You; the lifting up of my hands as the  
evening offering.** (Psalm 141:1-2, \*NASB)

In verses 1 and 2 David establishes his attitude, which is absolutely critical if we're going to resist the temptations of the world. In verse 1 the attitude is one of surrender. It's an attitude of submission. It's a brokenness. It's a humility. It's saying, *God, I need help with this.*

Imagine with me this morning that there are two roads. It's a common imagery in both the Old and New Testament. There is the road that leads to life. There is also the road that leads to death. You travel one road or the other. There is no middle ground.

David, with all of his heart, wants to travel the road of life. He wants to walk uprightly. He wants to do the right thing. But he understands he needs help. There is something within us that really wants to be self-sufficient. And I think we all fight it all the time. We, with the best of motives, would say, "God, I want to travel this path. I want to do the right thing. I want to walk uprightly. But I'll do it myself." And that's what gets us in trouble. I'll guarantee you, you cannot walk this path yourself.

So verse 1 is David's acknowledgement: *God, I need You. I need Your help or I'll never get down this path alone.*

In verse 2 David offers two very impressive pictures, metaphors, to describe his attitude. I think it's an attitude of authenticity, of David saying, "God, this is my heart's passion." He says, "**May my prayer be counted as incense before You.**"

In the old covenant, the priest would come into the tabernacle or the temple and he'd come to the altar and he would offer an incense that would then create this sweet-smelling aroma that would be lifted up to the heavens. This would be a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. It was a beautiful picture of a life of obedience that's sweet and pleasing to God.

One of the ways to process this world which God has made is to ask the question 'why' for everything God has made. *God, why did You make this like that? Why is this that color? Why does this look like that? Why does this grow like this? Why does this smell like this?*

Have you ever stopped to think about this? There are those things that God has made that are very sweet-smelling; they're very pleasurable. But there are other things that just stink. One is very pleasing; one is very offensive. Why is it that everything that has to do with death and dying and decay is so putrid? Why does it stink? Why is it so offensive? And why are there things that God has made that are so full of life and sweet in their aroma?

It's as if God has given us this metaphor in creation—to say the path that goes down the path of death and destruction, it stinks. It's putrid in the nostrils of God. It's displeasing to Him. Every time you smell something like that, there ought to be a reminder that there's a path that the world is trying to lead us down. And in the nostrils of God, it stinks.

But there's another path. It's beautiful. It's sweet-smelling. What David is saying is, "God, I want my life to be like that."

When we come before God in prayer, it's not a matter of using the right words. It's not a matter of the right posture. It's not a certain formula. But what it is, is the gathering of how I live my life 24 hours a day. And it's brought before God in that prayer, and David is saying, "God, I want every moment of my life to be a sweet fragrance in Your nostrils"—because that's the passion of his heart. That's what he wants.

The second imagery is very similar to that: **“the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.”** The priest would go into the temple and offer the sacrifice. And as the sacrifice would burn, the smoke would lift up into the heavens and it was a sacrifice of obedience before God. You can just picture the priest kind of following the smoke as it goes into the heavens. It’s as if his arms and hands are imitating the smoke rising into the heavens as an offering of obedience.

In essence, when we worship and we lift up our hands, that’s what we’re doing. We’re mimicking the smoke. *May this be an offering of obedience to You, God. May You be pleased with this.*

What David is saying, in essence is, “God, the passion of my heart is to walk uprightly before You. Every moment of every day, I want it to be a sweet smell in Your nostrils. I want it to be a smoke of obedience as it lifts up into Your presence.” That’s what he wants.

The first thing that we have to process in thinking about resisting temptation is asking ourselves the question: Is that really what we want? Is your deepest passion to walk uprightly before God—to travel the path of God, to do the right thing, to walk in holiness before Him? Is that what you want more than anything else? I’ll guarantee you, if it is not, you stand no chance of resisting temptation.

If you find yourself kind of indifferent—*I don’t really care; I could down this path; I could go down that path*—you’re guaranteed to crash and burn.

So it starts with an assessment of the heart: What do I really want? Do I really believe that’s the path of death and destruction and this is the path of life, and with all my heart I want to walk uprightly before God?

There’s a big difference between the person that wants to walk uprightly before God but from time to time stumbles and falls—we all do, but that grieves us; that’s not what we want; we want to do better—there’s a big difference between that person and somebody who really just doesn’t care all that much. They travel this path awhile, that path for awhile—it really isn’t that big a deal. That person is an easy target—guaranteed—to crash and burn.

So that’s the first thing we assess: *Is that really what I want?* And if it is, then we go on with the psalm.

Verse 3:

**Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.**

I find it really interesting in a psalm where David is talking about temptation, that the first temptation he deals with is the temptation of our mouth, our lips, our tongue—what comes out of our mouth. Now be honest, when we first started talking about temptation, is that the first thing you thought about? Probably not. We think about temptation in sexual areas, or this, or that. But the first place David goes is that we are tempted to allow things to come out of our mouths that aren’t right, that aren’t pleasing to God, that aren’t reflective of the presence of Christ in our lives.

I think the reason he starts there is because it’s a problem every single one of us has. There isn’t a person that doesn’t struggle with this. The fact is, we open up our mouths and out comes stuff that shouldn’t come out. It may be gossip; it may be profanity; it may be critical talk; it may be shredding somebody else. We all struggle with it.

There is a temptation within this world to talk like the world: to be critical like the world, to be unthankful like the world, to gossip like the world, to be profane like the world, to shred other people like the world.

David says, “God, I don’t want to do that. I need You to post a guard at my mouth. And every time it seems like I’m going to open up my mouth and say the wrong thing, I’m asking Your soldiers to draw their swords and cut my tongue off. Stop me from saying what I shouldn’t be saying.”

It’s interesting how in the church (whether it’s this church or any other church), there’s always the temptation to focus on certain sins and kind of dismiss or ignore other sins. I think, historically, sins of the tongue have been minimized. It’s just not that big a deal—even though the Scripture says it’s a big deal. In both the Old and New Testament, when you see lists of sins, usually those having to do with the tongue are at the top of the list.

Proverbs 6 says there are six things that the Lord hates; seven are an abomination to Him. Three of the seven have to do with the tongue. In the New Testament, James says the tongue is like a small fire that sets a whole forest aflame. It’s incredibly destructive.

As kids we remember the saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Never have more untrue words ever been spoken. Perhaps words do more damage than sticks and stones could ever do. The Scriptures say this is a huge problem. Don’t rationalize it. Don’t justify it. Don’t dismiss it. Deal with it.

When I was growing up, I got the impression that maybe the number one sin on the list was smoking. If you smoked, I mean you were a bad boy. You’d have been better off stealing a car than lighting up a cigarette! Now if you smoke, I wish you didn’t. It has a lot of health risks, and I wish better for you than that. But the reality is, oftentimes we get our focus all out of whack.

Let’s imagine this morning that as you’re exiting, you see our worship team and they’re sitting around a table and they’re all smoking cigarettes. Would you be a little shocked by that? I would be. Do you suppose I’d get a few e-mails? That’d probably be my whole day on Tuesday: *Yes, I know... Yes, I know... Yes, I know.*

But what if you walked out these doors and you saw the same people sitting around a table and they’re gossiping? They’re shredding somebody else. They’re engaged in negative critical talk. Most people would shrug it off. I maybe wouldn’t even get an e-mail—because that’s not that big a deal.

I think that’s how we tend to view issues of the tongue. We figure out ways to minimize, to rationalize, to dismiss—as if it’s not a problem.

Imagine, parents, you’re sitting around the dinner table tonight, and your teenage son whips out a cigarette and lights it up. You’d probably react to that, and well you should. But you turn right around and light up your tongue, and nobody says a word—as if that’s okay. Why is that okay? I will tell you this, if I had a choice of my teen between somebody who lights up a cigarette and somebody who lights up their tongue, I’ll take the one that lights up the cigarette every time.

It is a problem. We become like the world when we allow things to come out of our mouths that shouldn’t be there. The very first temptation David deals with is: “God, stop me from letting stuff come out of my mouth that shouldn’t be there. Put a guard at my lips and stop it.”

It goes on in verse 4:

**Do not incline my heart to do any evil thing, to practice deeds of wickedness with men who do iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.**

The word “incline” means to reach out toward; it means to lean toward. What David is saying is, “God, don’t let my heart lean toward evil, lean toward the things of this world.”

This is very important to understand. You cannot manage temptation on the action level. It has to be dealt with at the heart level, or you simply will not win.

James says the same thing in the New Testament. He uses the imagery of childbirth to describe temptation. He says it starts with conception in the heart. It grows to maturity and gives birth to the action. But once the action has taken place, there is death. The Greek word he uses there in James means stillborn. This baby you thought was going to bring you so much pleasure—it was going to be such a happy moment—actually is born stillborn. The results of giving in to temptation were not what you thought they’d be. It’s not satisfying like you thought it would be.

The point James is making is, it starts in the heart. It doesn’t just happen one day. It isn’t just something you give in to one day. It’s something that you’ve allowed to fester in your heart for awhile. It’s something you’ve allowed to just kind of stir around in there, and you’ve nursed it and you’ve wondered and you’ve thought about it. And on the right day and the right moment, you gave birth to the action.

Actually, Jesus would say the same thing regarding what comes out of your mouth. What comes out of your mouth is a reflection of what’s in your heart. It didn’t just come out; it has been in your heart for awhile and it finally made its way out your mouth. The best way to stop what comes out of our mouth is to look at what’s in our hearts.

Imagine we’re walking this pathway of life, and over there is the pathway of this world—which is the pathway of death. At first, we don’t even want to look over there. We’ve got our eyes fixed on Jesus and we’re walking this path. But after a while, we start to kind of glance over there and it seems like there are some pretty good things going on over there. It seems like there are some things that are kind of interesting, maybe even attractive. And we find that we’re looking over on that path more and more.

That’s what David is saying. Our hearts are starting to lean that way. I’m starting to wonder, *What would it be like? And maybe it isn’t that bad.* There are things in my heart I think I would never do, but I allow them to kind of fester in my heart until one day I’m doing things I never thought I’d be doing.

All of us need to assess: *What is the lean of my heart?* There are some of you here this morning and if you were to be honest, your heart is leaning a very dangerous direction. You’ve tried to excuse it. You’ve tried to rationalize it. You’ve tried to convince yourself it’s okay, that you can get away with it—it’s not that big a deal. And if you were to be honest—maybe nobody else knows this but you—but your heart is starting to lean another direction, and you’re in a very dangerous circumstance.

He says eventually, if your heart leans that way, you “**practice the deeds of wickedness.**” In other words, you do the action “**with men who do iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.**”

The word “men” there is an interesting one. It’s a Hebrew word that means men who own land, men of status. We would call them movers and shakers, the influencers of the world.

It’s interesting to stop and think about who are the people in your world that influence you. If you’re a student, who are the groups at school that tend to influence you? That for whatever reason, they appeal to you, and they are pretty effective at luring you off the path? Those are the influencers for you. Out in the marketplace, who are the groups that tend to pull you toward them, that tend to influence you, where you find yourself leaning in their direction far too often?

That’s who David is defining here. These are the movers and shakers. And because of that, they set up a banqueting table with all of the delicacies of life—in the ancient world, all of the most exotic foods and perfumes, it’s the best the world has to offer. And they set up this magnificent banqueting table. All the movers and shakers, they sit around the table but there’s one empty chair. And people who are highly influential say to you on the other path, “Why don’t you come over here? It looks to me like you’re eating peanut butter and jelly over there, and look what we have. This is a fabulous feast.”

There’s appeal in that, because of who they are and because of what they offer. We find ourselves starting to lean that direction. We find ourselves starting to think, *You know, that does look pretty good. I am getting a little tired of peanut butter and jelly. And those are the delicacies of life.*

What makes temptation so tempting is that it is tempting. (Go ahead and write that down.) I’m going to give it to you again: **What makes temptation so tempting is that it is tempting.** In other words, it is appealing. There is something within me that says, *That really does look good.* I’m not tempted by stuff that doesn’t look good. I’m not tempted by something that doesn’t promise to meet some need in my life. I’m tempted by something that really does look good. It is appealing to me. That’s why I’m tempted by it.

The fact of the matter is, if you’ve been used to peanut butter and jelly, those delicacies would be really good. What temptation does is it seeks to meet legitimate needs through illegitimate means. That’s what makes it so powerful. There is a desire to sit down at that banqueting table and eat that kind of food. God has promised, “I will satisfy your every need—but in *My way*, in *My time.*”

What you see at this banqueting table on the path of destruction is, in essence, a lie. It’s a deception. Oh, you’ll get one meal at the table. And then bread and water for the rest of your life as you suffer the consequences of death and destruction. It will not deliver the goods. But for a moment, it’s highly appealing.

David understands he needs some help with this. I mean, we would all say there are times when the movers and shakers—those who market the values of the world—they are so good that they get us starting to lean. They get us starting to drift. And we need help.

That’s what verse 5 is about:

**Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; it is oil upon the head; do not let my head refuse it.** (verse 5a)

In other words, what he is saying is the righteous are those who are fellow travelers on the path. They’re not perfect people, but they’re people whose passion is to walk uprightly before God, just like yours. We walk down this path hand in hand, and we help one another travel down the pathway.

He says, **“Let the righteous smite me.”** That’s a strong word. It means to strike with a hammer. Sometimes we need that. It’s a strike with a hammer in kindness. “To reprove” means to argue with me, to convince me, to convict me.

In other words, what David is saying is, “There are going to be times when I’ve been so influenced by the tempters, I’m going to start to drift. And in those moments, I need people around me that know me well enough and love me well enough that they’ll take a hammer and whack me in kindness and say, ‘Hey, what are you doing? What are you thinking? You’re starting to go down the wrong path. You know, I’ve been watching you and it seems like you’re looking at the other path more and more these days. As a matter of fact, I think what I’m seeing in your eyes is, you’re longing to go down that other path.’”

Once in a while we need somebody to strike us with a hammer and say, “Hey, what are you doing? What are you thinking? You’re going to destroy your life if you keep heading that direction.”

He says, “It is oil upon the head.” In the ancient world, if you were a traveler and you stopped to visit someone, if you were a valued person, they would take oil and put it on your head. It was soothing. It was a statement of value. It was healing. You see it in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm: “He anointeth my head with oil.”

David is saying, “You know, when people love me enough to do that, it’s a good thing. They love me; they’re honoring me; they value me. They’re not willing to just let me walk away and crash and burn.”

But it’s interesting, he follows that by saying, “Do not let my head refuse it.” Our tendency is to not like it when people do that. We refuse it, and that’s what gets us in trouble.

I’ve noticed in the Christian culture in which we live today, it’s very popular for people to say, “You know, I want you to know that you have permission to speak into my life at any time. If you see something in my life that isn’t right, if it looks to you like I’m getting off track, you just tell me. I want to hear that.” You have parents that say that about their children: “If you ever see my children doing something they shouldn’t, we want to know.”

Well, that’s an easy thing to say. But what often happens when you actually do that is people get very offended. They get very defensive. You find out pretty quickly they really didn’t want to hear that. They say things like: “Hey, why don’t you keep your nose out of my business? Who do you think you are? Have you checked out your own life lately?”

You see, this is what happens when we’re in an environment like this. You’re in a certain frame of mind, a good frame of mind. And when we go through these things, you say: “That’s really true. I want to stay on this path, and I need people that love me to speak into my life and keep me on the path. I’m all for that.”

But when you are in those moments where you’re drifting off the path, you’re in a completely different frame of mind. What has happened is you’ve started to convince yourself that it’s probably okay, that somehow it will work in your favor, that you’re going to get away with it, that it’s going to be banqueting tables all the way down the path. And you’ve finally convinced yourself you can make this work. And that’s the frame of mind you’re in.

You're now salivating because you're headed for the banqueting table. And your friend gets between you and the table and stops you. And you don't like that, because at that point you're in a bad frame of mind. You react and you get defensive, and you want him out of the way.

That's where we, as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and friends, cannot let that person intimidate us from doing what we need to do. They probably aren't going to say, "Thanks for sharing that. You know, I was really headed the wrong way, and you rescued me." Oh, they may say that ten years later. But at the moment, they're probably going to get a little ugly.

But you can't let that stop you, because they're headed for trouble and we love them too much for that. So you just have to understand, that's probably the way it's going to be. But you still have to whack them with the hammer of kindness and say, "It looks to me like you're going down the wrong path and you're headed for trouble. And somebody needs to stop you before you end up with consequences that may follow you the rest of your life."

In the last part of verse 5, he's gaining perspective: *Why is this so important? Why do I need people around me that love and care about me enough to stop me from going down the other path?* And by the way, we probably all know people who have developed a certain degree of expertise in how to keep people out of their lives. They won't let anybody get close. They don't want anybody poking their nose in. And those are people that are almost guaranteed to crash and burn.

Why is it such a problem? He says:

**For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds. Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock.** (verse 5b-6a)

He's saying, "I'm still praying against this wickedness, because I know, on my best days I know this is the path of destruction. And I don't want to go down that path. But there are days when I'm tempted to go down and I need somebody to stop me."

What he's praying for is that the movers and shakers, the influencers, when they're going down this path would end up dying an ugly, gory, painful death on the rocks. It's a very vivid imagery. But there's a shock factor where those people traveling this path would suddenly be horrified and say, "I didn't know that's where this path was going. I thought we had banqueting tables all the way down the path. I didn't realize it ended up there." And that's where he says:

**And they hear my words, for they are pleasant.** (verse 6b)

The pronouns in this psalm are a little bit hard to follow. The "they" that hear the words are the fellow travelers on the path of destruction. And when they see that horrible end, they're stunned with that and they think: *I didn't know that's where this path was going. I don't want to go down this path anymore!* And they hear the words from the other path. It's the words of David saying, "Hey, it doesn't have to be like this. There is another path; there is another way." And those words are pleasant because they're filled with hope.

No matter how far you've traveled down this destructive path, it's *never* too late. I guarantee you—wherever you are on the path—if you stop and listen, you can hear the words of hope. It's the voice of God from the other path saying, "It's never too late. There is another path. There is another option. It doesn't have to be this way." And those words are pleasant because they're filled with hope.

Verse 7:

**As when one plows and breaks open the earth, our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol.**

There's a lot of debate about what verse 7 means, and the debate centers around the word "our" because it could be translated "our bones" or "their bones." The Hebrew goes either way here. I think it's *their* bones because the context makes sense. To the Hebrew people, it was a big deal that you had a proper burial.

But what David is saying is—as he's reflecting on where the other path ends—just like a farmer goes along and the plow overturns rocks and stuff in the field, that these wicked people, the end of their path is such that they'll be thrown in such a shallow grave that when the farmer comes along he'll plow up their bones, they'll be scattered over the field and no one will care. It's just a statement of utter humiliation that at the end of the day, it was a total waste of life. David is processing that. And I think by this point in the psalm, he is so emotional over his desire not to travel that path—because he sees where the path is going—that in verses 8 and 9 he just cries out to God:

**For my eyes are toward You, O GOD, the Lord; in You I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, and from the snares of those who do iniquity.**

He is crying out to God and saying, "I've got a glimpse, a perspective again of where that other path goes. And God, whatever You do, don't let me go down that path! Don't leave me defenseless. They're setting snares; they're setting traps. They're trying to fool me; they're trying to deceive me; they're trying to destroy me. And God, if I go down that path, it's going to be a slow, ugly, painful death. Whatever You do, don't let it happen." The passion of his heart is to go down the path of life.

**Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely.** (verse 10)

Let the wicked suffer the consequences of their choices, if that's what they're determined to do. But David says, "I want more than that. I want to pass by their destruction and experience the life that's promised in God."

As we process this psalm, we all need to kind of take a deep breath and think about a few things. First of all, we need to ask ourselves: *In our heart of hearts, which path do we really want to travel?* I said it before, if you really don't care, if you're kind of indifferent, then I guarantee you, you will end up on the path of destruction.

We've reminded ourselves over and over again that this world is not a playground; it's a battleground. And you can't go into the battle halfhearted about victory, or you're guaranteed to die. With all your heart, with every fiber of your being, the passion has to be: God, I want to walk uprightly. I want to do the right thing. That is how I want to live my life. I want it to be a fragrant aroma in Your nostrils. I want it to be an offering of obedience to You—that every day of my life would be an act of praise to You. That's what I want. Some days I get there and some days I don't—but that's what I want.

If that's what I want, then I need to think about the temptations of this world. And God will start with my mouth. I'm asking You to post a guard there and stop things from coming out of my mouth that shouldn't. And the reason they're coming out of my mouth is because they're in my

heart—and so I need to reexamine my heart. Which direction is my heart leaning? Are their areas of my life where I'm leaning the wrong direction and I'm going to end up getting myself in trouble and giving birth to the action. And God, I also know that I need help with this. Have I created an environment where other people have the freedom to speak into my life and say, "It looks like you're starting to head down a different path. It looks like you're getting in trouble. It looks like you're leaning the wrong way"—so that I don't end up on that path, because it's just death and destruction?

Does the banqueting table look good? It sure does. And am I hungry? I sure am. But it's a deception. You've got to look beyond the table and realize: It's one meal at the table followed by a lifetime of death and destruction. It's not worth the cost.

In a moment I'm going to close the message in prayer. That's going to be followed with just a couple of minutes as the worship team plays, to give you time to process this—a little quiet time to go before God and ask God: *What is the passion of my heart? What is coming out of my mouth? What is the lean of my heart? Who is there in my life that loves me and knows me well enough that would speak truth when I start to drift off the path?*—just to process some of this.

Then we're going to close by singing the same song we sang when we opened, "Hosanna." Hosanna means to praise the Lord. It's our pledge. It's our commitment that we want our lives to be a fragrant aroma to God, to be an act of praise before Him. And the last song is our commitment to that as the people of God.

*Our Father, we're thankful that You're such a faithful, loving God, that You have provided for us a pathway that leads to life. Lord, You care about every longing, every desire of our heart. You want to satisfy every longing—but in Your time and in Your way. Lord, the enemy is so clever in offering the counterfeit that looks so good at the moment but is filled with pain and destruction. Lord, I pray that You would help us to understand how important it is that what comes out of our mouths is pleasing to You. It is a big deal to You. Lord, remind us that's true.*

*Lord, for every one of us, help us see the lean of our hearts. Lord, there are those here this morning that are leaning the wrong direction; and if something doesn't change, there are going to be serious consequences. Lord, we all need people in our lives that love us enough and know us well enough that, when we start to drift off the path, will get between us and the destruction and do everything in their power to convince us to get back on the path of life. Lord, speak to us in these quiet moments. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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