

Morning.

If you want to open your Bibles to Proverbs 6, you're going to be reading 1 through 19.

My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger, if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, and save yourself.

For you have come into the hand of your neighbor.

Go hasten.

and plead urgently with your neighbor.

Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber.

Save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of a hunter, like a bird from the hand of a fowler.

Go to the aunt, O sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.

Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvests.

How long will you lie there, oh sluggard?

When will you arise from your sleep?

A little sleep, a little slumber, like folding of the hands to the rest.

And poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, and points his finger.

with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord.

Therefore, calamity will come upon him suddenly.

In a moment, he will be broken beyond healing.

There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him, haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,

a false witness who breathes out lies and one who sows discord among brothers.

Thanks, Jake.

I had to give Jake the passage about the deer getting away.

So it just fits.

Hopefully it's not a prophecy or anything like that.

Let's pray and ask for the Lord's help one more time.

Heavenly Father, thank you for practical wisdom.

Lord, we're thankful for just the way that you are so much above us and you created the world.

You know everyone intimately in it.

You oversee all things.

And yet, Lord, you care about the little things in our life.

You care about the small decisions we make and steps that we take.

So Lord, would you help us to care about the small decisions and steps that we take?

And Lord, would you help us to find joy in bringing ourselves into further conformity with your word?

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

All right.

Good to go?

All right, looks good.

So Solomon's aim in the nine chapter introduction that we've been working through is to motivate his son and through motivating his son to motivate us to get wisdom.

One of the motivational tools that we saw last week that he used last week in the passage that we looked at was a warning about the self-destructive nature of adultery and sexual sin, right?

So he talked quite a bit about how the giving into adultery and sexual sin is self-destructive and

This week, we'll see three other self-destructive behaviors.

And he's kind of continuing that theme of foolishness, bringing your own doom, your own harm.

And he says,

we'll see that there's three common ways we invite destruction on ourselves and others.

I've tried to make them memorable, and it doesn't quite do them justice.

You'll see as we work through it.

But if you're just looking for a little tag to hang kind of the three behaviors that he talks about on, your three hangers will be vain debts, or debts that you get into to make yourself look good, dwindling discipline, and aggressive discourse.

So vain debts, dwindling discipline, and aggressive discord.

Three destructive behaviors.

They get progressively more serious, and we know that the author intends us to see that they get progressively more serious by the way that each person is addressed in each warning.

So he starts off addressing his son,

Then he moves to addressing the sluggard.

And then the third person doesn't even get addressed.

He just starts talking about them.

He doesn't talk directly to them.

So you can kind of see how he's getting a little more stern or not aggressive, but he's getting more serious with each individual warning.

And I do think that there's common threads throughout the warnings.

I'm not pulling out a lot of them.

You can do that on your own.

Look at

what these three things have in common from a spiritual and a heart level.

And I think there's a lot we could dig up there.

but we're just going to kind of lay the groundwork and allow you to do some of that this morning.

So first, Solomon starts talking about vain debts, right?

He jumps right in.

He says, my son, if you have put up security for a neighbor, if you have given a pledge for a stranger, if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth, and then he gives some instruction following that.

Really what he's talking about here and what he's warning against in this chapter is cosigning

Or putting yourself up for security for others.

So essentially, he's talking about behavior that, again, we would label co-signing, putting up yourself as collateral for someone, or even really getting into a partnership where someone else's default in the partnership could come back totally on you.

And this is risky and foolish business.

I mean, this is why he's warning his son about it.

Even the FTC warns about it being risky and foolish, the Federal Trade Commission.

They require that when you co-sign for a loan, that this notice gets put in front of you before you co-sign.

It says, you are being asked to guarantee a debt.

Think carefully before you do.

If the borrower does not pay a debt, you will have to.

Be sure you can afford to pay if you have to.

and that you want to accept this responsibility.

You may have to pay up to the full amount of the debt if the borrower does not pay.

You may also have to pay the late fees or collection costs, which increase the amount.

The creditor can collect this debt from you without first trying to collect from the borrower.

The creditor can use the same collection methods against you that can be used against the borrower, such as suing you, garnishing your wages, et cetera.

If this debt is ever in default, that fact may become a part of your credit score.

I mean, we could go through that and point out all kinds of reasons.

Cosigning and assuming someone else's future liability is particularly risky.

But it should be enough to say that if the bank or the lender did the math and they don't deem that borrower qualified for the credit, that that should be enough for you to stay away from the situation as well.

I mean, that's why they're turning to you in the first place, right?

The bank or the lender has determined that they are unfit for that line of credit.

The Bible wants us to be generous, right?

It wants us to help people who are stuck in a tight spot

but not in this way.

Go ahead, pay off their debt, be generous, give them a new start, help them meet their current needs financially.

The Bible is all for that.

It's all for us being generous and giving to people.

Give it away.

But it's not for encouraging irresponsible behavior by becoming a party to it and assuming future liability, future risk through co-signing and other partnerships.

Paul offered to pay off Philemon.

If you'll remember in the book of Philemon, he was a runaway slave.

He ran away from Onesimus and then met with Paul and Paul sends him back to Onesimus and he says in Philemon 18,

If he has wronged you at all or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

So Paul essentially pays off his debt.

Whatever he owes you, I'll cover his debt.

But what Paul doesn't do in Philemon is say, and if he ever racks up another debt or if he does anything else, I'll cover that too, right?

He's not assuming Philemon's future liabilities.

He is expecting Philemon to take responsibility for his own future and his own decisions moving forward.

So he was in a bad situation, whether that was by his own doing or not.

Paul's willing to help give him an out from that situation and help restore him in that way.

But he's not going to be responsible and especially potentially solely responsible for Philemon's future debts that he may incur.

So maybe you're sitting there and you're like, uh-oh, this is me, right?

I'm on the hook for someone else's debt big time, especially if they don't pay.

Or maybe you've put somebody on the hook for your own debt.

What are we to do?

What are we to do if we're in this situation currently or we ever foolishly find ourselves in that situation even after we've heard the warning?

Well, Solomon tells us in verses 3 to 5,

Then do this, my son, and save yourself.

For you have come into the hand of your neighbor.

Go hasten and plead urgently with your neighbor.

Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber.

Save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

So essentially what Solomon's saying here is to humble yourself, right?

Humble yourself.

Admit you were wrong and ask to get out.

You gotta eat a large dose of humble pie here.

If you have someone on the hook for your own debt, if it's at all possible, let them out and take responsibility for it yourself.

Don't just ask to get out, right?

So Solomon's not just saying go up and give it a shot, just try once.

He says persistently plead with the creditor and with the person that you co-signed with to make a way out for you.

Whatever you've got to do, if you've got to pay something, whatever, like get out of that situation where their default, their bad behavior moving forward is your responsibility that comes back on you.

Now, this will be difficult to do, right?

It'll be difficult to do because you're already in contractually in the situation, but it's also difficult to do

Because most likely it's some form of pride or misplaced compassion and savior complex is a strong way to put it.

but there's some form of pride that got us into this position in the first place.

Look at verse 3.

Then do this, my son, save yourself, for you have come into the hand of your neighbor.

I'm sorry, verse 2.

If you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth.

You get into this conversation and you feel for the other person, you really want to help them out, and even though you don't have the means, you don't want to admit that you don't have the means or the

And even if you do have the means that you don't have, like the compassion or whatever, you're not the person to turn to.

You want to set yourself up, right, as like kind of the person that comes and saves the day, right?

And so you take on the responsibility yourself and save the day.

But again, if you're co-signing, you're not really willing to save the day or you're not really able to save the day in the first place.

So there's some form of pride or attention drawing, right, that got us there in the first place.

So then we got to go back and eat that pride, even worse than if we had just said no in the first place, and humble ourselves and try to get out of the situation.

Taking on someone's foolish risk, right, it might make us look stronger, it might make us look more capable, but essentially Solomon is saying here, this is self-destructive behavior, right?

This is putting yourself in a position you should not be in,

that God does not expect you to be in, and it is something that's only going to end up hurting you in the long run.

There's no benefit for you here at all, real benefit for you here at all.

So first self-destructive behavior.

Don't take on vain debts.

Don't take a risk that the only thing you're getting out of it is feeling good about yourself or maybe puffing up your ego a little bit.

Second one, he says, is dwindling discipline.

Look at verses 6 to 11.

Go to the aunt, O sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.

Without having any chief officer or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.

How long will you lie there, O sluggard?

When will you arise from your sleep?

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber and want like an armed man.

So this is the first time we're introduced to the sluggard in Proverbs, but he comes up quite a bit throughout the book of Proverbs.

There's three things that we see in the book of Proverbs that Ray Ortlund has noticed and pointed out, and I'm going to give them to you from him, about the sluggard.

One we see in verse 9 of this passage.

He won't give a definite no.

The sluggard won't give a definite refusal or no.

He says, how long will you lie there, O sluggard?

When will you arise from your sleep?

a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.

He's just like, eh, you know, a little sleep here, I know, a little slumber here, I'm going to get to it in a minute, right?

He's not saying no, I'm not going to do it, but he's just like, ah, in a minute, right?

In a minute.

There's no definite no, but there's just this endless train of small compromises, right?

Endless train of small compromises that eventually results in the thing not happening.

Also, the slugger won't finish things.

So if he actually does get around,

to starting stuff.

We see in Proverbs 26, 15, that the sluggard buries his hand in the dish and it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.

I love that proverb.

So vivid, right?

He reaches down for some peanuts and he's just, he's too worn out to bring it back to his mouth to actually

Eat it.

And we see this in all kinds of ways.

I think of myself and when I had a garden, right?

You know, you go through all this work to prep the garden and it's growing and I weeded it and all that stuff.

And then sometimes I just don't feel like going out and picking stuff, right?

Sometimes I don't have time.

It's legitimate.

But there are other times where I'm just like, I'm just going to stay inside.

It's too hot, right?

Won't even bring the fruit to my mouth.

Won't go out and get it.

Basically, though, he doesn't stick with the task, right?

He gets halfway through, doesn't see it through to the end.

Also, sluggards don't face things as they are.

This is one my dad quoted quite a bit, Proverbs 22, 13.

The sluggard says, there's a lion outside.

I shall be killed in the streets.

Instead of facing the obstacles and the challenges of life, he makes excuses.

Is there really a lion out on Fairmount?

Unlikely, right?

There's not a lion out there roaring around, running around, killing people.

What's really out there, though, are endless ways to provide for ourselves and other people spiritually.

But he doesn't want to go out there, right, or physically.

He doesn't want to go out there and work and provide for himself and for others physically or spiritually.

So he invents some kind of danger that's out there so he doesn't have to, right?

He doesn't have to go out and do the work.

As I was kind of thinking over the ways that I've seen this in my own life, there's ways that I think a lot of us are good at doing this physically.

You know what I mean?

Some of us are really good at working hard and providing for the family or providing for others and doing the physical work.

But there's also a spiritual aspect to all of these as well.

There's a spiritual debt that we've owed, and we'll talk about this in a second, that Christ paid on our behalf.

But there's also a spiritual provision and a spiritual work that has to be done to provide for ourselves, to feed ourselves from God's word, and to feed others as well.

So don't be lazy, right?

That's essentially what...

Solomon's saying here, don't be lazy, especially when it comes to eternal work.

Do the family devotions.

Get coffee with that person that God's laid on your heart.

Partner together here with God's people.

There's a full harvest out there.

It hurts sometimes getting involved in people's lives.

It costs emotional time and energy to get plugged in with people.

Don't invent pain and don't invent a cost in your head and then let that

overrule or allow you to sit on the couch instead of getting involved in people's lives as well.

So deep down though, I think we've all got some sluggard in us, right?

We've all got those times when we won't make up our mind or we won't finish things or we won't face things as they are, which is why Solomon sends us to school and particularly the school of ants, right?

Not a school for ants, but a school of ants in verses six to eight.

It says, So first off, just notice that the aunt is discussed in the feminine.

That's pretty typical in Proverbs.

whoever the son is supposed to look at, right, and either admire or stay away from is typically in the feminine.

So we have wisdom talked about as a woman.

We also have the adulterous talked about as a woman.

So ladies, you just got to take the good with the bad, I guess, in Proverbs, right?

So he's going to talk about you in very uplifting ways, but he'll also talk about you in some ways of warning as well.

All right, so

The aunt here, she works from inner drive and harmony is the first thing we notice.

It says, go to the aunt, consider her ways.

Without having a chief officer or ruler, she does all this work.

So she's, you know, you've got this whole colony in advance.

It's pretty amazing, actually.

And they have a queen, but basically the queen is just pumping out eggs.

She's not telling everybody what to do.

They've done studies on this.

They thought there were pheromone instructions given, but they can't link anything to instructions.

I did a little deep dive on ants.

They communicate through pheromones and stuff, but there's not a big master plan.

They just do it.

This whole colony just does what needs to be done.

Somehow, they all know what to do and when to do it.

So that's kind of amazing.

But also, nobody's there cracking the whip on the ants, right?

They're all just doing it.

They're working from this inner drive, doing what they're made to do, and a love for the work that God has given them to do.

She's not forced to work.

She works because that's what she's made to do, and there's beauty in the work that God's made her to do.

Listen, our work has been cursed because of sin.

It's futile.

It's broken.

We can and should do a whole Sunday school class on work.

The Bible has a lot to say about work, and we will work for eternity.

Work comes pre-fall.

It's a good thing.

Work is not a result of the curse.

Our work is cursed.

It's futile.

It's never going to amount to anything really meaningful other than the work that God includes us in in the building of his church.

right?

But it's good, right?

The work that God's given us is good to do.

We'll be doing it for forever in some form or fashion.

I kind of suspect it's going to be like the ants, right?

That we're not going to need anybody cracking the whip over us.

We will all be motivated from this inner love and beauty for the work that God's given us to do.

And maybe we won't need a plan or oversight.

Maybe we'll just

know what to do like the ants.

I don't know.

That's kind of interesting to imagine.

But the point, though, I think that Solomon's making is that there's this inner joy, this inner harmony that drives her work.

And she works hard, right?

He says that she prepares her bread in summer.

Summer here kind of emphasizes the season, but really the emphasis is on the heat.

She works even when it's hard to work.

And she works for the future.

So she gathers her food in harvest.

She knows winter's coming, but she works hard when it's time to work to provide for her future.

Many of us work hard to prepare for those winter times in our life.

We build up a nest egg.

We do our best to prepare for lean times physically.

But there are spiritual winter months and even years coming.

There are times when God will call you to walk through a period of suffering,

whether it be physical suffering or suffering with loved ones in our life.

Or sometimes he calls us to walk through periods of just spiritual dryness, where it seems like God's far away.

It seems like I open up his word and there's just nothing.

I feel nothing when I open his word.

I feel nothing when I get together and sing with his people.

There are dry times that God calls us to walk through

spiritually, winter months that God calls us to endure spiritually, what are you doing now to prepare for those winter months?

What work are you putting in now, both mentally and spiritually, like in our hearts, to prepare for those lean times?

So we've been warned of vain debts.

We've been warned about the sluggard and diminishing discipline.

But Solomon addresses the most serious destructive behavior here in the last one, an aggressive discord.

So first thing that we see is that discord is self-destructive in verses 12 to 15.

I'll tell you why.

You'll see why discord marks this whole section.

It's a little unclear at the beginning, but then it gets clearer as it goes.

But he says in verses 12 to 15, a worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech.

He went with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord.

Therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly.

In a moment, he will be broken beyond healing.

So we have one mention of discord there in verse 14.

And this last section is really kind of two separate sayings that Solomon smushes together.

But they're connected by the main themes of divisiveness.

They're also connected by the repetition of the same body parts.

So he lists the same body parts in the first section and in the second.

In verses 13 and 14 and 17 and 18.

So in this first section, we have this picture of what God calls a worthless person.

Someone who's of no value to the people around him, no value to bring glory to God.

Every person has worth and dignity in God's sight as somebody made in his image.

But when it comes to doing what God has made them to do and benefiting those around them the way that they were made to benefit those around them, this person's worthless in God's sight.

He's holding a conversation here, this worthless person is holding a conversation here  
or conducting business.

He's in interaction with somebody else, all the while signaling something completely different to his friends.

So that's kind of what the picture is that Solomon's painting here.

I remember sitting in a board meeting at a church that I was volunteering at when I was younger, and there was a particularly contentious topic on the agenda.

And as the board leader was introducing the topic, I saw a guy

kind of in the circle, throw a look over to his friend that was in the circle at the meeting and kind of rolled his eyes.

It was like, what an idiot.

Can you believe this?

We're going to do this again type of thing.

That's what Solomon's talking about.

You put on a front one way, but you're also kind of signaling that you either have no intention of keeping this deal or you're just kind of communicating some other message to somebody that  
that's in the vicinity.

That's not how the body of Christ behaves, right?

We don't throw people under the bus behind their backs.

We don't form factions in a corner and manipulate to get our own ways.

Matthew 18 gives us a very clear process for how we confront sin, but also how we just deal with confrontation in the church in general.

We go directly to the person,

And if you can't resolve the issue one-on-one, then we bring another person in to help mediate.

And if that doesn't work, we go to the elders and then finally to the church, right?

So we don't look to build up a following or we don't look to get some support from other people on our side before we go try to get our agenda put, you know, established.

Rather,

We go directly to the person that we have an issue with or the confrontation with and we deal with it that way.

God allows us, God's grace in particular allows us to deal with conflict directly.

Because even from the top down, leadership on down, we can admit we're wrong because there's grace.

We can admit we're wrong because we know we're wrong and we know we're sinful.

We're not perfect.

We're not going to make the right decision every time.

We're not going to deal with difficult interpersonal relational issues perfectly every time.

We expect some corrective feedback all the time, as should you, right, from your brothers and sisters around you.

You're not perfect either.

So we expect some corrective feedback in love, speak the truth in love, but we do it directly, right?

We do it directly, not in this shady way where we say one thing or where we put on one front and then are communicating something else on the side.

Solomon warns,

Ultimately, that this kind of two-faced discord is self-destructive.

That's the important thing to see.

Look at verses 14 and 15.

Calamity is a big word.

I think what he's saying here is kind of two things.

Just one, generally speaking, when you deal with people this way, it's not going to go well for forever, right?

You might get your way for a little while, but it's going to come back to bite you.

But he also says here, calamity will come upon him suddenly.

In a moment, he will be broken beyond healing.

I think he's talking about final judgment here, right?

That this reflects a heart that is not regenerate.

This reflects a heart that is...

does not understand grace and mercy in a saving way.

I think he's talking about something similar to Hebrews where Esau sought repentance with tears and couldn't find it.

Couldn't make his way back to asking for forgiveness and repenting from the Lord.

So whatever these words mean, they're big.

Broken beyond healing is intense.

But

Discord here is that serious because ultimately discord is an abomination or sowing divisiveness is an abomination to the Lord.

So when you have a list here like this, so he says six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him and he lists them.

When you have a list in Hebrew literature and they add one thing like they do here to the end, the last one is the most important, right?

The last one is the one that informs the rest.

Excuse me.

It informs the rest.

and tells us what the rest of them are about.

So the last one, the one who sows discord among the brothers, is the one that's informing the real issue, that's informing the rest of the list and establishes itself as the real issue.

The real issue is stirring up discord and division.

So there's sinning, and then there's aggressive sinning, is another way to think about it.

There's sinning,

that's like on the attack, right?

Where you're, you're going out and you're looking to cause trouble.

There's sitting where you're kind of, it's between you and God, or, you know, you kind of have this desire and you, um, are, are just kind of accidentally doing it almost like you're still purposefully doing it, but it's, uh, it's, it's kind of passively.

You just kind of do it and you almost don't know that you're doing it.

Don't realize you're doing it.

And then there's like this aggressive sitting where you're actually like going after people, uh, and, and, um,

aggressively moving your own agenda forward.

At the center of all this, and this aggressiveness goes from like destroying someone's reputation to actually shedding their blood, right?

Like there's this progression you see in these verses as well.

But at the center of it all is a heart that sows discord among the brothers, which is an abomination to the Lord.

Like Solomon can't say it any clearer.

I can't say it any clearer.

When you see that something is an abomination to the Lord, it's not the word we use a lot today, but it's very serious.

There's not many things that are listed as an abomination or an affront.

God hates it.

He finds it disgusting, putrid, that are totally against who he is and what he desires.

Conservatives are really good at

at calling out liberal abominations, gay marriage, the killing of unborn children, transgender ideology, all clearly labeled abominations or at least displeasing to the Lord in Scripture.

But very rarely do we hear conservative circles referring to this

abomination with the same force and intensity, or at least even the same word, right?

So in discord or division among the brothers, is that abomination equal in its severity to some of those other things that I listed?

I've observed several in the Reformed community, especially some of our post-millennial brothers, who are encouraging, especially younger believers, to be a problem in the church.

to be a problem at school board meetings, to be a problem at town hall gatherings, to be the reason that your elders have to pray longer and harder at their prayer meetings.

I kind of get what they're talking about, but I am concerned about the way that they're going about encouraging this type of behavior.

My concern isn't that there's a growing sentiment that we need to stand on truth and conviction.

I'm glad that's happening, right?

I'm glad that there's a growing sentiment that we need to stand and not give on truth and on our convictions that are biblically based.

But my concern is that that's not effectively what people are being encouraged to do, but rather, in practice,

they're being encouraged to aggressively attack something false, right?

That the way that some of these memes and articles are written are encouraging believers to go on the offensive and attack something that they seem to be false.

I think this is potentially a problem because one, if you look at Ephesians closely, we're not given spiritual armor to attack.

All through the book of Ephesians, Paul's telling us to walk and to move forward, right?

To grow, to advance in our knowledge and relationship with the Lord.

But when he gets to the armor, he says to stand firm, right?

He says, put on the armor and stand.

Stand firm and endure the flaming arrows, blah, blah, blah.

So look it up.

It's there.

Two, I think people get focused on the falsehood.

I'm concerned about this because I think people get focused on the falsehood.

They start looking

for things that even slightly resemble the falsehood to destroy them, right?

So this is bad over here.

This kind of looks like this over here, destroy, right?

That's kind of the end result of this like encouraging to go on the offensive and attack rather than fixing our eyes on the truth and growing together.

This kind of results in a lot of hostility and suspicion towards anyone that's not on my list of approved teachers or podcasters

And it stifles our ability as a people, as God's people, to listen to other believers with discernment and conviction rooted in the scripture.

I'm not going to agree with every believer all the time on everything.

But there ought to be a sense of which I'm listening for what I can agree with you on and what I disagree with you with.

All I'm saying, bottom line,

We can talk more about this.

I don't want to have inside baseball conversation from the pulpit for too long here.

All I'm saying is that causing division among brothers is an abomination to the Lord.

Very clearly here, right?

So we better be sure.

We better be sure as heaven and hell that what we are fighting for, our standing, or what we're standing on is scriptural truth, right?

And not just our interpretation of it,

but what scripture says.

There's also, and I say this because we will be talking in the near future and making some tough decisions about organizations and folks that we associate ourselves with and that we work with.

And we will have to stand, I believe, on some convictions and divide or part ways in cooperation with certain organizations and folks.

So I'm not saying that there's no time, right, to stand on convictions and to stand firm.

But we ought to take that very seriously when we do, right?

We ought to take that very, we ought to tread lightly there and not just throw this around like a blowtorch burning a ton of stuff down in the process.

without carefully considering and listening, and really listening and love to what our other brothers and sisters are saying and how they got to the place to where they're at.

All right, three self-destructive behaviors.

Kind of in three different directions, but also in a very similar direction and some similar roots as well.

These certainly have consequences for those around us, right?

Vain debts, dwindling discipline, aggressive discord.

On one hand, they're pretty straightforward.

They're pretty simple.

On the other, we know that all too well, all too well, we've got each of these things in us.

So we could just take them at surface value, be like, I haven't co-signed for anyone.

I'm providing for myself.

I'm doing all right.

I haven't killed anybody lately.

So I'm doing pretty good with these things.

But if we take a closer look, we all

have some of this in us, and we don't walk within them perfectly.

I want people, you know, there's different ways that we do it.

So a passage like this can be overwhelming, right?

It can even be paralyzing, especially when we think that there are times that I want people to think I'm more capable than I am financially, and so I say things that I make promises I shouldn't.

Or I can be indecisive and make excuses for not being as productive as I should be.

Or I've struggled to walk the line

between standing on biblical truth accurately applied and being divisive over my own personal convictions on what it looks like to live out that truth.

I mean, when you start framing it like that, this can be overwhelming and even paralyzing.

But the gospel reminds us that Jesus just didn't come to extend our credit

and cosign on our sin debt, right?

But he came to pay our debt in full.

He did the work, right?

He did the work that we never could do to make us right with God when we were far off.

He reconciled us back to God in Christ so that there's neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, there's no male nor female, for we are all one in Christ.

The unity that we have in Christ is

transcends all of those other categories that trip us up in other areas of life.

And it's only when we truly understand that deep down, it's only when the gospel goes deep, right, into our hearts, into our desires, that we can give selflessly and wisely, that we can work

with joy and harmony, and we can firmly stand on Scripture, not compromise on Scripture, instead of almost...

I can't think of the word, just lost the word.

Not self-confident, but, you know, where you're aware of yourself and your needs.

Instead of just like, yeah, not self-aware, that's not quite the word.

But anyways, that's like aggressively attacking people because you're insecure.

There we go.

Insecure in your own positions, you know, aggressively attacking people.

We can firmly stand on scripture and not be in that position.

So it's my prayer this morning that the Lord keeps us, right?

That the Lord keeps us from self-destructive behaviors of these sins and that we live and listen with discernment and wisdom by his grace.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your grace that's new every morning.

Lord, we're thankful.

that you don't allow us to walk in these things blind to them, but that you reveal them to us in your word.

So would you show us our hearts?

Would you show us where we stand in some of these things?

And would you help us to grow in them for your glory?

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Let's stand, and I'll read the benediction for us as we leave.