

## Conquering the Wind (Part 1)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello, friend. So good to have you joining me today. I have a word in my heart that I want to share with you. If you could sit down with me, here, right now, and I opened up the window, or there's actually a door off behind me, you could see that the wind is absolutely howling here in California today. The trees are bent over, and there's leaves blowing everywhere. Not a good day for ladies who want to keep their hair in place because it's just so windy. I'm going to talk to you about the wind. In fact, I want to talk to you about three types of wind spoken of in the New Testament, and they represent challenges that every believer will face in life.

Now, I'm not going to be able to finish this message today. So you're just going to have to tune in next time to catch the remainder of what I want to share about the wind. I've entitled this Conquering the Wind. The first type of wind that represents a challenge that every believer will face we find in the book of James 1. I'm going to begin reading verse five (James 1:5 NKJV). It says this,

<sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Right there, that's a great promise. If you don't know what to do, and you're faced with a marital situation, a financial situation, there's spiritual conflict going on in your life, there's things going on with your kids or with work, and you're just bereft of wisdom. You don't know what to do. Ask God for wisdom. The promise is that He will give it to you liberally and He won't find fault.

He won't scold you and say, "You should know this. After all this time, you've got to be kidding me. You're asking Me for wisdom? You don't know this? Don't you listen when you go to church? The pastor dealt with this very thing last Sunday." No, God will not upbraid you. He will not scold you. He won't find fault with you. If you ask for wisdom, He will give you wisdom. That is a wonderful thing. He will show you what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. It doesn't stop there. (James 1:6–8 NKJV) It says,

<sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The first wind that we're going to have to confront as believers that we're going to speak about now is the wind of doubt. You won't receive wisdom, the wisdom that God promises to give you, or anything else you ask for if you doubt and become double-minded after you ask him. I think all of us can relate to this. You pray and you ask God for wisdom or for something else, and a little voice just says in your mind, "You're not really believing. God didn't hear you. You don't feel any different. Things don't look any different. You better pray again." Some people even doubt their own salvation experience. Others have prayed for healing or asked God for God's help in some other area of life, but they're being tossed about like that wave in the wind. Their confidence has been shaken, and they're going back and forth. "I think God heard me. No, He didn't hear me."

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You feel great, and some things begin to happen in your favor. You think, “Oh, God’s for me.” Then all of a sudden, some things go awry, and you think, “Oh, well, maybe He didn’t hear me.” You’re back and forth. Double-minded and unstable in all your ways. Let not that person think they’ll receive anything from the Lord. The Scripture says we must ask in faith, nothing doubting, remaining steadfast, which means that we must hold steady and refuse to give in to the voice of doubt once we pray and ask God for something according to His Word. The question then becomes, how do you do it? How do you remain single-minded? How do you remain steady? How do you keep from yielding to that wind of doubt that wants to blow you so you’re back and forth, you’re double-minded? How can you remain steady in your faith?

Well, I want to share with you something really simple. For our English audience right now, this is actually an acrostic using the word “faith.” There’s five things, F-A-I-T-H. If this is being dubbed into another language, obviously, the acrostic is not going to work, but the principles will work, so you are going to get it. This is the answer on how to remain single-minded and to hold steady once you pray, trusting God.

F, the first thing, stands for: Find a promise. Faith begins when you know God’s Will. God’s Will is revealed by what He promises. His promises are a revelation of His Will. God only makes promises that He desires to fulfill. The only purpose of a promise from God is its fulfillment. Number one, find a promise. 1 John 5:14–15 NKJV says,

<sup>14</sup> Now this is the confidence that we have in Him.. (You ready?) This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Somebody says, how do I know if it’s God’s will? If He promised it, it is His will. Find a promise that belongs to you as a believer in Christ. It begins with finding a promise. It starts with the Word of God. The second letter is A, and that stands for: Accept the promise as your solution. Accept the promise as your solution, whether you can understand it or not. Jesus, in talking about the parable of the sower, the sower sows the seeds of God’s Word, and God brings His Word, brings salvation in all of its varied aspects. Salvation, the word itself, means “to be saved,” but it means “to be delivered.” It means “to be healed.” It means to “be rescued.” All of the things that God does that are in this bundle of salvation come from the seed of God’s Word.

We’re born again, not by corruptible seed, but through the incorruptible seed of God’s Word. Psalm 107:20, God sent His Word and healed them. The apostle Paul said, “I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified.” What God does in our life, He does through His Word and by His Spirit. Jesus, in talking about the seed being the Word of God in the parable of the sower, said, “The kingdom of God is like a man that should cast seed onto the ground.”

He said earlier that the ground is the human heart. He gets the Word in his heart, and he should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed springs and grows up, and he doesn’t know how. Afterward, when the seed is ripe, and the grain is ripe, He thrusts in the sickle and reaps a harvest. It’s interesting. He said that the seed is sown in the soil of his heart. He sleeps and rises, meaning there’s going to be a time from planting to harvest, day and night. The seed springs and grows up, becomes ripe, and produces a harvest. He doesn’t know how, meaning this, that the Word of God can work independent of your understanding, but you must accept it as your solution. Now, A, doesn’t stand for argue. Some people say, “I know the Bible says that,

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but” and then they have an argument. You’ll never get anywhere disagreeing with God’s Word. You need to agree with it.

I was doing a meeting once in an area that had a lot of gangs. I’d been invited into this little church, and it was made up of mostly ex-gang members. People who had lived lifestyles of drug abuse and violence, and they’d found salvation and rescue in Jesus. God had sent a man in there to plant the church and just had a beautiful work. I’m in with a crowd that is one I wasn’t particularly used to, but they were just delightful. You can tell, as we say, they’d been around the block once or twice. They had lived hard lives but had been rescued by Christ. They were just so grateful to be in church and to have a new family.

This one guy comes up to me after I preach. He’s got a cane. He walks with a limp, and he’s an older guy. Actually, the pastor later on says, “Yes, that guy is what they used to call a veterano.” He was a veteran in the gangs. He’s one of these guys who grew to an older age at this time, probably in his mid-30s, but that was old for a gang member.

He had shot somebody in a rival gang. He was at his house in the afternoon, sleeping on the couch in his living room. These guys from a rival gang snuck into his house and, with a .38 caliber pistol, shot him in the back of the head while he was sleeping on the couch. He didn’t die, obviously, because he’s in the story. When he got shot, his girlfriend or whoever called 911, which for us is like the emergency number. The paramedics came, got him to the hospital, and he survived. It had partially paralyzed him; hence, he’s walking with a cane.

He found Christ in this little church that I was preaching at. He’s a fairly new believer. I was actually about the same age as him at that time. I was probably mid-30s. In fact, I might have even been younger than that. I might have been 31 at the time. He sits down next to me and actually showed me these gang tattoos that he had. He said, “After I got saved—” Again, I’m just going to chalk this up to not a lot of knowledge and a lot of zeal. He said, “I didn’t want these gang tattoos anymore, so I put a butter knife in the fire, got it heated up, and I got rid of the gang tattoos.”

He had all these scars on his arm where there were the gang insignias before. Then he looked at me, and he goes, “Hey, preacher, do you know what the uncompromised Word of God is?” I said, “No, what is the uncompromised Word of God?” He holds his Bible up, and he says, “The uncompromised Word of God means that there’s no buts in this book.” Then he got up and walked away. Probably to this day, it’s still the best definition that I’ve ever heard for the uncompromised Word of God. There’s no buts in the Book. The Scripture says that, “Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Some people say, “Yes, but...” No, there’s no buts in the Book. The promise is true. “By His stripes, you were healed.” “Yes, but...” No. The uncompromised Word of God means there’s no buts in this Book. What things you desire, when you pray, believe you receive them, and you shall have them, Jesus said. Some people say, “Yes, but...” No, the uncompromised Word of God means there’s no buts in this Book. We come back to this second thing. We’re talking about how not to be tossed to and fro by the wind of doubt. Accept God’s Word. Don’t argue with it. Find a promise and accept it.

The next letter in the word “faith” in our acrostic is I, and it stands for: Implant the Word of God in your heart. In this same chapter in the book of James, verse 21, it says, “To receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your soul.” Only when it is implanted does it save. Only when it is implanted does it heal or deliver or change circumstances. Again, back

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to the parable of the sower. Jesus said, “The sower sows the Word.” It falls on the soil of people’s hearts. Satan comes immediately to steal that Word. Other times, he uses the tools of persecution and affliction, and the lust of other things, and the love of money.

They choke the Word of God, and it becomes unfruitful. Those that accept the Word and guard it and allow it to take root in the soil of their heart, it will grow up, and it will produce a harvest. The harvest coincides with whatever is promised. Whether that’s a harvest of salvation, a harvest of healing, a harvest of peace, a harvest of wisdom, whatever it might be. Some people get the seed of God’s Word, and they just put it on the table, and they admire it. They’ve got a Bible sitting on their coffee table in the living room. It’s great that you got a Bible on the coffee table, but you need to get the Word off the coffee table and into your eyes, and into your ears, and into your heart.

Don’t just admire it. It must be implanted if it’s going to work. Someone says, “How do I get the Word implanted in my life?” I’m glad that you asked. The next two letters tell us, T and H. You need to think about it, T, and you need to hear it, H. Think about it and hear it. That is what is equivalent to the biblical principle of meditation. Let me read to you from Joshua 1:8. Moses has died. Joshua has now taken the reins of leadership. He has to lead God’s people into the promised land. These are pretty big shoes to fill. He’s got to lead them as Moses had previously led them out of the land of Egypt. Joshua, how are you going to do it? This is what the Lord told him. Joshua 1:8 NKJV, the Lord said,

<sup>8</sup> This Book of the Law (My Word) shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

God said if you want to have good success, if you want to prosper, if you want to succeed in what I’m calling you to do, it’s got to center around My Word. Meditate on My Word day and night. The Hebrew word for meditate literally means “to mutter or to murmur, to reflect upon, to think about, to roll over and over in the mind and to speak aloud.” You’re taking a promise. The promise that covers your need. The promise is my answer. I accept it. I need to get it implanted in my heart. How do I do it?

First of all, I begin to meditate on it. I roll it over in my mind. I think about it. I read it again. I read it again. I reflect upon it. I read it aloud so my ears can hear it. The Bible says, “Incline your ear to His Word, keep it in the midst of your heart. Then you’ll make your way prosperous. Then you’ll have good success.” Psalm 1 tells us something very similar. Verses 1–3 KJV,

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the Lord (in God’s Word); and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

The result, verse 3,

<sup>3</sup> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; (Remember, there’s a time from planting to harvest.) his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

We want to prosper in the things God has called us to do. We want to see the fulfillment of His promises. Meditation in God’s Word is what gets the Word from your head and into your heart.

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My friend, faith is of the heart. When it reaches your heart, faith is the natural byproduct. It should never be a matter of us trying to have faith. It's like, "Oh, I'm trying to believe. I'm trying to believe this promise." No, faith flows naturally from a heart that is full of God's Word. Jesus said this in John 15:7 NKJV,

<sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Our youngest son, Spencer, is 36 now, as I'm actually speaking to you. When he was a little boy, my mother bought him a rock polishing machine. It wasn't an expensive thing for a Christmas gift, and we all thought it was wonderful for about a day. He's got this little machine, and some really ugly, nondescript, just plain old rocks that came with it. The instructions say—it's like got this barrel—you unscrew the end, drop the rocks in, and it's got different grits of like sand. You put the roughest one in there first, and then you screw the barrel on, hook it to this little machine, plug it in, and it goes round and round. This hard-grit sand goes over those rocks. I'm reading the instructions, and it says you need to do this and let it go round and round for six days. Five or six days. I'm thinking, "Okay."

We plugged it in, and it was so loud. It went, [mimics sounds]. These rocks are tumbling. You can hear it all over the house. It was crazy. We said, "Spence, we can't have this thing in the house. You can't even hear one another speak." We plugged it in this outlet in the backyard, closed the door, and you could still hear it. We'd be sleeping at night. I'd want to put the pillow on my head. You could hear this thing 24/7. These rocks are spinning around.

Finally, the five or six days are done. I go, "Oh, thank goodness!" I read the instructions. It says you open the end of the little barrel, and put in the next finest grit of sand in there, and do it for another three days. I thought, "Three more days of this?" We had guests who would come over to the house. The first thing they'd say when they'd walk in was, "What is that noise?" "It's our son's rock polishing machine."

Then that gets done, and then finally, we put the finest grit of sand in there. We close the end of the barrel, and you have to do it for several more days. This has been going on all together, I think, for eight days or nine days, something like that. It drove us crazy. Finally, we said, "It's done, Spencer. Let's look at your rocks."

We unscrew the barrel. We dump them out. We wash them off. I couldn't believe my eyes! Those nondescript, dull rocks that you would have just tossed aside were beautiful. They were glistening and gleaming with hues and colors that you just didn't see in them before. They were amazing! We took a couple of them and made them into pieces of jewelry that my son Spencer gave to his grandmother, my mother, as a Christmas gift. They were made into like a little necklace. They were just beautiful.

You know what? That rock polishing machine is a lot like the art of meditation. You drop God's Word into the soil of your heart, and you just let it tumble over and over, and over. You think about it. You reflect upon it. You're grinding away. You read it over. You say, "Man, I'm not getting anything out of this; this seems like a waste of time. It's been days since I've been reading these promises. I read this chapter over 20 times." No. You keep meditating, and reflect on it. Speak it aloud over and over. It's like those rocks turning in that little rock tumbler.

Friend, I'll tell you what. Sooner or later, if you will meditate in God's Word, those Scriptures that were nondescript and dull, and weren't doing anything for you will shine with illumination and

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revelation, and faith will spring forth. Get the Word in your heart and keep it in your heart. If you've been tossed about by the wind of doubt, find a promise, accept it as your answer, implant it in your heart through meditation, and you will conquer the wind of doubt. I just have a few minutes left right now, and I've got a couple of other winds that I want to talk about.

The second one is the wind of false doctrine. The apostle Paul talks about it in the book of Ephesians. Talking about people who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. The final one that we're going to speak about is the wind of trouble. Jesus speaks about those who hear the Word but don't act upon it. The rain falls, and the flood rises. The wind blows, and their house collapses because it was built on the sand and not built upon the rock. I wish I had time to get into those right now, but we're going to get into them next time.

Let me just take a few moments and encourage you, if I might. I got saved out of a lifestyle of substance abuse, alcoholism. I was in a lot of trouble, a lot of wrong things going on in my life. A 12-year-old boy came up to me one day and told me about Jesus Christ in a park. I ended up in a street mission filled with homeless people, drug addicts, and that was where I gave my life to Jesus. I walked forward into that little meeting house at that place for derelicts and people who were strung out on drugs, and I gave my life to Jesus. People put their hands on me and prayed for me, and I was delivered that night from years of substance abuse from that day to this day.

It's been 48 years, and I've never, not once, had an illegal drug in my body. Up to that point, I had not been sober or been straight for years and years. Jesus delivered me, but let me tell you how I stayed delivered. Early on, I learned the importance of God's Word. I started having a love affair with God's Book. I was at a yard sale. People were selling an old lamp and some old pairs of jeans, and some old gardening shears, and this and that. They had a Bible there. It was 35 cents. I gave the guy the 35 cents, and I bought my first Bible. It was the best investment I ever made in my life.

At that time, I was living above a little pub, a bar. I had a single room that I rented out from this girl that I knew. The room that I had didn't even have a bathroom. There was just a mattress on the floor and like a cabinet against the wall. No carpet or anything on the floor, but it gave me a place to sleep. Didn't even have electricity in that room, but I started reading that Bible. I would light a candle. I would have the candle, and I would read the Bible for hours. Into the wee hours of the morning, I would read it. I started in Genesis. That was amazing and enthralling!

I read through Exodus. Then I got to Leviticus, and I got a little bogged down, but I just kept going. I wish someone had told me to start in the New Testament, but nobody told me that. So I just thought, "Okay, it's a book. You start at the beginning." So I did. I read through the whole Bible. I tell you, I was amazed when I came to the promises of Jesus and the words of Jesus, and the Gospels, and the Epistles that told me who I was and what I had in Christ. I devoured it, and I read it, and I read it, and I read it, and I thought about it, and I thought about it, and it changed my life.

The single most important thing I have ever done as a Christian is put God's Word in my heart. To this day, I'm still doing it. I got up early this morning, and I went and sat down at my kitchen table. I made myself a cup of tea, and I read God's Word. I read it. The last thing I did last night before I went to bed was in fact, lay up in bed, and read God's Word. I actually was reading it out of an electronic device.

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In this one, I have different translations. What I did, I was reading through, actually, Psalm 55 last night. I read it slowly. I would read it in English, and then I would pull up the Spanish translation, and I would read it out of Spanish and make sure that I understood all of the Spanish word. I speak a bit of Spanish, not as fluent as I want to be, but I'm working at it. I read verse by verse. It's not a long Psalm, but it took me a long time because I thought about it and what it means. I reflected on each verse. Then I read them in Spanish, and then I read them in English again.

It's the single most important thing I've done in my life, and it's the only way to conquer the wind of doubt. My friend, you can do it. I want to thank you for joining me. I want to tell you that I love you. I want to say thank you to those of you who support the broadcast. We're able to bring these truths to other people and to help them as well, so pray for us. Pray about supporting us, and I pray that God would richly bless you. We'll see you next time.

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