

Open Hands: Stewardship with Kingdom Vision

Technology and Temptation: Stewarding Digital Boundaries

Good morning church,

Today we live in a world where technology is everywhere. Our phones wake us up in the morning. Our phones and tablets help us work during the day. Our screens follow us into late hours of the night. Technology has become one of the most powerful tools in our generation. It connects us, informs us, and helps us accomplish things that previous generations could never imagine. Technology has become a powerful temptation. Today the same devices distract us from God. The same platform that connects to people that can expose us to things that weakens our spiritual lives. The greatest spiritual battles today are not only fought in physical spaces, but in the digital space we carry in our pockets everyday. I honor and believe in 1 Corinthians 10:23. Today we are going to talk about technology and temptation and how we can establish spiritual boundaries, protect our hearts, and make sure our devices serve God as the rock of our salvation. We can make sure our devices serve God's purpose and not distract us from it. In 2023, during my time at Star of Hope Mission in Houston I experienced a strong sense of community. I laughed with people, talked with other clients and had a very active social life. That season helped me grow more open and relational with others. Other clients at Star of Hope Mission in Houston told me while in the Spiritual Recovery Program at the time I needed to remove the walls from around me. Right now my season in Memphis is different. I find myself more quiet and reflective. I do not talk to people as much. Every season teaches me something. My time in Houston taught me the value of fellowship. Seasons of isolation can feel heavy. A new community can still be built again. This season is teaching me patience, focus and rebuilding. Today my season in Memphis feels different. I do not talk to people as much as I did when I was in Houston. I have come to understand that God works through different seasons in our lives. Some seasons are filled with fellowship and laughter. Other seasons are filled with reflection, preparation and growth. God continues to shape every season with every calling. My testimony is that God uses every season of life to prepare us for the Great Commission. My Great Commission has taken me to different places across the country. God was teaching me about faith, perseverance and service. My journey began in Iowa between 2015 and 2017. During that time my finances were stable and I moved into my own apartment for \$350 per month. That season showed me that stability can give you a foundation to move forward and plan for the future. In Detroit in 2018, I was able to work with a landlord to secure an apartment. God provided me a way to become financially stable during that season and I made it through until I moved again later that year. In November 2018, I moved to Philadelphia. I first stayed at a homeless shelter and later moved to North Philadelphia. That living situation became a toxic environment because I was living in a shared room house, but God opened the door to a friend who helped me move into a safer environment. I was able to help people experiencing homelessness and encourage them in their difficult times. That was part of my great commission helping others while rebuilding my own life. Later, I lived in Atlanta in 2020 and 2021. I witnessed economic hardship and financial collapse around me during the pandemic. At the time I battled Covid 19 three times and had to quarantine myself. After those difficult experiences, I chose to receive the vaccine and booster to protect my health and continue to move forward. My journey reminds me that the Great Commission is not only about preaching the Gospel. It is about living through trials with faith, helping others when you can, and continuing to move forward. Every place I have lived have been part of a mission field God used to shape my life and strengthen my faith.

Heavenly Father,

We come before You today with hearts full of gratitude and expectation.

We thank You for gathering us together as a congregation, for the gift of life, and for the opportunity to worship You in spirit and truth.

We ask that Your Holy Spirit move freely among us. Open our ears to hear Your Word, open our hearts to receive Your truth, and open our minds to understand Your guidance for our lives.

May this sermon not just be words spoken, but a transformative message that draws us closer to You and equips us to serve others with love, faith, and humility.

Bless the pastor as they deliver Your Word.

May every thought, every illustration, and every exhortation come from You, touching lives and renewing spirits.

Guard us from distractions and fill this place with Your presence, peace, and joy.

We dedicate this service to You, Lord, and pray that all glory, honor, and praise be Yours.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

For more than ten years, God has placed on my heart a calling to comfort the barriers of poverty and homelessness through work of the church and the power of the Gospel. When I reflect on the legacy of Rev. Jesse Jackson and Operation Breadbasket, I see powerful examples of faith being lived out through service to people in need. During my undergraduate years in Chicago, I began to respond to that calling by launching the **Pastor Hobson Homelessness Initiative and the Youth and Children Community Development Initiative**. What started as a personal outreach project became a way to serve the homeless, needy and struggling families in the community by providing spiritual encouragement, support and hope. Today the same mission continues through the community outreach programs of our congregation. In a similar spirit of Operation Breadbasket, our church works to uplift those facing hardship by combining spiritual care with practical support. Our goal is not only to preach the Gospel, but demonstrate Christ compassion by helping restore dignity, opportunity and hope to those in need. I believe the great commission calls us to more than words. The Great Commission calls us to action. We seek to reflect the hearts of Christ and continue the work of serving our communities with faith, justice and love. After a season of reflection and transition, I believe God is opening the door for me to return to serving the poor and homeless in Mississippi next month. For more than ten years, my calling has been helping people facing poverty and homelessness through faith, outreach and community restoration. While I spent my time in Memphis, I realized my assignment and mission field is leading me to Mississippi where I can continue to work God placed in my heart. I apologize that it did not work out in Memphis and wish people in Memphis the best going forward. I am sorry to say to the City of Memphis that I just rather move on and let God continue to lead me going forward by focusing on my life in Mississippi. One of the greatest blessings of our congregation God has entrusted in me is the diversity of this congregation. The Gospel has always been meant for every nation, culture and people. When I reflect on the legacy of Reverend Jesse Jackson, I am reminded of how faith leaders have worked to bring people together across racial and culture lines. That is why during the last week of the month I am on my way to Mississippi to move on and serve God and this flock. Memphis is not the place for me. Approximately 35% of members are Caucasian, 30% black, 28% Latino of Hispanic and 6% international background. The build of this congregation is all about hard work, commitment and responsibility. This diversity reflects the beauty of God's kingdom and reminds us that the message of Christ reaches beyond race, language and nationality. As a spiritual leader, I see this diversity as the Great Commission to bring the Gospel to all people and build a community where different cultures can worship, serve and grow together. Our congregation is committed to demonstrating unity, compassion and service to people in need across every community. The church has the Free Childcare Program to help single mothers with affordable childcare while they work.

Technology can be used for ministry, learning and connection. Technology is a tool, not a problem. For example, online Bible study, evangelicalism through social media, digital church communications, pornography, social media comparison, online gossip, time eviction and distractions. Technology can open the door for distractions and spiritual compromise. Uncontrolled technology leads to spiritual drift. Believers must create healthy limits. Boundaries protect our hearts, minds and spiritual focus. Spiritual maturity requires intentional discipline.

“Let your light shine before others.”-Matthew 5:16

Jesus tells His followers you are the salt of the earth. believers preserve goodness and influence the world. Followers of Christ are meant to be visible examples of God’s truth. People do not light a lamp and hide it under a basket. Light is meant to illuminate the house. Jesus is saying your faith should be seen in action. Your life becomes a testimony to others. When people see compassion, service, and righteousness, they recognize God working through you. First develop Christ-like character. Then let that character shine publicly. Matthew 5:16 teaches that followers of Christ should live visibly righteous lives so others see their good works and give glory to God. Jesus taught that the church should not hide its light. Community ministry is one way the church shines publicly. Community ministry is food pantries clothing closets, emergency grocery vouchers, community outreach programs and neighborhood prayer and support. When churches meet real needs in the community, people see God’s love in action. Community ministry allows the church to shine its light beyond the walls of the building. Serving the poor is one of the clearest ways to live out Matthew 5:16. Jesus says feeding the hungry and clothing the needy is serving him. Faith without works is dead. Serving the poor is a kingdom witness. Church leaders are called to set the example. Leadership means guiding the church in service, organizing ministries that help people, and living a life others can follow. When leaders serve the community and care for the vulnerable, they model the light of Christ for the congregation. Leadership is demonstrating the gospel through action. Matthew 5:16 can guide a church’s mission inside the church, outside the church and through leadership. When a church serves the community, helps the poor, and leads with integrity, people see the good works and glorify God.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.-1 Peter 5:8

Peter teaches about humility and dependence on God. Believers should clothe themselves with humility. Humble yourselves under God’s mighty hand. Cast all your anxieties on God because he cares for you. Peter reminds believers to trust God and remain humble. Peter gives a spiritual warning. Believers must remain spiritually alert because the enemy looks for opportunities to attack faith, character, and obedience. Peter gives the response to resist him and stand firm in faith. The solution is steadfast faith, not fear. God will restore, confirm, strengthen and establish believers after suffering. The message of 1 Peter 5:5–11 is to be humble before God, trust Him with your worries, stay spiritually alert, resist the devil. God will ultimately strengthen and restore you. Spiritual leadership requires alertness and discipline. Temptation and spiritual attacks are real. Faith and humility protect believers from falling.

“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”-Proverbs 4:23

guard or protect your inner spiritual life carefully and intentionally. Everything in life flows from what is inside the heart. If the heart is healthy and guided by wisdom, life will move in a righteous direction. If the heart is corrupted, actions and decisions will also become corrupted. Guarding your heart means protecting your thoughts, desires, and influences because they shape the entire course of your life. Wisdom brings life and health. speech reflects the heart. W nd avoiding distractions that lead to sin.

1. Pay attention to wisdom.
2. Keep God’s words in your heart. This goes back when I preach a message in Detroit to you on heavenly wisdom and avoid making decisions by earthly wisdom.
3. Protect your inner life
4. Watch over your thoughts and desires
5. Be careful about influences that shape your character

6. Put away corrupt speech
7. Avoid dishonest or destructive words
8. Keep your eyes looking straight ahead
9. Stay focused on the right path
10. Think carefully about where your path leads
11. Do not turn toward evil

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”-Romans 12:2

The focus is on spiritual transformation. Believers should not adopt the values, patterns, and behaviors of a world that is opposed to God. Transformation happens when a person’s thinking is changed by God’s truth. When the mind is renewed, believers can discern and live out God’s will. Believers should offer their entire lives to God. Believers should not worship him occasionally. Their lifestyle should become an act of worship. Conformed means to follow the pattern or system of the world. Paul is teaching Christians should not allow culture or society to shape their spiritual identity. Transformation means a deep inward change.

1. Study God’s Word
2. Pray and seek God
3. Grow spiritually
4. Serve others with humility and spiritual gifts

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”-Colossians 3:17

Paul begins by telling believers they are God’s chosen people. He says believers should forgive one another just as Christ forgave them. He says love is the bond of perfection. Paul instructs believers to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts, live in unity as one body and be thankful. Peace and gratitude should guide relationships within the church. Everything should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus and with thanksgiving to God. Paul builds the teaching step by step by putting on Christlike character, let Christ’s peace rule your heart, let Christ’s word guide your life, and do everything in the name of Jesus. Colossians 3:17 teaches that when believers live with love, peace, and God’s Word guiding them.

“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.”-Psalm 101:3

David outlines a personal covenant to live a righteous life as king. It is a declaration of his commitment to holiness and moral integrity. David commits to avoiding exposure to sin or temptation, including immoral sights, influences, or desires. David commits to avoiding exposure to sin or temptation, including immoral sights, influences, or desires. David pledges not to let sin take hold of him or influence his life

Technology can influence the mind. What we watch can influence what we think. What we scroll influences what we believe. What we consume shapes our attitudes, values and priorities. Guide your eyes and heart. Temptation is one click away. We need spiritual