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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good morning.

HS: And welcome church family. We are so, so happy that you're here. Thank you for joining us. Reminder that greater, greater is the Lord God who is inside of you than the evil one who is in the world. You are loved.

BS: We are so, so glad that you are here with us today. I want to give a special welcome to Jonathan Isaac, from the Orlando Magic who's here to testify. We're grateful. And grateful that you're here, Jonathan. We'll be talking to him in just a minute. So glad you're here, as well. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we're here in your presence to become more than we thought we could be. Lord, you can transform us into the likeness of your son Jesus. All things are possible in your kingdom, so help us to have your vision, your heart, your dreams, your ideas of good and evil, your compassion for the lost. Help us, Lord, to be full of your fire. We want to be like you, Lord, and we pray it all in Jesus' name. All God's people said, amen.

HAVEN: Turn to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Matthäus 13,24-30 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 13:24.

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servant came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' An enemy did this," he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them all up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Amen.

INTERVIEW – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Jonathan Isaac (CB)

Jonathan Isaac is a professional basketball player in the NBA and has spent the last six years with the Orlando Magic. Also a speaker and author, Jonathan aims to use his platform to share the love of Jesus, and how his life has been transformed.

BS: Jonathan, hi.

JI: Hi.

BS: Thank you so much for being here.

JI: Yes sir.

BS: We're so glad you're in the house today. Thank you so much for being here.

JI: Thank you for having me.

BS: It's interesting, one of the things that people always say when I meet them for the first time is whoa, you're taller than, you know, and this is the reason why. Its things like this. You should know at home I'm not short. I'm 6'3. How tall are you?

JI: Seven foot.

BS: Seven feet tall.

JI: You probably win like the pastor's height, though.

BS: The pastor's height?

JI: Like across the country, you're probably one of the tallest.

BS: Yes, I know Judas Smith.. I met him, he's 6'6, I think..

JI: Oh wow.

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BS: ..or 6'5. He's taller than I am. But not as tall as you. But I was saying in the first service, I made a joke and said that the way I got Jonathan to come here is we played a game of one on one in Orlando and I won and that's how I got him here, but nobody would believe that.

Can I do this again? Like I just.. it's so daunting. Hold your hand up like so you're like.. okay, like let's look.. there is no chance that ball. Well anyway. You play for the Orlando Magic, and you're 25-years-old.

Jl: Yes sir.

BS: And you're doing like great things, and you're testifying for the Lord. And that's one of the reasons we want you to be here is to talk about this important thing. Now there are a lot of young men that would say there's no bigger dream I can have, no greater thing I can achieve in my life than to be a starting player in the NBA. I mean a lot of people would feel that way. But that's not how you feel.

Jl: No, not at all. That was how I felt for a long time, and getting into the NBA was everything that I thought I wanted out of life, but it wasn't until I got there that I knew that it wasn't all that it was cracked up to be, and now that I have a firm foundation in Christ I see that it's a reality of eternity, and that's who I found my identity in and my confidence in and my boldness, and it's what has led to this book.

BS: Tell me what is your faith journey? How did you come to faith in Christ, because your faith is bold. You're not Christian in name only. You testify to the name of Jesus.

Jl: I appreciate you. First off, thank you for having me. I can't say everything just because of the time that we have, but I do want to just say thank you to my pastor and Hakeem that are here, too. They're a huge part of me talking about my faith journey. But I grew up in Bronx New York, I moved out of Bronx New York when I was ten years old. My dad had us in church all the time. He was like the holy ghost roller. We were memorizing scriptures from like five years old. But I left New York when my parents had split up when I was ten, and I went to Naples Florida, so I went from a predominantly black community to a predominantly white community and I really struggled as a kid trying to fit in, trying to make friends. My nickname, as I told you in the first service was Ethiopia when I first got there, and I really struggled with making friends. And I developed anxiety, self-insecurity that basketball was able to mask because the better that I got at it, the more that I was accepted by the people around me, and it started this idea in my head about working for love. The better I became at basketball was the more love that I got and attention that I got. Got drafted to the Orlando Magic, went to Florida State for a year, and once I got drafted, I met a man on an elevator who stopped me and said 'I can tell you how to be great,' and I said how, he said 'you have to know Jesus.' I said man, I know Jesus, I know all about Jesus, but I didn't and it wasn't until I learned about the true love of God that loves us for us, whether we are right, wrong, whether I make a shot or not that I started to battle back against the anxiety and the self-insecurity that I was struggling with.

BS: Wow. What a powerful story. I love your testimony. You're such a peaceful person. You're a humble person. I think it's so wise, like that even when you came here as a 25-year-old NBA player, a lot of NBA guys are puffed up. I mean they achieved the dream. They had these multi-million-dollar contracts, but you have a mentor in your life, you have a friend in your life like Hakeem and your pastor, and I think having other godly men around you, how important is that to you in your position?

Jl: It's huge. I wouldn't be who I am today. I wouldn't be on this stage with you if I didn't have guidance and leadership around me. He'll tell you. And a lot of it is in the book about how he was able to mentor me, to get me to the place where I wasn't the only one to stand up for something.

BS: In talking about standing up for something, we don't like to get into politics here. We love everybody, we have a church full of all sorts of political views and we appreciate that, but you've come under a lot of scrutiny lately because of a political stance you took that was sort of a hard thing to do. How do you endure something like that, get through when you have media, when you have other people, peers, people you respect and love talking about you. Tell us a little bit about that.

Jl: Well just to tell you about what the book is about, back during 2020, I'm sure everyone remembers George Floyd situation and how he died. Back during that time, we went into something called the NBA bubble where all the NBA teams were in the playoffs and there was a ton of pressure on everybody to kneel for the national anthem and to wear a Black Lives Matter t-shirt. And I was the only player on my team who decided not to and it was a high stakes situation. Obviously it was a very emotional situation, but for me it was more about thinking about what could actually bring real healing and change, and growth to white and black relations across the country.

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And I couldn't think of anything other than the gospel. And so I didn't want to align myself with the organization of movements so I didn't wear the t-shirt and that's what has birthed this book. And just to tell you a little bit about what went into the stakes of that day, I hadn't signed my contract yet, I was up for a contract extension that summer. I knew what was going to come with it. I was on the phone with my pastor the night before and I was telling him I don't think you understand how crazy this is going to be. Going to be name calling, going to be all these things, and he said to me you cannot stand for God and God not stand for you. And that is what has birthed the book *Why I Stand*, and in it I'm talking about how I was able to battle back against anxiety and fear to be the only one to stand up for what I believed in at the time.

BS: That's great. That's great. I think about your response to that, even though it wasn't a political statement you were making, it was a.. I don't want to say religious; it was a spiritual statement.

Jl: Absolutely.

BS: And you're saying I kneel for Jesus and that the gospel is what can heal our country; the gospel is what can save us, and I appreciated your response so much because it was not against anything. You had zero negativity. You just very politely and calmly and humbly just said this is how I feel, and this is what I felt like what was right to do something like that, and you testified to Jesus.

Jl: Yes, it was more so just about solutions and so obviously I saw what had happened and how terrible and tragic that was, but it was just about what is going to be the true anecdote to not only racism but all the problems that we see in our country, and I couldn't coincide with what was going on and the tone and the rhetoric of the movement. I just felt that the truth of all of us falling short of the glory God, all of us needing grace, and that I can't throw stones at another person or a race from a glass house because it can come right back at me.

BS: What do you say to someone outside of that who's just struggling right now. We have a lot of young people that watch on YouTube, and they see this successful NBA star. We have people that are watching that are just under immense pressure to be something else, to do something else, rather than to commit their lives to God. What do you say to somebody who's feeling kind of weak in that moment?

Jl: I would say from the perspective of somebody who has achieved what most people would think is the American dream: to have money, to have success, to have a level of fame, to hear it from me that it is not the end all/be all and it's not all that it's chalked up to be. The Bible says that Jesus came to give us life and life more abundantly, and I have found that life more abundantly in Jesus more so than I have in the world.

BS: Amen. Couldn't say it better than that. The book is called *Why I Stand*. This is a great book by Jonathan Isaac, power forward for the Orlando Magic, but a lot more than that. Jonathan, we thank you so much. God bless you and thank you for testifying. We love you.

Jl: Appreciate you.

BS: Appreciate you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Well no matter who you are, would you stand with us? Hold your hands like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor. Thanks you can be seated.

MESSAGE / PRAYER – Bobby Schuller – “Thriving in a Field of Weeds”

My greatest desire in life is for anyone who hears me speak who doesn't know the Lord, to make a decision to know the Lord. God has made Himself available to us, and everybody who's hearing us this morning is hearing this because God wants them to hear it. And all those who are not hearing it, maybe God doesn't want them to hear it now. If you're hearing this, hear it. The best life that's available to you is available when you're at peace with God. When you rely on Christ crucified and make a decision to depend on Him; to see His world through His lens. To have His heart in your heart. To have His wind in your lungs. To have His ideas in your head, and to allow those things to guide and transform your life into flourishing and abundance, and so much more. Doesn't mean you won't struggle. It means you'll be giving all you need to get through the struggle. Doesn't mean that life will be easy, it means that you'll get stronger. And that's the promise. As Christians, we don't pray for an easy life. We don't say God, make my life easy. We say Lord, make me stronger.

Make me worthy. Make me bigger. And you can be bigger than whatever it is you're facing, but you do it when you have an ally and His name is Jesus Christ. Won't you make a decision to follow Christ. Won't you be at peace with God to have your sins forgiven. I want you to make a decision right where you are to invite Him into your life, and to invite Him to forgive you of your sins, and your home will be in heaven, and heaven will enter you today. If you make that decision, will you text me the word HOPE to the number on the screen. Well I want to ask you a question this morning. Do you know the story of the ugly duckling? Now you probably think you do, but Walt did not tell the story right. I went back and read the original version by Hans Christian Anderson, and it's a serious story, a parable, for serious people. It goes like this: some eggs in a nest are hatching. A mother duckling looks at the eggs. The first egg hatches, beautiful little golden duck comes out, little duckling. Another one, a cute little feathery poofy duckling comes out. They all hatch, and there's one left, an egg, it's a little bit bigger. Finally that one hatches and out comes the ugliest duckling you've ever seen. Too big, not gold at all, more of a gray color, and everybody says yuck – what is that disgusting thing. As this little duckling grows up in his little family, he's picked on. People peck him and mock him, ridicule him, reject him. This is really a story of enduring violence, rejection and ridicule, unfairness, betrayal, even by your family. The mother duckling at first is constantly defending him. He swims better than everybody else. He's just bigger because he was in his egg too long, she says. But he'll be fine. He's going to grow into a great duckling. And continues to endure and then finally all the violence, all the pecking, all the ridicule, his mother finally says, actually, I wish you were never born. And this is the day that the ugly duckling flees his own mother. Finds some wild ducklings. They beat him up, they say he's so ugly. Goes to another group of goslings, which are baby geese, and these geese kind of accept him and he finds a home, but eventually some hunters come and they kill all the goslings, and they leave the ugly duckling because he thinks he was so ugly that they won't kill him. Finally he finds himself all alone when winter comes, freezing to death, and a nice milkman comes and rescues this ugly duckling and takes him into his home and warms him up and revives him. But now the ugly duckling has endured so much violence, so much ridicule, so much hatred, has such a bad view of himself that when he gets his energy backs, he flaps his wings and knocks things over in the house, and the wife of the house kicks him out of the house. He can't even receive love anymore because of what's happened in his heart. And one day, finally, as winter begins to thaw and spring is returning, he sees some swans come back to a lake. He's always admired swans. So grand, so dangerous. We may not know that. We always think of swans as elegant, but if you've ever grown up near a lake, you know swans are mean. They can be. They're dangerous. Some people call them the lions of the lake. And they can be violent, especially will kill other birds. When I was growing up on the ranch at my dad's little church on this big property, we had swans and the alpha swan would go around just doing the worst things, like chase kids around. We called him Freddie Kruger. Freddie Kruger. He'd peck the glass really hard with his beak when you'd try to run away from him. So this is something that people in Hans Christian Andersons day knew he was dangerous. And so he sees these swans, they're beautiful, they're elegant, they're everything he wants in life, but he knows they're dangerous, and he knows if a swan pecks you, you die. And this is his final reprieve. He decides to throw himself at the swans as an act of suicide, as an act of death. And this is his final words he says to himself: better to be killed by them than to be pecked by ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved by winter, and he throws himself at them. And what do you know, as he throws himself at what he thinks is death, the most dangerous thing he can think of, they run out and they meet him and they say it's one of us! That part Walt did get right. He, in fact, was a swan, you see. And they took him in and it's a wonderful story. One of the interesting things about this story that really stood out to me is although he spent his whole life on the water, the first time he actually sees his reflection, the first time he actually looks down and says I'm a swan only comes after he's accepted by this group; only comes after he's loved and brought in. It's amazing what being in a community of God's people, being in a community of possibility thinkers, being in a community of hopeful people can do for someone who has been ridiculed and burned by life. And I want to just encourage you today. When I think about this story and I think about the swans, I do think about this is what life is like when you throw yourself at Jesus Christ. God is dangerous. This is what C.S. Lewis says when he's talking, he uses Aslan, the lion, as a descriptor. One of the characters says oh you mean he's safe? This God, He's safe. And the other character says oh He's not safe, He's very dangerous, but He's good. You see, He's good. And so this is what happens when you throw yourself into God's community, you throw yourself at Christ, that even though it feels scary.

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You're actually throwing yourself into the thing that will help you see your real reflection, who you're really born to be, what you're really called to do, what task is really set before you. And see one of the greatest things, one of the greatest questions we can ask is what am I called to do? What is set before me? And what does my life hold? Only God can answer that question, and you must throw yourself at Him to get that answer. And that brings us to our scripture reading. The title for today, the message is "Thriving in a Field of Weeds." It's easy very often in life to feel.. as one of God's people to feel like everything around you is fake; everything around you is overgrown and not real. Let's talk about that. Matthew chapter 13, Jesus gives this wonderful parable. It says "the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came in and said sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from? An enemy did this, he replied. The servants asked him do you want us to go up and pull them?" Pull the weeds. "No, he answered, no. Because while you're pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at that time, I will tell the harvesters first collect the weeds, tie them into bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn." Okay what is this about? First of all, Jesus is talking to an agrarian society. This is something that somebody in the crowd might have actually done to one of their competitors. They knew it was rotten and wrong, but it was common. When somebody plants wheat.. if your competitor plants wheat, you can plant what's called dandelion. Here's what dandelion looks like when it grows. It is indistinguishable even for the best farmer to tell the difference between dandelion and wheat. This is what dandelion looks like when it's fully grown. What does that look like? This is what dandelion looks like at the very, very end. So it's not until right at the time when you harvest that the two are distinguishable. And this is obviously not wheat. This dandelion plant is poison, actually. So one produces something that gives life and the other produces something.. it's not even neutral, you catch that? It's not neutral. It gives death. This is what we're dealing with. It's not just life and everything else. Its life and death. It's serious. Life and death. Life and death. Not life and something else, not death and something good, its life and death, and this is what Jesus is telling us that through the whole process, it's nearly impossible to tell the difference until the end. And that's why while you're growing, while you're doing, while you're making, while you're going, it is not useful at all to compare, to look at others, or to examine your life based on what other people are doing. Very often what you think is wonderful, life-giving, good, is poison. Yes, we can learn from other people and we ought to, but not compare. You can't tell when these plants are growing, you can only tell in the end. So this is what we know: wheat is not concerned about what the weeds are doing, but we do believe that the weeds that are growing around us are very concerned about outdoing the wheat. We know that the weeds that grow among us, the fakers, they hate the real deal. We know that the weeds mock, that the weeds look down. We know that the weeds that grow in the field have shallow roots. Why do they have shallow roots? Because nobody can see roots. And yet we know in the end plants with shallow roots don't last very long. I'm not saying this in a judgmental way, I'm simply saying that in your life, wheat doesn't judge, it doesn't respond, it doesn't compare, it just grows. So here's my advice to you this morning. Just grow. Just grow. The more you grow the better your life will get. Let the roots go deep. If you have choices between branches reaching for the sky, or roots reaching for the nutrients in the soil, you choose the roots. Both are good, roots are better. If you want your life to get better, you have to get better. If you want your life to improve, you have to improve. Your thoughts must improve. Your learning must improve. You must become more confident. If you want a bigger life, you need to become a bigger person. And none of the things when we blame others, blame our institutions, blame our parents, blame our siblings, blame our competitors, those things will not help you. Here's what helps you: when you look in the mirror and you say I can become bigger, I can become better, I can become more loving, I can become more confident. I can become more confident. I can do it better than I did it yesterday. Grow. Just grow. I remember there was a season in my life where I was pastoring a very small church as a volunteer in an American Legion beer hall. All young people who couldn't rub two nickels together. Lots of little kids running around, which was fun. But we couldn't afford a children's minister so my sister-in-law was the children's minister and we were just faithful to God. But during that time, you know what I felt called to do? I felt called to grow. Personally. I spent three years of my life just devouring books. I got five mentors. One of them was named Juan Carlos Ortiz. Anybody friends with Juan Carlos? Amazing pastor, formerly here at the church. And just surrounded myself with mentors and books and the kinds of people who were where I wanted to go.

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And when the time came, God released me into a fresh, big calling. I can't tell you and testify enough the importance of personal development, especially when you're in an in-between time of not comparing, not getting beat up, not blaming whatever, but just growing. Lots of people ask the question – who's the right person. When my daughter gets old enough and she says dad, who's the kind of guy I should marry. Here's the person she should marry. She should marry somebody who's growing. That's what we look for. Don't confuse someone who's growing with someone who's grown. Nothing's worse than a champion who rests on his laurels. It's sad. Nothing worse than someone who just gives up and spends the rest of their life not using all of the skills and wonderful things that God's used in that day. How big does a tree grow? When does a tree stop growing? Anybody know the answer? When it dies. That's when a tree stops. When it dies. Every ring you see when you cut down a tree is a year of growth. Some years are bigger, some years are smaller, but every year it grows as big as it can get. When a tree stops growing, it still might be green, still might look lovely, it's dead. So here's the answer – who are you looking for, whether it's to marry. Who are you looking for, whether it's somebody you want to partner with. Who are you looking for, whether it's somebody you want to hire or somebody you want to invest in, or someone you want to recruit. Here's who you want to hire – someone who is obsessed with growing. Someone who does not blame the world, but looks in the mirror and says how can I do better, how can I get better, how can I be bigger. That's the person you want to surround yourself with. And some of the biggest trees in the world are still growing. They're in Yosemite. Check them out. Those are still growing. Those are some good trees to be around, don't get me wrong. But don't go to a tree that's dead. And don't go to a tree that refuses to grow. And just focus on growing yourself. Don't focus on the weeds, necessarily. There are some weeds in your life that we want to talk about, but here's something that the wheat doesn't do. The wheat does not do the weeding. Very often we want to weed out the people around us that we think are weeds. The wheat lets the farmer do that. The farmer is obsessed with protecting the good trees, the good wheat in his field. He'll protect you. He'll take care of you. Trust the farmer. And it's easy to look at weeds around us that are growing faster us, and big churches, big businesses, people that seem like they're succeeding. In the end, it may not be what you're seeing now. Don't focus on them. Here's what you focus on. You know what I'm going to say. Focus on growing. Your life, and my pastor used to say this, very often, especially when you're reading the books, when you're listening to the sermons, when you're going to the churches, when you're doing the things that it takes, when you're praying the kinds of prayers, when you're meditating on the things, focusing on the things that you're supposed to focus on. Your life is like a stone going back in a slingshot. Yes, you technically might be going backwards or going nowhere, but with every minute the tension between you and where you're supposed to be increases. And someday God will go (MAKES SLINGSHOT SOUND) and you will soar. And you will thank me, if you're listening to what I'm hear.. because this is the truth. This is always true. It's not sometimes true. It's always true. The way your life gets better is when you get better. Focus on personal development. We call it discipleship in the church. Focus on becoming a Jesus kind of person in every way. In every way. Full of passion, full of hope, full of purpose, full of wisdom and your life will increase and not decrease. Here's a good question – what does the devil look like? If I said draw me a picture of the devil, what would you draw? I think a lot of people would picture like classic Donald Duck in red pajamas with horns and a little pitchfork, maybe. I think if you said what does he really look like, you might take a cinematic view from like Diablo the video game, or something like that where you have this huge many horned stone skinned flame coming out of the eyes monster. The Bible reveals to us already what the devil looks like. You know what he looks like? He looks like a saint. He looks like a Christian. He's darnel. He looks just like wheat until the very end. The Bible says he poses as what? An angel of light. Angel of light. He's attractive. He's good at marketing. He's good at communicating. He knows the Bible very well. He knows it better than I do. He quotes it to Jesus. And he goes to church. Guaranteed. You've probably met him at a couple churches. He doesn't go to this church. Doesn't go to this church. But he goes to church. Goes to church. And so how do we solve a problem like that? If a Christian and the devil kind of look the same 90% of the time, how do we solve that problem? Here's the answer – don't look. Don't look! Don't compare your life to other people. Just grow. Invest in you. Just grow. Don't let weeds tell you how to live a good life. Don't let weeds tell you how to live a good life. But here's the other side of that coin, and I don't want you to miss this, either. Here's the other thing we tend to do when people are growing around us, succeeding around us. Not all who grow faster than you are weeds. Don't mess that up, either.

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There are some wheat plants in your life that are going to grow faster than you, bare more fruit than you, last longer than you, have all the things that you want, and they're of the Lord. Praise God. Here's how we respond to that – bless the Lord. Here's how we respond to that – thank you God that the world is full of fruit-bearing, good people. Get yourself around people like that. Surround yourself with as many people like that as you can. We know from the scriptures that God has called us to rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn. I think for many of us, it's a lot easier to mourn with those who mourn – oh, you poor thing – than it is to rejoice with those who rejoice, especially when someone has the thing we want. Research tells us that resentment, the feelings of resentment that you have that all of us experience in life, resentment does not come from the part of the mind where anger comes from, or where justice comes from. It feels that way, but it's not. Resentment comes from the part of the mind where – hear it - envy is located. Envy. Meaning that if you have feelings of resentment, it's very likely that the person you resent has something you need or desperately want. You get upset at your spouse or your roommate for being lazy. Well, it might be that they are lazy, but there's some part of you that needs rest in your life. You resent someone who's rich. Well it might be that you need more financial means in your life. You resent the powerful. That might mean that you actually feel like you're not in control, or you need more power in your life in general. Or you resent people that are popular. It might mean that you've been uninvited, or you struggle to make good friends. Here's how you fix that situation. Just label it and bless those who have what you want. Pray for those who have what you want. Get around those who have what you want, if they're good people, if they love the Lord. Bless them. Help them. And you know what? You might even learn from them, and grow from them. That is a better approach to life than resentment. And it's easy. Who here is perfect? No one. No one's perfect. So when you resent someone, it's easy to magnify the imperfections about that person. But if they really are a mostly good or healthy person, get around them, pray for them, ask the Lord to bless them even more, and watch what happens. Remember – Abraham is given a promise by God that he will bare children, and that his children will outnumber the sands on the seashore, and the stars in the sky. Twenty-five years go by before this very old man has a child, and his very old wife, 90-years-old, gets pregnant. What is the one thing in the Bible that happens. The very last thing that happens before Sarah gets pregnant? I will tell you Abraham prays for his neighbor who has been barren. He prays for his neighbor to get what he wants. He prays for his neighbor to receive his promise. And the first thing in the next chapter – Sarah gets pregnant. Have we not learned and do we not testify that we live in a spiritual world that follows spiritual rules? We follow these rules, we obey these rules, we build our lives around these rules, and we do these rules, and our life gets better. Pray for and bless those who have what you want. Who want what you want. Who are going or are where you want to be. Bless them and do not curse them. Bless them. Don't compare yourselves to your co-workers. Don't compare yourselves to your ex. Don't compare yourself to your exes new boyfriend or girlfriend. Don't compare yourself to your boss, to your competitors, to your siblings, or to your friends. You know who you should compare yourself to? You know who is the best person to compare yourself to? There's one person you can compare yourself to and your life will get better every time you do it. Here's who it is: you compare yourself to who you were yesterday. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear. Compare yourself to who you were yesterday. If you grow month by month, year by year, and that's who you compare yourself to; full of more love, if I had bigger vision, am I surrounding myself with the right kind of people? Do I understand God's word? Am I spending time with the Lord? Am I committing my minutes and my hours to the things that really matter? Did I make the call? Did I write the letter? Did I send the email? Did I do the thing? Did I get up when I said I would get up? Did I show up when I said I'd show up? Did I do what I say I would do when a year ago I wouldn't have? You'll be glad that you're becoming something special in God's kingdom. You're becoming a giant for God's kingdom, and that's what matters. Just grow. Just grow. Grow. Grow! Before you go somewhere, you need to grow somewhere. Never forget it. Now this parable is talking, when it talks about wheat and weeds, its talking about people, but I think we can apply this to our personal life. For all the men in the house, I just have three minutes left. Guys, you ready? Men don't like long sermons, and I certainly understand. In life, there are weeds that you pull up, not people, but in your head. So you sow a dream. It's a family, a marriage, a child. You sow a dream, a business. You sow a dream, a project, a work of art, a book, a club, something. You start this thing that terrifies you, but you know you have to do it or you'll die, so you sow the dream. The better the dream is, you nurture the dream, you care for the dream, here's a promise – weeds are out to kill your dream. The better the seed, the better the soil, the bigger the weeds. That's a promise.

Thriving in a Field of Weeds

And here's where the weeds are. These are the weeds you do pull up. They're in your head. And they're two things. They're the negative thoughts, sinful thoughts, and number two, it's the distractions. Not a sin, but the things that take away. Here's the first thing, the thoughts. We all know and we believe that what we think about is who we're going to become. If you have an amazing life right now with the worst kinds of thoughts, that is much worse than someone who's in the darkest, most horrible place, but has the right kind of thoughts. Your thought is a compass, it's a map, it's a course for where your life is going. It's an absolute rule. This rule cannot be broken. If you're not where you want to be, it's the result of thinking. We got to change our philosophy, change what we believe, and change what we think about. And there is one weed, one thought above all that is ruining your life. Above all. All. This is the worst. This is the one you kill. This word is – judgment. Judgment. We do it all the time. Judgment is the opposite of forgiveness. When we judge others, we sabotage our life. Here's what thoughts of judgment look like. All rich people, dot, dot, dot. When you say all rich people dot, dot, dot, you're guaranteeing you will never be rich. I had a friend that said all mega church pastors are narcissists! Wonderful pastor, great guy. Pastor of a small church. Said all mega church pastors are narcissists, but he only knew one mega church pastor who was a narcissist, but this bridged to all, and I believed him for a while. I got to know some mega church pastors. Some of them are my friends, and guess what – some of them are narcissists. But some of them are not. They're just wonderful people. And I've known a lot of small church pastors, and guess what – some of them are narcissists, and some of them are not. Here's a guarantee I can make to you. You know Simon Cowell from American Idol and all that? You will never hear Simon Cowell sing. You know why? Because of judgment. He can't now. The first time he sings, even if he sings like an angel, the whole world will dunk on him for one missed note, one missed lyric, one messed up song. This is what judgment does – puts you in a box. It ruins your life. It sabotages your future. If you're judging others, special groups of people, you will never achieve what they have. Ever. You completely have sabotaged your life when you do that. So don't do it. We don't need to do that. God's the judge. We don't need to judge others. Maybe if you're in an office you have to do that, but other than that, unless you're in some kind of position of authority. Okay. So thoughts. Number two – distractions. This is the other thing that'll kill the seed you sow. Distractions are the type of thing that are not evil. In fact some distractions are kind of good. But they're still going to take away from where God wants you to go. They're not bad, they're expensive. You ever had an expensive distraction? New video game. New show on Netflix. Got to get the work done, got to make the call, got to visit the person, but one more episode. Hey listen, I like shows as much as the next person. I like to relax. But those distractions, when they get too much in our life, they take us away from where we're supposed to be, and they cost us a lot. You want an edge in this world, in this very distracted world? The world has never been more distracted ever than it is right now. You want an edge in that world? Get rid of your distractions. The fewer distractions you have, the higher your velocity goes. The fewer distractions you have, the shorter your time horizon for your dream gets. Get rid of those distractions. Looking back, you're not going to go wow, I'm glad I spent all day Saturday catching up on that show. Spend an hour catching up on the show. Don't spend the whole day. And the fewer time you spend on those distractions, and the more time you spend with the people that you love: your family, with the person you love the most, the Lord. You love the Lord the most? Are you clothed in Christ? Is your first and last thought every day? When you make what matters truly matter based on how you spend your time, that's your most valuable resource, your life gets better. Here's how you grow the world's greatest pumpkin. The world's biggest pumpkin. Two thousand five hundred and sixty pounds. You know how you grow a pumpkin like that? You first have to get a prize-winning seed. You know how much a prize-winning seed costs? Eight hundred dollars, at least. For one seed. So you got to get a good seed, you got to get a good dream. You plant it in the ground, and then this is how these guys grow these giant pumpkins. It's kind of a bummer it's sideways. I wish it was upright, but anyway. Call me a purist. As the vine grows; I learned this from Mike McCalway, he's a great business writer. He has a book called The Pumpkin Plan. It's amazing. There's a whole world around growing giant pumpkins. As the pumpkins start to grow, you clip the small ones off. Sure, they're pumpkins, sure they make good pie. You cut them off until you narrow it down to one pumpkin, and that one pumpkin just begins to blow up like a balloon. Isn't that amazing? Think about your life in this way. The more pumpkins you have on the vine, the smaller your pumpkin will be. Some people say well, I'd rather have twenty-five baby pumpkins. Well that's fine. But if you have a big dream, you got to clip some of those pumpkins. Clip the stuff that doesn't matter. Clip the gains.

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Clip the time wasting. When you rest, really rest. Really take a break. Really be there and your life will be blessed. I know I talk a lot about time, but it's the most important thing. It's the most important resource you have. If you take care of the hours and the minutes, the years will take care of themselves. I broke my promise. I went seven instead of three minutes. But I'm done now.

We thank you, Lord, we love you and we're grateful for your wisdom and for the Holy Spirit. Lord, you've provided a door for us, but we must seek it out, we must ask for it, we must knock on it, and when it opens, we must walk through. I pray, Father, that no longer will we be bogged down by the weeds that surround us, but we will be committed to you, Lord. And it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, all God's people said, amen.