

Proverbs 2

May 14, 2006

I. Introduction to Proverbs and Building a Relationship with God

Last week we began to focus on how to build a relationship with the Lord. We have been talking about that in a lot of different general terms and concepts, and I've been trying to take you through the Word of God and just really show you and help you understand how it kind of all goes together. We've been taking two or three weeks at a stretch and talking about doctrinal principles, and then we've been taking a couple of weeks into finding how you apply those.

Last week we were in Deuteronomy 29. We were a lot of places last week, but we finally wound up in Deuteronomy 29, and we were talking about what it means to have the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. As I said last week, we've so cheapened and so commercialized in Christianity the word "personal." We use that now in an expression that really doesn't carry with it the weight of everything that it really means in the Bible. So we talked about that last week.

I thought today what I want to do is kind of give you another perspective on it. In fact, I thought we're going to go to Proverbs 2. I thought what I would do is show you what the wisest man in all the Bible, and certainly the wisest man in all the world, show you what he said about having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

If there's any book in the Bible that I would like to just totally, completely understand and have the access of total recall in my mind, it would be the book of Proverbs. I believe that the book of Proverbs, without a doubt, is probably the book in the Bible that contains every issue that you're going to get into in life. I think the rest of the Bible is written around the book of Proverbs from a practical standpoint. I think every illustration, every example, every man and woman Jesus meets, everything that you're dealt with in the book of Romans and 2 Corinthians, I believe they all fundamentally go back to the principles that are found in the book of Proverbs. In fact, when we talked about building your foundation a couple of weeks ago, and we talked about building on those precepts, the book of Proverbs is the precepts. It is an incredible book.

It kind of breaks itself down if you're ever going to really study the book. You'll find that the first seven chapters, I think the way that God breaks the book down is very instrumental in our understanding. The first seven chapters you're going to find that each chapter starts out by saying, "My son." We know that historically, he's probably writing this to Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Inspirationally, he's writing it to you and to me as God's son. Doctrinally, he's writing to the nation of Israel as God's son in an Old Testament sense, as the nation of Israel. So we know that when we read those first seven chapters, what he's doing is giving us a prelude for as a son of God, what the book of Proverbs will give us.

There's a number of things that you should go through the first seven chapters that it's more like, "Okay, if you get this and this is how you get it, this is what it's going to do." It tells you in the first seven chapters, really the fundamentals of getting and building a relationship with God and

what you need. In chapter 8 through chapter 30, you've got those chapters that deal with the issues of life. Almost unbelievably, every verse is just loaded and packed with principles that you're going to be faced with or deal with in life. I don't know of any circumstance, any situation in a practical living sense that you won't find explained or you're warned against in the book of Proverbs chapter 8 through chapter 30.

Then chapter 31, the end result, the virtuous woman, that virtuous woman is a picture of the church. That virtuous woman is the end result, the byproduct of you and I doing what the book of Proverbs says. My, my, my, how you can come down through that virtuous woman there and find all the things that fit into your life and my life as far as a relationship with God and ministering to other people. It's an incredible, incredible thing.

But I want to focus today on one of the great, one of the greatest proverbs for me. If there's any one passage of scripture that I really focused on early in my life to really build that relationship with God, it was Proverbs 2. I took it word by word, verse by verse, concept by concept, and explored it through the Word of God and then put it into my own life as best I could.

So I want to read that for you today in the first nine verses.

Proverbs 2:1-9

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee today for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much for all that You've done for us. We ask You today, Father, to open up our hearts, that we might receive the things of the Word of God that You have for us. Help us, Lord, every day of our lives, every week of our lives, and everything that we do to seek God's face and to try to build that strong one-on-one relationship with God, Lord, that carries us through all the things in life. Help us, Father, to understand that there isn't a problem we have in life. There isn't anything that we have in life that the problems are not solved by the Word of God. I thank You, Father, for our time today. I pray that You'll bless us, give us all the things that we need, and we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen.

II. The World's Opposition to Personal Responsibility

As I preach you the Word of God every Sunday, I'm running a stiff opposition. That opposition is simply this: the world is bombarding you with all kinds of things that are simply not true. Most of God's people that don't get into the Bible never really grasp the reality, so they get caught up in all this. You're taught today that you're not responsible for anything. You're taught today that as a human being, you're a victim of life.

There was a time when man took responsibility for his own sin and his own problems. That doesn't happen anymore. There was a time where the preacher, the doctor, whoever, would say to the guy, "You know what? You need to be accountable and take responsibility for what's going on in your life." Today, the preacher, the doctor, everybody else, they're on their side and saying, "You can't help being what you need to be."

I was driving down the street by my house the other day, I couldn't believe this. In fact, I almost wrecked the car, had to come back and see it again. There was a church down the street from us, and I was going up to the store to get something. It was a Methodist church or a Lutheran church, I don't care, I'm not sure what it was. It was one of them kind of churches. And there on the head, it had a, on a slot, it naturally had trees planted every 20 feet or something, like a big tree. And they had a big banner stretched over the church that said "Cultural Intervention Week." And on these trees out here, it says, "We want," and each tree had a name, "We want old people. We want young people. We want lesbians. We want gays. We want rebels. We want..." I mean, the list was unbelievable. I would go up there and I had come back. I said, "I got to see that again." And I drove back again. And sure enough, in fact, I drove through the parking lot. In fact, I wanted to get my picture taken along. You wouldn't believe me. It's unbelievable.

I thought to myself, that's exactly where there was a time when men stood in the pulpit and preached the Word of God against men's sins. Today, we tell them that you're not responsible for your sin. We blame it on society. We blame it on everything else in the world. I'm going to tell you, I don't know what problems you run into in life. I've dealt with men that were drug addicts that told me, "Well, you know what? My pastor or my doctor and my psychologist told me that the ability to be a drug addict was in my genes. Therefore, I'm just a drug addict because I can't help it." I've had alcoholics tell me the same thing. "Well, I'm an alcoholic because it runs in my family." Well, let me tell you something. I have high cholesterol and it runs in my family. But if you're a drunk or a dope addict, it doesn't run in your family. Those aren't sicknesses as we're led to believe today.

Now, why I said all that to say this: whatever you're told in this world, whatever you're told in this world that goes against the Word of God, that you're not responsible for whatever you are in your life, let me tell you something. You are responsible. You know what? You have within you. I kind of believe in that. I kind of believe that each of us has within us the ability to be an alcoholic or a drug addict. I believe that. I don't believe it's passed on through your family. Well, yeah, I do. But I believe it's not passed out through your family genes. I think it's passed out through your old sin nature that comes from Adam.

I've got some more news for you. Everybody in this room, everybody in this room has the ability not only to be a drug addict, not only to be a drunk, you have the ability to be a murderer. You have the ability to be a rapist. You have the ability to be a Saddam Hussein or an Adolf Hitler or a Mussolini. You have the ability to be the most wicked thing in this life. You have that within you. It's not born through your family in the sense that it was in my mother's gene, or my father's gene, so I've got it. You have it because inside of all of us is an old sin nature that has passed on down through having children. It goes right down. We bear children in our image after our likeness, which is a sinful image and a sinful likeness. Therefore, in that sense, you have that inside you.

If you didn't have an alternative, then you wouldn't be responsible. If God just let Adam in the garden sin and walked out the door and said, "Well, that's the end of that plan," then you and I could get to the great white throne judgment of the double-seated Christ and we could honestly say, "God, I'm not responsible because You let sin come into the world. And because You let sin come in, I am now faced with these things. And You have wrote in Your Bible that man altogether is against God, that there's none that doeth good. There's none that seeketh after God. So Lord, therefore here I am, what I am, I had no control over." And God would have to say, "Yep, you're right."

But you know what made the difference? Christ made the difference. That book makes the difference. Once Christ, the man who did allow God, the being allowed sin to come into the world, once He who, yes, He did, He allowed it to come in, but the same God that allowed it to come in is the same God that came down and paid the price to take it out. Now you have a choice. Now you don't have to be anything except what God wants you to be. Now there is nothing in this world that should keep you from God unless you choose it. Now there's nothing in this world that will allow you to be anything but what you want to be other than yourself. Now you cannot blame whatever you are on anybody else. It comes right back to you. That's why the book of Proverbs and in particular Proverbs 2 is so vital. That's why understanding how to build a relationship with God is so vital because we like to blame our problems on somebody else. We love to do that.

I recommend for most of God's people when I first meet them and most unsaved people a vacation on the Isle of Reality. Spend a week there, look at your life, see what's going on, and then realize that you are responsible for your life and for your sin. You and I are responsible for what we are. That's why building a relationship with God is so crucial and that's why the wisest man that ever lived said this.

III. Man's Two Fundamental Problems

You know what he did? I don't know if you caught it or not. I just thought about it so I had to stop myself and back up. But you know what he did? In what we just read, the wisest man that ever lived defined what your problem, my problem really is in life. He did. Now maybe you missed it, but if you read down through there, he tells us the two things that we get when we do this or the two things that man needs more than anything else because they're the two things that man doesn't have. You know what they are? I'll show you.

Look down here.

Proverbs 2:5

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

He said when you do this verse 1, you do this verse 2, you do this verse 3, you do this verse 4, this is what you get in verse 5. "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD." You know what that is? That's who God is. You know what's going on with America today? They don't know who God is anymore.

Now the next thing, "and find the knowledge of God." Notice now it didn't say find the knowledge about God, find out all about God. It said getting the knowledge that God has. Two problems man has:

1. Who God is.
2. What did He say?

Those are the two fundamental problems that we have. Look at America. When we started out, we knew who God was and we knew what He said. Look at us today. We don't know who He is and we don't know what He said. Look at churches. There was a time when you went to the Methodist Church, that guy tore the hide off you with preaching in the Word of God. There was a time you went to the Presbyterian Church. You got blasted there. You didn't like him. You went over to the Episcopalian Church and a guy tore your hide off there. Wherever you went, you didn't have a lot of options. Not today. Why? Because we've lost the concept of who God is and we've lost the concept of what God said. Because of that, you can pretty much go. If you don't like what I say, you can pretty much go wherever you want to go and find somebody that will tell you just what you want to hear. That's the society that we live in today. That's where we're at.

IV. The Meaning of "Receive My Words"

Now Proverbs 2:1-9 teach us basically how to do what we talked about last week or how to get to that point in our lives. Every verse is just absolutely loaded. Now he says in verse 1, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words." Let's just stop right there because we got a mouthful right there.

First of all, the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 2:13:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Now the key word here, once we get past "my son," we know who he's talking to, is the word "receive." You know the Bible is its own dictionary. That's one of the big problems people make. Too many people redefining the words. I don't know how many times I've had somebody come to me over the years after I preached or in my Bible studies where I allow you to ask any question you want to ask. I don't know how many times somebody has come to me and said,

"Bob, let me ask you a question. I was reading my Bible the other day and my mother taught me this and my preacher taught me this. Over there in 2 John down around verse 10, it says that if somebody comes to your home with another spirit or another gospel or something like that, that you're not to receive them into your house or you're not to bid them Godspeed. And I was really concerned because I made a terrible mistake. Last week some Jehovah Witnesses came to my house and they wanted to talk and I allowed them to come into my house. Did I commit some great terrible sin?" Now that's how people think.

Now I want to talk to you about receiving. Receiving, the word to receive. You got to go to the Bible to get its own definition. Now the word "receive" in the Bible doesn't mean allow somebody to come in. If you're a Jehovah Witness and you come to my house and I got time, I'm going to have you come in. I'm going to chase you around the room for a while, run you upstairs, run you downstairs, try to corner you in the basement. I'm going to have you come in. Now if you're, I'm not going to go where you think I'm going to go, but we're going to have some fun. I don't do video games. I don't play a computer game. My watch doesn't do anything but give you the time. Some have got all got my cell phone. Don't take any pictures. It hardly even makes any phone calls, but bottom line is my entertainment is not that. My entertainment is to get somebody out there that believes something else that thinks that I'm stupid and then having a fast game of tennis with him being the ball. I know how to play stupid better than anybody else in the whole wide world because I've been that way all my life. I can play so dumb and so innocent and boy and let you just walk into that trap and it hits you with a right hook that you won't even wake up till next Sunday.

Of course the Bible says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Some people you handle very carefully, you handle very genuinely. The Bible says, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Sometimes you deck them. We talked about it. David and Goliath, the stones, and you look where he doesn't have the armor and then you nail him.

But when the Bible says that you're not to receive somebody into your house, it's not talking about that. The word "received" is defined for you in the book of 1 Corinthians 15:7 where Paul says:

1 Corinthians 15:7

After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

No, that's not it. It's 1 Corinthians 15:7. No, it's not. It's Romans 15:7.

Romans 15:7

Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Now that's the word "received." When you come over to my house, my house is yours. So if you have time, fix the porch. We did the things. My house is yours. Truthfully. I know you never do this, but this is how I feel. When I know you and you're my family and you come to my house, you can have whatever you want. You don't have to say, "Bob," I mean, honestly, you don't have

to say, "Bob, can I have a bottle of water?" You can go to the refrigerator, open it up and just take what you want. You don't have to, honest to goodness, if you're hungry and you got them over there, "Hey, you know what? You can say, 'Bob, can I make a sandwich?'" Sure. No problem. I don't have a problem with that. Don't eat the Twinkies. So they have one little parameter here, Twinkies. Don't eat the Twinkies. Twinkies are my. But you know what? My house is yours. Why? Because I receive you into my house, just like Christ received me. When Christ received you, whatever you have, whatever He has is yours. Bible says you're a joint heir. Bible says you're the aristocracy of heaven. You're a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Everything that is His is yours. That's the way I'm to receive you.

So the word "receive" in the Bible doesn't mean you're a Jehovah Witness. You can't come into my house so I can witness to you. It means that the Jehovah Witness coming in, he ain't getting a sandwich. He better not open up my refrigerator. He better not take my Twinkies. He ain't getting nothing but the book. My house is not his. We have nothing in common.

So the word "receive" is one of those words that the definition has been lost over the years, like so many others. People fret and worry over it. When you receive something for God, when I receive you into my house, my house is yours. What I have is yours. We're brothers and sisters in Christ. When I go to my sister's house, I don't ask Sharon, "Can I look in the refrigerator and see if there's anything to eat?" She doesn't care. I just open it up. When I go to my mom's house, I don't say, "Mom, Mother, may I, Mommy dearest? May I open up?" I just run through the thing and get what I want to eat. Now I know you wouldn't do that. I mean, to my house, you might do it. But I know you won't come into my house and just say, "Hey, Bob, it's good to see you. You know, I was kind of late today. Hey, you're going to eat this?" No, I know you wouldn't do that. But I'm telling you, I don't care if you do. I wouldn't be mad. Even if I was going to eat it, I'd say, "You go ahead and have it." You know why? Because I'm a lot like Abraham. When I fix you a feast, I like just to stand back and watch you enjoy and not partake myself. I'd give you anything I got. Well, because we're brothers and sisters in Christ. We're the family. It's not a matter that you're just part of my church. It's a matter that any brother or sister that has a need that loves God, is doing what's right. You know what? I will do anything I can do for him. That's the way it's supposed to be.

But now if you're a Jehovah Witness or a Mormon or somebody else or somebody outside where your whole doctrine and your spirit is one that is against God. Hey, you can come into my house, but you ain't coming into fellowship. We ain't coming into eat. I'm going to come in and give you the gospel. And then when I'm done, I'm going to pack you on your way. You see, that's what it means. The Bible says, "If thou wilt receive my words." He says, "For this cause also, thank we God without ceasing." Let's do it again. "For when you receive the word of God, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." If you don't believe it, it ain't going to work inside you. It's as simple as that. Receiving the word of God, receiving it into your heart, just as it is the most precious thing like we talked about last week that God has given you.

V. The Devil's Trick and the Dark Ages

You know, there's a great, a great trick of the devil. I don't know how much you follow things in history and life and put it all together, but I want to tell you something. We're experiencing today in our world, in our Christian world, we're experiencing today an incredible feat. If you're paying attention, you saw this thing develop down through history. You know, the book of Revelation is an incredible book. The first three chapters show us the church history. It runs from the church of Ephesus up to the church of Laodicea. In chapter 4, a door opens in heaven, a voice heard like a trumpet. Somebody goes up, you never find the word "church" again, then you're into the tribulation and on through the book of Revelation. But those first three chapters are absolutely paramount if you're going to understand what's going on. When I start to come through there, I begin to see this trick being revealed.

Tonight we talked about Job 40 and 41. We talked about Leviathan, Satan, and we talked about how that God would not conceal his parts, his powers, company, proportion. I showed you that's how the devil works down through history. That's exactly what we've got. People do not recognize what's going on today, because through the process of time and all the other things we're involved in, we lose our perspective on what the devil's doing. That's exactly what he wanted us to do.

But you'll come back there in that early church. The first one you find is the church at Ephesus. The word "Ephesus" means fully purposed. Here was a church that was fully purposed to do the work of God. It had everything that it needed. It had everything that the apostles had just probably died off the scene. The men that were there had a fresh understanding. There was no lack of time. They had the Word of God was complete. They knew many of them had seen Christ and knew Christ. It was very clear exactly what the mission was. This church, he comes down through there and he says, "You're a good church. You have patience. You've done all those things." But he says, "I have one thing against you." What he talks about down there, he comes down, he says you have the deeds of the Nicolaitans. He says you lost your first love, the Word of God. And you have the deeds of the Nicolaitans.

Revelation 2:6

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Now the Nicolaitans are the word that means conquering the laity. What happened here, we begin to see the early church get in a mindset very slowly that the common ordinary man, you and me, could not understand the words of God. Very slowly the devil bit in the form of hierarchy that he was going to raise up. He raises it up slowly as time goes on and doctrines come in. The Word of God gets under control of the people who are trying to take it over. Pretty soon by the time you get to the Pergamos church, which is about 300 years later, the Pergamos word means much marriage. The church has been literally married to the world. Now it isn't the deeds of the Nicolaitans, it's the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. It went from deed, just doing it, to an official teaching and stand that this is what the Bible teaches that you and me as common ordinary people cannot understand the Bible. There's no way you can figure it out. It's just going to confuse you. So you come to me and I will tell you what it means because I am a Gnostic. I

am a knower. I'm someone that has a higher spiritual plane than you poor saps and you can't figure it out. But you come to me and I'll tell you what it means.

You know what that kind of attitude did? It brought in the Dark Ages is what it did. Because the Roman Catholic Church came to power, they made it a capital offense for any common man to have a Bible that you could find out and receive the words of God. They made it a capital offense punishable by death. They made leagues with kings and nations to wipe out, kill anybody that found with a copy of the Word of God. Oh my friend, it threw this world into the Dark Ages, the most darkest period of time in history because the Dark Ages simply put is nothing more than when the Roman Catholic Church took the Word of God away out of the hands of common men and women. That threw this world into darkness and there was no light from God's word. It was a time when there was nothing going on. It was just the feudal system with all the big people on top and all the masses on the bottom. Boy, you watch that thing go for a thousand years.

God says, "You know what? My people need the Word of God." All during that time, I don't want to suggest for a moment that God wasn't doing some things, but God was doing it the way He does it many, many times through the severe persecution of oppression, of a wicked religion to put the Bible believers down. But yet all they do is flourish. I mean, while that is going on, people didn't have a copy of the Word of God. They were hiding it. They were copying it at night by candlelight. There were people that maybe that they would wait months just to read a small portion of the Word of God. We think what a terrible time. I don't know. I don't know if that's terrible or not. Maybe it takes something like that for you to fall in love with your Bible. You see, we got a thousand Bibles. We got six sitting back there. We got cars. I got 25 at home. I count this way. How many do you got? We got so many Bibles. We don't know what to do with it. What happens is, is we take it for granted and it's subtle, it's sneaky, and it's a trick of the devil. I'm going to tell you something. I don't know that it's bad for somebody to hunt you down. Don't want to kill you for reading that Bible. Maybe that's the only thing it'll drive you back to God. Maybe it's the only thing it'll make you appreciate that precious book and receive it as it really is the Word of God.

But old God had plans. Oh, He had plans. All around about 1300, an old boy was born down through there and his name was John Wycliffe. John Wycliffe, he saw the need. He saw the corruption and he saw what was going on. He wrote the, he took the text out of Antioch and he made the first Bible in English for the common man. Miraculously, he lived his whole life. The Roman Catholic Church never got him. He died just a normal death. But the Roman Catholic Church hated him and hated his Bible so much. 70 some years after he's dead, Roman Catholic Church digs him up and executes him. Yeah, they dig up his bones, burn him at the stake like, "Wow, we showed you." He's called the Morning Star of the Reformation because in that darkness, there was a light on the horizon.

Oh, we take for granted the book God's given us. Last week, I talked to you about the passion of the Word of God, of how that you know what, you need to look at it like God just wrote it to you with nobody else in mind. But I'm telling you, there you have to understand and we don't understand. That's a terrible thing about young Christians today. They get saved and they get no

heritage of why they've got what they've got. For the people that went into Christ and teach him every week don't have a clue.

A little bit longer along the way, a guy by the name of William Tyndale. Oh, William Tyndale. He translates it into English. He didn't so lucky. They call him in for the court of England, accuse him of heresy, question him through an inquisition of why you would do this and why do you go out there and tell people and encourage people to read the Bible. John William Tyndale said, "You know what, you see that plow boy out there, give him a Bible that in three years he'll know more of the Word of God than all the scholars in England." He understood what he had. He'd received it in the darkness. He wasn't as lucky as John Wycliffe. They took him. They tortured him. They tried to make him recant and he wouldn't. Finally they hauled him out in the court in England at Archbury there and they burned him at the stake and they put the wood around him and he tied him to a stake and they put the wood around him and he lit the flames and as the flame began to consume him, you could hear over the flames the last prayer of William Tyndale. His last prayer was based on his understanding the Word of God and receiving it and what it was not the word of man but as it is in truth the Word of God where he cries out one last prayer, "Oh God, open the King of England's eyes." 75 years later God honored that prayer and brought to the throne after Bloody Mary James the First and brought forth the grandest, glorious book this world has ever seen that went to all the world. God did open the King of England's eyes and that's why I can have it today.

But I want to tell you something. I said all that to say this. We're in the Dark Ages again today. Turn over to Amos 8. Oh I know we got our computers and we got our automobiles and we got space travel and you know we're gonna go to Mars and right after that we'll go to the sun and we got all these great things you know that that we're man's gonna do but I'm telling you we're I mean I know we live in the information age and I know that it's true that a man today with a New York Times newspaper has more information than a man in the 15th century got all of his life. That's all an illusion.

Amos 8:11-12

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

Notice the books here, there's just nobody listening. "And they shall wander from sea to sea and from north even to the east." That's where we're at today. Men and women running around saying like a suddenly began, "Well, I'm this because of this and I'm this," blaming it on everybody else, running to and fro from sea to sea, even to the north to the east, to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it. You know why? Because finding that book wouldn't here isn't based on your intellect. It isn't based on what you know or who you know. It's based on your attitude of heart, loving God with all your heart, with all your mind and all your soul. It's based on you receiving that book as the Word of God and you don't. You can have 20,000 Bibles around you and you'll never hear the Word of God. It's a famine. We're in a Dark Ages today with all that

we've got. It's all artificial light put up by man. They go the true light. The Word of God is not here today just like it was not here in the Dark Ages. We have a few groups of people in this world today that love that book and know what that book is and they match right up with the Waldenses, the Albigenses. In fact that's your lineage of your Anabaptists. Tyndale is connected with the Lollards. They're connected with the with the with the Hussites. We're connected with the Paulicians. We're connected with all those biblical groups. Now we're seeing today a time that we live in where the Word of God is just taken for granted. It doesn't mean anything special. Oh we've got it and we even got the right one. But it's all in how you received it. It has a word of men or as it is in truth a word of God and when you take it as the Word of God my friend it does something for you that no other book in this world can do.

VI. The Power of Receiving God's Word

Oh I love Psalms. I think Psalms is probably one of the greatest books in the Bible and for me I come over to Psalm 119. I believe that Psalm 119 will show you what the Word of God will do for you when you receive it. I don't have time to go to the altar today but I want to show you one concept here. One concept.

Psalm 119:97-104

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Oh that ought to be your attitude of heart toward the receiving the Word of God. That one section of verses right there says everything that needs to be said. "Oh how I love thy law!" I mean I don't know did you see that's always a favorite of mine because in the first couple of verses there it really shows you what happens when you receive it and you believe it.

First thing he says down there verse 98, "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me." You're going to have a lot of enemies in life as a child of God. Some will be your family, some will be work, some will be people that you associate with, some will be people but I promise you if you're going to take a stand for the Word of God and you're going to be what God wants you to be. If you're going to be the light in this dark age, if you're going to be a light in this wilderness I'm telling you he's telling you already

that you're going to have enemies for he says down there this little postscript "for they are ever with you." There's never going to be a time in this life that you're going to be enemy free unless you compromise.

Now he says, "Wow, what a loaded verse." He's going to make the Word of God when you receive it and you love it and it becomes your meditation makes you wiser than your enemies. You know why? You get a different perspective. You get a different understanding. I'll tell you something else, you choose when you get angry. When you lose your anger, when you lose control and you get angry you're out of control and I'm telling you if you don't, I've learned one thing about the Bible, two things about, a lot of things about the Bible but this one thing particularly. God loves with a perfect love and God hates with a perfect hatred. You know what the word "perfect" is in both cases? Unconditional. You know how you can hate as God hates perfectly and love as God loves perfectly? Don't get emotionally involved. Don't take it personal. That's what the Word of God will do for you. How does it do that? Because it helps you see what the real issue is.

We're all, hey, we're all frail human beings and we all want people to like us and our feelings get hurt. I don't care how tough you pretend you are. You don't like it when somebody doesn't like you and we just want people to like us because we're, that's the way we are and we just don't like people not to like us but the bottom line is you got to get over that because if you're going to stand for God you're going to make a lot of people angry with what you say and you're going to make a lot of people mad with what you do and you just believe the Bible is the Word of God and you're going to have your share enemies but anger clouds the mind because in anger normally when it's not perfect anger you know what we do? We vent our own personal concepts. He said you're wiser than your enemy.

There isn't anything that really makes me mad. I mean I don't like sin. I hate sin. I get mad at some of the things that this world does. I'm talking on a personal level. Other than my family and my kids I don't know what you could do that would really tick me off. I don't know what you could do to me that 15 minutes later you could say I'm sorry and I'd say it's fine we both have lunch together and I'd never think about it and I bring it up again. You know why? Because I understand the issues in life and I understand that I don't take it personal and I also believe this. I believe that when you have the book you don't have, you can pick what you get angry about. I only have so much energy to expend. I'm a human being like you. I only have so many tears that can flow. I can only have so many emotions to give out. I can only have so much anger to give here. So you have to pick and choose where your battles are going to be. A man who has no Bible in his life, who has no discipline in his life, he gets angry over everything or stupid things. You're wiser than he is and you see his frailty and infallibility in those temper tantrums that he throws.

I'm gonna give you a great verse. Psalm 119, you don't have to look it up just write it down but you'll want this one.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

I don't get offended. I've had people come, I do this all the time. I have people come up to me and they say, "Brother Bob, I just want you to know that I need to talk to you here and confess something to you because you offended me by some things that you said today." I said, "Fine, hold on a minute. The Bible says when you love the Word of God nothing shall offend you. Go ahead." You see how the Bible betrays our real feelings? You see it's no wonder the Bible says all things are naked and open unto Him. That Word of God strips us right down and shows us our very motive. I don't get offended by anything in life. You know why? I'm secure in the book. I got the book. I don't care. Somebody say, "You know what the Democrats are doing?" I don't care. "You know what the Republicans are doing?" I could care less. It ain't gonna be that. It ain't gonna be one or the other. They're just playing around like little ants down here having a great time. One day the one who owns the ant farm is gonna come and stomp it all out. I don't care. "Well, you know, are you a Republican or a Democrat?" I'm neither. I'm a Christian. I don't take any political side. "Well, this one over here, this one over here, they're Democrats. They're liberal. They want all this liberal stuff and he's over here." Hey, I got news for you. They're both crooked. You can't tell me that you can be a politician in the world today and be straight. Everybody right now, "Well, brother in the bush, you know, it's election year now. Now he's signing, letting all the Mexicans in, you know, and he's signing the bill to go to Mars, you know, he's doing all these things because he's got a secret agenda." Well, sure he does. He's a politician. Why, when you graduate from politician school, the first thing they give you on the way out is a secret agenda. Come on. What do you think he is? I'm not saying he's a bad guy or a good guy. I'm saying he's a politician and politicians always have a secret, a hidden agenda that's built around what they want to do and they may think it's best for the country. I don't know. I don't care. They can think all they want what's best for the country. I know what's best for this country. Why? Because I'm wiser than my enemies. I'm not better. I'm not better than anybody else in the world. I'm just wiser and I'm not wiser because I'm smarter. I'm wiser because I'm stupider. Is that a word? Stupider. You know what I'm saying. I'm wiser because I'm dumber. I'm dumb enough just to believe that God could write a book and preserve it that would give me everything in life to get me through life.

So he says, he says, yeah, wiser than your enemies and you'll be smarter because you'll be able to pick and choose and not expend energy on stuff that doesn't matter. You'll see through the smoke and the glass and see what the real issue is and you'll come away saying, "You know what? I don't care if they took my job. I don't care if they took this. I don't care if they took that. They can't take this." You got this. You got everything. You only think you got everything else when you got everything else.

Then he says, "have more understanding than all my teachers." You betcha. I went to school to the sixth grade, man. I know history, science, evolution, politics, all those religions. I've been through it all. I've read it all and I understand it all. The bottom line is, you know what? I believe what the book of Proverbs says that all that stuff without God and Israel is just the fields of the fatherless. Just wandering through the times and all that's going on. I mean, I know exactly where I'm at. I know exactly where God's at. I know exactly where America's at. I know exactly what's going on and where it's going on.

Turn Isaiah 5. I'll show you another one. Boy, this is a good one. Here's where we are. Now, this is what the Bible does. The Bible gives you more understanding than all your teachers, wiser than your enemies. This is how he does it.

Isaiah 5:20-21

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Look at that. Now, where's that at today? That's America that put darkness for light and light for darkness and put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. "Woe unto him that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." That's America. That's America's educational system. That's America's science system. That's America's religious system. That's America's political system. It's all built around that we're going to live down here for a million years and we're going to govern our own destiny. You know what? God just really doesn't have anything to say about it. Well, what do I have news for you? I've got a shocking revelation. Let me tell you something. That Bible says that you have more, you have more, you have your wiser than your enemies. You have more understanding than all your teachers. And then he says, "I understand more than the ancients because I keep thy precepts." How? Receiving his word, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in also you that believe.

VII. The Wisdom Books and the Bible's History

We were in a book of Psalms, book of Proverbs. We were in a book of Job, book of Song of Solomon. You know what they're called? Typically the wisdom books. They're called the wisdom books because they display the wisdom that is taught throughout the rest of the Word of God. When Aristotle and Socrates and Plato and all the great minds and your college professor and your high school teacher, when they get up there and they laid out their garbage about the world and all the things that went on in their view of history, that's all that it was. It was a Gentile perspective that when you know the Bible and you have the wisdom of the Word of God and you know the Bible because it is the truth of God, you can figure all those things out.

The wisdom books. Somebody says, "What about the book of Psalms?" Book of Psalms? That's the heart of God. You want to get the heart of God? Get in the book of Psalms. Somebody says, "Well, what about the sufferings of God?" You want to learn about the sufferings of God? Go to the book of Job. Somebody said, "I want to get the mind of God." Mind of God, book of Proverbs. Not me. I want to find out the mind of the Spirit, book of Ecclesiastes. Not me. I want to find out the mind of Christ, Song of Solomon. You got it. One's got the heart of God which shows you the sufferings of God. One shows you the mind of God. One shows you the mind of the Spirit that will show you the mind of Christ. Oh, you'll not beat the Word of God.

When I stand up here and tell you, I'm not just saying it. When I said that in 1 Thessalonians where it says, "For when you receive the word of God, you're received not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God which effectually worketh also when you believe." I mean,

receive it. I don't mean just put it on your coffee table and say, "Yeah, I got one." I mean, it's your attitude of heart that it's your book. You love it. You see the perspective of how down through history, it all tried to get destroyed. The devil hated anybody. Everybody hated that book. Wanted to take it from you. Couldn't do it. Now he has.

You want a history lesson real quick? I give it to you in 30 seconds. Say, five things you know about history and the Bible, you got it all. Yeah, five things. See, I got to break things down. I mean, I'm just, things are too complicated to me. I got to get them down where I say, "Okay, this is how I'm going to remember it. One, two, three, four, five." That's it. I'll put this whole thing in a nutshell. We go home and eat lunch early. Yeah, Psalms is the heart of God. Job's the suffering of God. Proverbs, the mind of God, Ecclesiastes, his mind, the despair. Song of Solomon. Yeah, right down the line.

But when you look down and you see the history of the Bible and the history of the church and history of man, and you see where you're at, and you realize Psalms 119 says that God's going to make you wiser than your enemy, smarter than your teachers, more than the ancients. You're going to get all the superior intellect to understand and see exactly where you're at, looking back, standing here, and looking forward. Come to that Bible. It's simple. Five things. Come to this book.

3. This book, God thought it. It's the mind of Christ. It was in His mind.
4. This book, Christ bought it. He paid the price for me to have it.
5. This book, Holy Spirit of God, brought it. So when he received the Word of God, he received it not as the Word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God.
6. The devil fought it. He tried to stop it at every turn. Take that book out of your hand.
7. I got it.

Oh, God thought it. Jesus bought it. Holy Spirit brought it. Devil fought it. But glory to God, I got it. You receive it as it is in truth. The Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. Oh, I'm telling you, my friend, oh, the wisest man that ever lived, the wisest man that ever lived, said, "My son." He said, "My son." He said, "My son, receive thou shalt receive my word, receive my, if that will receive my words." That is the first step. Without that, you're going to go through life blaming your problems on everybody. And the farther you get out, the worse you're going to be.

VIII. The Importance of Being "On Target" with the Bible

I've told you this illustration before, but it is so true of what happens to man, this country, and individuals when they don't have the Bible. Years ago, I used to help out at a gun club. They had a sight-in day every deer season. I went out there. They needed to have some help. What it was, they put an ad in the paper, "Anybody that bought a rifle and you got a scope on it, and you don't know how it's not zeroed in. You don't have a place to go. Saturday and Sunday, 9 to 12, show up, we'll give you a coach. We'll help you get it sighted in. So your rifle will be on. We don't want anybody getting hurt." Good.

Well, I show up. They give me this guy. Nice guy. He should not be hunting. Nice guy. He, and I could tell his gun still in the box. Walmart tag still taped on it. I remember today, it was a Marlin 336 lever action 30-30 or something like that. You know, nice weapon, nice gun. They still had the cosmoline on it. So I said, "Well, let's do first things first." So we wiped it all off, you know, we had the scope on it and all this stuff, you know. So I said, "Okay, here's what we're going to do." I said, "Don't load it yet. I got to go down here. In fact, we'll just sit in the car till I come back." You know, I didn't know this guy. So I go down there, I'm 25 yards, you know, I mean, I'm going to do it the way we did in the military, you know, you put a target 25 meters, you know, and then you, you know, the 30-30 is going to either go up or go down. So you drop it either low and get that. So I, I was figuring out, I'll get him on a piece of paper and then, you know, we'll adjust him up from there. So I went back, put the target down 25 meters. I said, "Okay, now, now hold very steadily right on that, take a deep breath." They'll tell him all the things, you know, cock the thing back, you know, put the bullet in and, you know, and, and he squeezed that thing off and BAM, man, that thing went off and, you know, I looked through a pair of binoculars down there and, and I gave him to him and I said, "Well," I said, I said, "You see right there, you just, the paper target was about this big and the bull's eye was in the middle and his round went right over here on the edge of the paper at 25 meters." And I said, "Okay," I said, "Well, we know what we got to work with." And I said, "Here," and I looked around and he's, he got his rifle, he's headed back to the car. And I said, "Hey," I said, "Annie, where are you going?" Annie Oakley. I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "Well," he says, "I'm going hunting. Tomorrow, I said, I'm ready to go." He says, "That's close enough to get me a deer." I said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa." I said, "Come here." So let me tell you a little, little thing here. 25 yards to that target. Your gun is shooting 12 inches off at 25 yards. At 100 yards, it's going to be probably two feet off. At 300 yards, it's going to be over here. And if you take a 500 shot, you're going to shoot yourself. I said, "You ain't ready to go anywhere." I said, "Sit out."

But he thought, you know what? The point being, God showed me this many, many years later. If you're off on your Bible, close range, what makes you think you're going to be on at 100 yards? In fact, the farther you go, the farther you get off. You have to have a point in your life where you start and you put that round right through the center of the bullseye. And in a 200 yards, you're right on. 300 yards, you're right on. 400 yards, you're right on. You have to get it zeroed in at the target. I'm telling you, you have to start with that book. That book is the book that you start with. When you receive it as it is in truth, the Word of God and the wisest man that ever lived said, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words," it's been defined for you now. You understand it. You can add this to what we talked about last week and you understand what it means now to receive it. You take it as it is. It's your book, just as I would receive you into my home. Your mind is yours. When God gave you that book and you receive it, it's yours. You've got to get it on the money when you start. That's why we're taking the time. That's why right now we've got to take the time to get you on target when we're here. So five, six, seven, eight years down the line, when you're way out there by yourself someplace, you're still on target. Otherwise, the farther you go, the farther you're off. That's why it's so important to learn the Word of God. That's why I told you, these verses are absolutely loaded, absolutely loaded.

Next week I'm going to take it, I'm going to show you from the Old Testament. We'll begin in the next part. I'm going to show you how you can go back to the Old Testament and you can find every kind of Christian you ever wanted to meet or did meet and come down to this bottom line of what it really means to love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul. It's the most unbelievable thing you have ever seen in your life. When we get the Proverbs next verse or next half of this verse, we'll look at that next week and I'll show you. You now know what it means to receive the Word of God. Next week I'm going to show you how to hide it into your heart. We talked about it. I'm going to show you what it means, how to do it, how do you apply it, and what you're looking for when you want to do it.

All right, let's pray. Father, we thank You. We love You so much for all that You do for us. We ask You, Lord, today to take the words of God that we've talked about and help us to be on target. Help us, Father, in everything that we do just to be rock solid with You. Help us, Father, to put our cross hairs right on the cross and, Lord, never move from that. Realizing that this book that You give us is the Word of God and let us receive it as it is in truth, the Word of God. Help us, Father, in everything that we do to put the Word of God first. Help us never to do anything in this church that isn't based on Your book. Help us not do anything in our lives that isn't based on Your Word. We'll thank You and praise You for all that You do. In Jesus' name, for the sake we ask it, amen.