

# Hebrews 4

Sunday 1/25/2004

Last week, we started to talk about Proverbs 2 and our continuation of how to build a relationship with God. I told you that we were going to look at the wisest man who ever lived and see what he had to say. Those verses in Proverbs 2 are probably the most loaded verses anywhere in all the Bible; they just have so much in them.

In fact, last week when I was done, I thought to myself, "Man, there are a lot of things in there I really wanted to accomplish and didn't get to, just because of the time element." I was thinking, "I want to kind of stay on a schedule. I don't want to get bogged down on it." But when today happened, and I knew that it was probably going to be a down-and-out day for a lot of people coming, and just someone could get here, I thought, "This is the perfect day for this." What I'll do is I'll teach what I wanted to get in last week that I didn't get in, that helped supplement what I was talking about last week.

So, we are going to talk about Hebrews 4 today. You remember last week we talked about how it started out with receiving the Word of God. We talked about where the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, when you receive the Word of God, you receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe. That was where we were at last week, about receiving His Word, and we defined the word "receiving."

Hebrews 4:12 really goes right along with that, and it defines the Bible for you in a way that I have never really heard it defined. We know the Bible is God's Word, and all that; I am not talking about that. I am talking about exactly breaking down the Bible. When He says, "Receive the Word of God," we know that means you have to take it into yourself as your own personal book of promises. We have covered all that. Hebrews 4:12 really talks about what the Word of God does for you when you do that. All this ties in, and you are going to see it today, it all ties in with what we have been talking about as we came through Proverbs 2, and before that, it all lays itself out.

He says in Hebrews 4:12:

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

## I. The Nature of God's Word

You are going to find that there are seven things about the Word of God that come into your life when you receive it the right way. Deuteronomy 32:4 talks about that He is the Rock; His work is perfect. Everything that God does, He does perfectly. Of course, we know that the Bible is God's perfect book.

You have all been around long enough where you look at people and you see how people look at the Bible differently. Truly, as we have said many, many times, how you view it depends on your relationship with it, and ultimately, your relationship with God, because attitude is the key. I have

found over the years that there are some people who are intimidated by the Bible; the Bible actually is intimidating to them. They do not really get into it because they are afraid of it. They look at all the negative things in it, and maybe they do not have everything perfect in their life, and everything is not laid out exactly the way it needs to be. So, they are always walking through life waiting for that second shoe to drop, for God to whack them, and they get intimidated by it.

At the same time, there are some people who love it. They take the Word of God, and they love it in a way that they do not love anything else in this world, because, as the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, they receive it as it is in truth, the Word of God. Some people come to the point where they see it for everything that it is. Some people despise it; they hate it for what it is. Some never read it, even though they have it. Some wear it out, going through a Bible every two or three years. There are all kinds of people when it comes to the Word of God.

But I know this: what He is talking about here goes right along with what we talked about in Proverbs 2, because when you do receive it, there are some things that the Bible does for you in your life that no other book can do, and it is listed here. He says, "For the Word of God," first of all, He says, "is quick."

## II. The Word of God Is Quick

Quickness in the Bible will always deal with your salvation. The Bible says in Acts 10:42 and also in 2 Timothy 4:1 that Jesus Christ is going to judge the quick and the dead. It talks about a quickness when you got saved. God quickened your spirit and quickened your soul. That is what salvation is. Ephesians 2:1 says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." So, the quickening element of the Bible, in its basic form, deals with the day you got saved. Before you were saved, you were dead in trespasses and sins. Once you got saved, or at the moment you got saved, the Bible says the Word of God quickened you.

So, the Bible says down here, "For the Word of God is quick." That is the first thing, because salvation has to be the fundamental thing in your life. Of course, we know that, and it is the Bible that really saves you. God has the power to save you. God died on the cross that you could be saved. But the bottom line of what saved you is the Word of God. That is why the Bible says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. You get saved by a book that God gives you, that tells you how to get saved and tells you what God has done so that you can be saved.

That is what the Bible says in 1 Peter 1:23:

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

It is the Word of God that quickens you. It quickens you in salvation, and that is the Word of God that saves you, because the Word of God is seed. It is not corruptible seed; it is incorruptible seed. That is why the Bible says, "Being born again," not of your parents, not of the physical aspect of life, but by the Word of God. The Word of God is what saves you. When the Bible talks about quickening, it means it quickens you in salvation.

At the same time, the Bible says that the Word of God not only quickens you the day you get saved, but it quickens you in death, because it takes the sting out of death, and death becomes a quick thing. You are going to die one way or the other. You are either going to die in the rapture and go up, or you are going to die a natural death. But the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:51 that when you go in the rapture, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," the rapture is a quick thing. The Bible quickens you even in death when He takes the sting out of death.

I know we think of dying, when somebody is laying in a hospital bed and all of that, and death is prolonged, and when it finally comes after a period of time. But the bottom truth of the matter is this: we look at death from one way, God looks at it from another way. When a man or woman belongs to God and is His child, the Bible says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." So, there is something about death that we do not understand. The aspect of death is, God did not quicken you at salvation and leave you to linger at death. There is a quickening in your salvation, and because of that, there is a quickening in your death. We see it in the rapture, that you are taken in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Of course, that is exactly what the Bible does for you.

Not only does it save you and quicken you there, I am going to show you all three aspects here: it quickens you when you get saved, it quickens you in death, but it also quickens you in life. This is what the Bible talked about in Psalms 119:97, when it said, "You will be wiser than your enemies, for their with you have more understanding than all your teachers, you will understand more than the ancients." It gives you a quickened mind right now. Overall, in this life, that is what the Bible does for you that nothing else can do.

Everybody likes to be around people who are always thinking fast on their feet, and they always have an answer for everything. There are unsaved people who are like that, and that is just part of their personality. Some people are like that, some people are not. You look at people, you see people in all shapes and sizes. Some people are mediocre, some people are really doofuses in life, and they just never get above a sub-plant life mentality. Other people are very sharp. In fact, we use the term, "Boy, that is really a sharp guy," or "That is really a sharp girl." We use it in a worldly sense, that they really have something on the ball. You work with people like that. You work with people that, in a natural sense, they just never can figure it out. They are always substandard in what they do. Then you find other people who are always a cut above the rest. They are always doing what the other people should be doing, and they cover all the bases.

That is what the Word of God does for you. The Word of God not only quickens you in salvation (quick and the dead), not only quickens you in death (the fact that you do not linger at death, death has no sting, and either you go in the rapture or you die, either one the Bible says is a blessing because it is quick, it is over quickly). As I said, we look at it from an aspect of how we see it from a human standpoint. You want to go back and read the accounts of the martyrs that died back in Fox's Book of Martyrs, and how, while they were burning them at the stake and while they were doing all the terrible things to them, they thought they were persecuting them for their faith, that they were going out in a blaze of glory. They were singing songs to the Lord and thanking God and praying, and many times they were praying for their captors. It was almost like, you get the impression, I was not there and I know we are reading the account, but it is

almost like they are not feeling what they are going through. I just do not believe for a moment that dying for the Lord is any greater, or that the rapture of the church is such a great deal and dying is such a rotten deal. I believe that God quickens you in both, and I believe God gives you the ability, and I mean it is an incredible thing, and we are so much out of touch with the reality of it that we do not see it.

It also gives you the ability to be quick in your mind. The Bible talks about the fact in 2 Timothy 4:2, Timothy is told to preach the Word. He is told to "be instant in season, out of season." That means he is supposed to be ready to have an answer and preach the Word of God whether he feels like it or not. He ought to be so thoroughly acquainted with the Word of God and have the Word of God in him so much that he always has the edge. Of course, the Bible says in 1 Peter 3:15 that we ought to be ready to give an answer to every man that asks us for the reason of the hope that is within us.

When you recognize what the Word of God is, and you see it as the quickening Spirit of God, it quickens you when you get saved, it quickens you in death, and it also quickens you in your life to the point where you are always a step ahead of the unsaved world. You are always a step ahead; you are always quicker, or you should be. There is no, the Bible is the one thing, and Christianity is the one thing where we are all on the same ground. Some of you intellectually might be smarter than others. You may be a little faster than others as far as doing things or your motor skills. You may have an IQ higher than somebody else, and you may be able to do this where somebody else cannot do that, and that is the way life is. But when it comes to God and the Bible, we are all on the same par. You can have that at God as much as you want. You only get out of it what you put into it. But the Word of God is the one book where we are at least all even when it comes to what we have and what we do not have.

In time, as you grow in the Word of God and you learn the Word of God, you come to the point where you are, as the Bible says in Psalms 119:97, "wiser than your enemies," you have "more understanding than the ancients," and you "know more than your teachers." In a worldly sense, you come to the point where you get that quick mind that you understand things faster, quicker, because you have the Word of God in there that gives you the true picture of things.

I always likened it to cameras. I remember when you just went out and bought a 35-millimeter camera years ago, whatever it was, a Minolta or Pentax. I always likened it to where you look through the camera in the back, and everything was out of focus. Then you had to take that little lens on the end and you had to screw it back and forth, left or right, until it came into focus. For years and years and years, that is how people took pictures, and that is fine if you are standing there taking a picture of your wife or your kid or your car or the mountains. But if you are at a someplace where somebody is skiing down the mountain, or you want to catch your kids running around and doing something cute, you obviously have to be really proficient with a camera to be able to get it in focus, or it is out of focus.

Then somebody came up with the idea, "We will have an autofocus." I remember I had one of these cameras at one point, and I am not sure where it is at now; somebody borrowed it and never brought it back. I think Pam Stymiech has got it, but that is another story. Anyway, this

camera was neat because what you did is you looked through the back, and of course, the shutter button, you pushed it down to the first step, and it was incredible. It automatically went and gave you instant focus. You did not have to stand there and crank the end anymore. I looked through there, I do not care where it was, 200 yards, 300 yards, a race car coming down the track, whatever. All I had to do was push that button down the first time, and it automatically zipped into focus in just a split second, and then I could take the shot. The other way, you are cranking it, and then you get your eye knocked out, and then you just never could take great pictures. This way, it was "zip shoot, zip shoot, zip shoot." Write that down: zip-shoot. It was easy.

I often look back and I thought, "You know what? That is what it is like for an ordinary, a common ordinary unsaved man or woman trying to get the focus on life." They are always fiddling with it, and it takes them longer to do it than the zip-shoot guy, right? Because the Word of God gives you the ability to zip-shoot. When you get the Book in there, it not only quickens you in life and not only quickens you in death, it quickens your mind so that you can come to focus on things in this world a lot quicker than somebody who does not have the Book. It is just a matter of getting that Book in your mind, and everything goes into autofocus. You do not have to focus it, because the Word of God hidden in your heart, that Word of God hidden in my heart, having this mind which was also in Christ Jesus, it comes to autofocus very quickly. You do not even have to think about focusing; it comes automatically. You will see something, bang, the principle comes into your mind that brings it into focus. You will see a circumstance, you will hear a circumstance in the news, you hear this, you will see that, you will hear a certain, bang, that thing will come in automatically, just like it zips into focus, because the Word of God gives you the ability to be quick in your mind.

That is one of the greatest things that the Word of God does for you. It quickens you. It quickens you at the time of salvation. It quickens you at death; death has no sting. Then, all through your life, as the book of Psalms says, it makes you wiser than your enemies, you have more understanding than your teachers, and you know more than you. You have it together. It gives you a quickening in your mind so that you can come to focus faster and quicker on what you see in life, problems in life, people in life, than the average person can.

The Lord had an ability that we do not have. He could read people's minds. He had the ability to know what people were thinking. He had the ability that when somebody talked to Him, He could read the ulterior motive and really knew what they were doing. We do not have that ability to that extent, but if you think the Bible and learning the Bible principles do not give you an insight on human character and human nature, the Bible tells you, especially in the book of Proverbs, it will almost give you every little innuendo that somebody does, and there is an ulterior motive behind it. It is an incredible thing. He talks about somebody jesting with you, as people like to do, and they want to hurt you by saying something. But instead of coming up and just saying that you are ugly or the clothes you have on are terrible looking, and they want to make you look bad because that is part of their agenda, they will cloak it in humor. That way, they can accomplish their purpose by making you feel bad, but they can step back and say, "Oh, I am just joking." That is what the Bible says. The Bible says a man will do something like that, then he will back up and say, "Am I not in sport?" That means when I joke. It will tell you

everything that you need. It will give you everything. It will tell you about when you go to eat at somebody's house and somebody of high stature has invited you over to eat, and you are not of the same high stature, be careful. There is a hidden agenda behind what they are trying to do. It gives you every insight, and it gives you that superior intellect where, no, you cannot read people's minds, but what you do is you read human nature so well that it is unbelievable.

I will tell you how it is. I can go just about anywhere in this country, train station, airport, whatever, and we will walk down the thing together, and I will point out for you every man in that place that is a fundamental Baptist preacher. They all look the same, they all act the same, they all wear the same kind of stuff, and they all have the same mannerisms. In fact, if you did not know better, you would think theological seminaries or Bible colleges were nothing more than a little factory where everybody came down the assembly line and got the three-piece suits printed on. It all changes like your car models. Next year, four doors are the big seller. Next year, two-door coupes are the big seller. Next year, everybody wants a black car. Next year, everybody wants a red car. Next year, everybody is into pickup trucks. Next year, everybody is into SUVs.

Well, preachers are the same way. One production line puts them in three-piece suits that works for a while, and then after three or four years, you go to leisure suits, and everybody gets spray-painted with a leisure suit. Then it goes back to the two-piece suits, and everybody wears that. It goes back to the pinstripe shirts and the big flowery tie, and it works from there. When you see them, it is just a matter of what production model you are on, but they are all the same. They all have the same haircuts, they all have the same mannerisms, they all talk the same way, and they all wear the same clothes. It is so easy to spot them. Why? Because you learn the characteristics of certain traits of people in human nature, and it is just a way to go.

Just like you can walk out there and you can spot a drug cop who can spot a drug dealer a mile away. You know why? They have a profile, and they know what they are doing. Just like the guy at immigrations, he can spot somebody coming through that maybe has got some suspect stuff. Why? Because they have a profile. Just like when you go on an honor across the sea strip, and somebody will walk up to you and say, "I would have to ask a few questions here. Are you carrying more than ten thousand dollars in cash?" They profile people because they have guys that sit around in little cubicles that say, "Okay, if you are going to do this, sell drugs, launder money, do whatever, this is the profile based on psychological points in your life that we are going to look for. When you have one or two of these, everybody may have one, certain people have two, but if you see somebody that has three, you have got somebody that fits that profile." There are guys in little CIA cubicles, little FBI cubicles, they call them criminal profilers. They have them for everything. When a crime takes place, they will sit down and they say, "Okay, we do not know who killed this woman, we do not know who killed this kid, we do not know how to, we do not know who it was. So, tell us, what are we looking for? What should we be looking for? Give us the first." He said, "All right, a guy that commits this crime fits this profile. This is what you want to look for. Black people do not commit this kind of crime, white people do. White people do not commit this kind of crime, black people do. You are looking for somebody in their early or middle 30s. You are looking for somebody that..." and they have all kinds of points that you look for, and that is where they begin to start.

Now, if the unsaved world can profile people to figure out what they are looking for, how about the Book that knows human nature better than anything else in the whole wide world? What you do when you get your mind quickened is you start to build profiles of the way people are. When somebody falls into that profile, then you know probably what you are dealing with. It does not mean that you automatically mark them off and judge them for that is what they are. No, but you begin to see the characteristic that you just know what you are probably going to deal with. That is why after a while, when somebody calls you with a problem and you start to deal with people, you may let them tell you the problem because they need to, but you could probably stop them after the first two minutes and tell them what the real problem is down the line, and they say, "Yeah, that is it. How did you know?" Because you fit into the profile, and the profile comes from the Book. When you learn the principles of the Word of God, you get quickened in your mind, and that is absolutely invaluable when you are dealing with people on a day-to-day basis. You know why? Because you are going to have to deal with people at work. You are going to have people at work that fit into the profile that they are there, and you just know what you are dealing with. Then once you know the profile, then you know how to deal with them.

When I was working for S.M. & P., that is a big ego thing because locating things in the ground. They put so much hype on not having any damages because it costs a lot of money. If you had a fiber optic kit, they really hold that up as a high standard. So, a guy that never has any damages, who is a really good locator, there is a real ego between the guys. When you first come into it, you are a nobody, you are nothing, you do not know anything. Sometimes they will help you, sometimes they will not. Sometimes it is like, "You know what?" But if you know that, and when I was going in, I had guys that were great locators. If I had a job that I could not figure out, where somebody else would call them, they would say, "Hey, do it yourself." If I would call them and ask them, they would drop what they are doing and come over and help me. You know why? Because I knew what I was dealing with. I knew we had this guy that thought he was the greatest locator in the world. Now, I had one or two choices. I could say to him, "No, I am the greatest locator in the world," and him and I would butt heads. Or I could say, "What do I care who is the greatest locator in the world? I just do not want to get a damage." You know what I would say? I would say, "You know what? You are the greatest locator in the world. I do not know of anybody that locates like you do. Your marks are right on them. Why are not you? They ought to put you in charge of this company. You really understand." You feed a guy's ego. You know what? You get in a jam, he does not want you to ever think that he is not the god that you think he is, and he will be there in a heartbeat. Other guys, they are fighting, fussing back and forth, they do not like each other, they backbite each other. There was not anybody that would not come and help me, because you know why? I will read where your ego is, and I have got a whole bag of ego treats. You know why? Because a man will become your servant because he is so stupid that he thinks he really believes that he is really as good as he thinks he is. In the world, you have got to use those things, otherwise you will go nowhere. It is one of those things, as the Bible says, "You are wiser than serpents, harmless as doves." Sometimes three serpents, two doves. But you use the wisdom that is out there in the world, and you see where a guy really thinks he is, and then you use that to your own ability and for the furtherance of your own gospel of preaching the Word of God and being their friend. Otherwise, you are going to butt heads with them the rest of your life.

You know what that is? That is reading the profiles. The Bible quickens your mind. When you learn the principles of the Word of God, your mind becomes so quick, you autofocus on everything in life, and you see it as it really is, not as it appears to be. While people are still walking around in the fog, living in the delusion of life, you see the reality of life. That is the key. That is the key to winning men and women to Christ. That is the key to dealing with people and their problems. It comes to that old thing, like I have taught you many, many times: most people do not want to really solve their problem; they want you to treat their symptoms. But you get beyond that, and you solve their problems, and you learn how to do that because you are quicker than they are. You are better than they are. It just means that the Word of God does for you what it does.

You know what? That is true in everything you do in life. If you go to watch a football game, you know who is on the offense. You know who is the guy that gets off the line quicker and gets out two steps on the guy and catches the ball. He is quicker. On the defense, you know what it is? It is the guy that blitzes the line and sacks the quarterback because he is quicker. You go down to KCI International Racetrack down here, I do not care where you go, you put two cars side by side, you know who wins? The guy that gets the hole shot, that is quicker and gets off the line first. Wherever you go, wherever you go, as a Christian, you ought to be off the line quicker than anybody else. You ought to fool the defense and blitz whatever you have got to be, and you ought to be two steps ahead of everybody else when you catch the ball. That is what the Word of God does for you. Quicker. For the Word of God is quick.

Then He says this, and it is powerful.

### III. The Word of God Is Powerful

The Bible is the most powerful Book the world has ever seen. People do not understand it because it is just a book, and there are so many other books, and it is pages with ink on it like so many other books. They do not really understand it. But like we said last week, when you receive the Word of God, you receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe. That is power.

Why, in John 18:5-6, when Christ speaks to the scribes and Pharisees, the Bible says they fall down. They cannot even stand in front of the power of the Word of God. That has always been a picture to me: when you are dealing with people, people will not be able to stand up to the pure Word of God if you believe it is the Book that God says it is. You will always have the edge on them because there are no words in this world, there are no books in this world that can stand up to that Book. You will always have the edge, and that is the key. You never want to lose the power of God in your life, because power is the edge. When you have the edge with people, they will never get ahead of you. I do not care if it is at work, I do not care if you are dealing with somebody and they are seeing.

The same words that knocked those men down in John 18 are the same words in Psalms 33:6, 9:

*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

*For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

The Word of God is powerful. It is powerful. In the book of Acts, you see it. He says in Acts 4:33:

*And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

1 Corinthians 2:4 says, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Ephesians 6:10 says:

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

It is power.

You might know that that is the issue today. You realize that every issue in this world, every issue between every individual on this planet and every country, comes down to simply this: a power struggle. That is what it is. When it is all said and done, and you break it down to its lowest form, I do not care what problem you have, it is a problem over an issue of who is really in charge. It is either me or it is you. If you get in a fight with your neighbor over this or that, it is because of the fact that he thinks the fence ought to go here, you think it ought to go here. It is always something that deals with a power issue in your life or my life. That is what it is with the Word of God. The Word of God is a powerful thing, and it is the whole problem in the world. I do not care where you go, the issue today is going to be authority. Who says what? Who means what? When push comes to shove, who has the final say?

The Word of God is the most powerful Book the world has ever seen, bar none. If you learn it, if you receive it, you will have the same power in your life and in your ministry. That is why there are men that get things done for God that nobody else does. That is why there are people that build things for God that nobody else will ever build. It is not the fact that he is better or she is better, or they are smarter. It is the fact that they believe the Book. They understand that the same power that threw the universe into being, the same power that knocked those guys down, is the same power you have in a Book in your lap this morning that you can get inside you, and you will have that same power. That is what He is talking about. So, He says that "for the Word of God is quick and powerful."

#### IV. The Word of God Is Sharper

Then the next thing He says is that it is sharper. Sharper. Of course, as the popular saying is today, companies like to say it, especially in the electronics field, "We are on the cutting edge." The Bible puts you as a Christian on the cutting edge.

I have watched a movie that probably most of you have seen over the years, \*Back to the Future\*. It is kind of a fun little thing. One of the things in it that I thought was the neatest thing, I always thought about later, is this guy goes into the future, and when he is going down there, to make a long story short, he sees a bookstore or something. In the bookstore, it has got a book in there of the history of who won all the Super Bowls. His immediate plan is, "Wow, here I am, a

hundred years ahead. I am going back. I buy this book that tells me who won the Super Bowl for the next 20 years. I am going to be a millionaire because I am going to know how to bet." So, the plan was that he was going to go back to his own time, and he could play the stock markets, he could play the lottery, all the different things where he could bet money and he would never lose, because he has insight into how to make the best investments.

I thought, after I saw that, "You know what? I know that is just a movie, and that cannot ever happen." But you know what? That is what the Bible does for you. The Bible takes you into the future and shows you where, as a Christian, you need to make the best investment of your life, because the Judgment Seat of Christ is going to be the payoff. A lot of people go to the Judgment Seat of Christ stupid, or they think they go stupid, or they go in ignorance. I have told you before, God is not going to hold you accountable for what you knew or did not know. He is going to hold you accountable because He gave you a Book that told you of future events and told you exactly where to put your investments. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is not going to be any big deal as far as you are going to be able to plead ignorance. God is going to have us dead to rights because He has given us the Book that puts us on the cutting edge, that shows us exactly where the insight into where the good investments are, that we know exactly what the Bible tells us. We ought to put our time, our money, and our labors where we better put it. If you want to be a millionaire, you ought to be a million times sharper than the average guy at the Judgment Seat of Christ, simply because you know how to make wise investments.

You know what the whole Bible is really written about? Certainly the Old Testament, really up to the New Testament, when you get to Paul's writings, it is about a wise man and a foolish man. That is really what it is about. You come through the book of Proverbs, through the book of Psalms, it talks about a wise man. He says in his heart that he loves God, and a fool says in his heart that there is no God. You have five wise, five foolish virgins in Matthew 25. All through the Bible, the Old Testament, it is nothing but a wise man and a foolish man. You know what the wise man does? He finds out where to make investments. The foolish man never does. God's people are that way today. Proverbs 15:6 says:

*In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.*

You know what? Your life and my life today is nothing more than where we have made investments. You and I are where we are at today because of those investments. When you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, that is all it is going to be about. You are going to look back, and you are going to have the ability, because you are going to have a glorified body, and at that point, you are going to have the mind of Christ incarnate in you, just like Christ. You are going to know everything that God knows. You are going to be just like Christ, enjoying it with Him, and you are going to see and understand everything perfectly, crystal clear, the way it really is and was all down through history. Then you are going to see every opportunity that you and I had to make the right investment when we made the wrong investment, understanding how it all plays out. The real issue in life was coming to the Judgment Seat of Christ, because Christ died for you, and He had a plan for you. Your success of that plan is nothing more than you making the quality right investments in your life and fulfilling it, or making the wrong investments and not fulfilling it.

The only difference is you do not have to wait until then to see it in crystal clarity. You have got that mind that is going to be in you someday right here in this Book. You can put it in you now. I know you are limited to a degree; we all are, because we are still in flesh and blood bodies, and we still struggle, we still have the flesh. But let me tell you something, that does not negate the fact that the Bible still has the ability to impact your life, to give you the cutting edge of making the right investments in your life, because life is so short.

I figured up one time, the Bible talks about in Psalms 90:10 that man's life is "threescore years and ten," seventy years. At one time, just fooling around, I thought to myself, "You know what? That sounds like a lot of time, but it is not really a lot of time." Then the Bible talks about redeeming the time. I got looking at that, I thought, "Wow, there is something to that time." I figured it up. By the time you take 70 years, and on average, the average Christian probably does not get saved until they are 20 years old. It varies, but I am just giving you an average here. So, you do not have 70, you have 50. Then you stop and think about the fact that you sleep one third of that. You never think of that. There is 30 years of that 50 years that you are not going to do anything for God because you are sleeping. Then you start to think about the fact that in a natural lifetime, you eat five years of that. I figured out, by the time you got done with that thing, and you put all those variables in there, it is no wonder the Bible said to redeem the time, because you only probably have 15, 20 years at the most to give God, and all that you do.

There is a great discrepancy in the Bible. In the book of Judges, it gives a time period. In the book of Acts, it talks about the exact same event, and it gives the time period, exact same time, exact same events, except there is a 93-year difference between the two events. Now, the Bible scholars, they say it is an error when those scribes were copying that stuff and laying that stuff out, that they just made an error, and it is an error in your Bible. That is what they teach. When you do not know what to do with it, throw it out. That is the work they work with. But if you go back to the book of Judges, you know what you find? You find a recording of the time of the nation of Israel and what they are doing, and you will find that there are times, and you add those times up, where they were out of fellowship with God and were not doing right with God. God was keeping that time score. You know what the missing 93 years is? It is the time God did not count, the time they were captive to their sin back in the book of Judges. In other words, God does not count the time you and I screw around and do not do what is right. So, you take the time out of our lives we just dink around and do not do what is right and are out of fellowship with God. In those various times, you think, "Well, it was only 20 minutes today, and then I was back with God," or "I was out for a week, but then I am back." You put that on a lifetime and see what that adds up to. No wonder we only have five, ten, fifteen, twenty years to really give God the very best we have. No wonder He said, "Redeem the time."

You see, when you get the sharpness of the Word of God and you understand those things, you understand what it means to redeem the time. You understand how those things, how it deals with you. You begin to see those things, and you realize that your life is nothing more than an investment. All right, He says this: "For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword."

## V. The Word of God Is a Two-Edged Sword

We talked about this the other night in Thursday night Bible study, and we talked about how you do not just learn how to use the Bible; you learn how to use the Bible, and not just learn the Bible. Having the Bible and not learning how to use it is no good. Of course, we talked about the fact when Pam asked the question about Ephesians 6, about the armor of God, and we talked about the fact that warfare is two phases: offensive and defensive. You can protect yourself with a sword, you can fight with a sword. It is an offensive and defensive weapon. That sword is something that you can defend yourself with, and it is something that you can attack with, but you have to learn how to use it. I will tell you something else: you have to learn when to use it. Sometimes the best offense is a good defense. It is just a matter of learning how to use that Bible, and not just learning the Bible, or a lot of things about the Bible.

I always talk about that a lot of people know a lot of things about the Bible, but they never really learned the Bible. What is the third element to that? That is learning how to use the Bible. You will hear me talk about a working knowledge of the Word of God a lot. When I talk about a working knowledge of the Word of God, I am talking about somebody who knows where the Bible is, knows what the Bible is, knows the Bible, and knows how to use the Bible. They know what the Bible will do for them offensively and defensively, because all warfare, or spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6, is broken down into those two categories. That is why in the armor there, you will find some of it is for offense, some of it is for defense.

You find people that can take all kinds of abuse, all kinds of, it just seems like they cannot take anymore, and you do not know how they can take it anymore, but all of their life, they can just take it and take it and take it, but they never do anything for God on the offense. They never win anybody to Christ, they never do anything meaningful in their life, but boy, they can just take it, take it, take it, and take it. Then you find people who do great things for God and just get out there, and they are great soul winners and all that. The first time somebody says something bad about them, they fold up like a broken accordion, and they are worthless. Offense and defense. All the Bible is broken down in those two aspects. So, He says a sharp two-edged sword; it cuts two ways, offensively and defensively. You have got to learn how to use it.

Then He says this: "a sharp two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder," piercing. The Bible goes down deep. It will not just cut you on the surface. That thing goes straight to your heart. He says the Word of God will not return void in the book of Isaiah 55:11, that God always accomplishes the purpose where He sent it. When you send the Word of God out, it always does what God intends for it to do. That is, cut straight to your heart. The Bible never, never, it is not a weapon that will ever, ever, ever just give you a superficial wound. Never. The Bible will never just glance off you. Never. The Bible will not just give you a little wound in the arm. Never. I do not care if it is one little verse. I do not care if it is a whole passage. I do not care if you hear a sermon. I do not care if you see a tract. I do not care if it is one little verse or one little concept. That thing will cut you right to your heart every time you hear it. There are men out there tonight that go spend \$100,000 getting a college education and get out from under the conviction they got under 30 years ago, because some Sunday school teacher just preached one verse, and God never let them go. Never let them go.

Years ago, I have told you this story too, or a story like it. Years ago, when we used to do street preaching back in Ohio, we were down there on a square. I had already done my preaching, and I went down to the drugstore down the end of the block. I was going to get a Coke, kind of soothe my throat a little bit. I was down there, and I went in there, and a guy walked in, and he waved to the girl like he knew her. He came in there, and he says, "Oh, you must be born again, you must be born again." He says, "I do not even know if I was born the first time," just joking. She says, "Yeah, I know what you mean. What do you need? I will give you a cup of coffee and a bowl of chili," and so on. You know what? That old boy had been walking down that street down there, and he heard that kid down there in that little soapbox saying, "You must be born again. You must be born again. You must be born again." I want to promise you something: that guy did not take it to heart. He did not even take it seriously. He just blew it off. "Oh, you must be born again. I do not know if I was born the first time." I promise you something: if he lives to be a hundred years old, he will remember, "You must be born again." He will never forget it. Why? The Word of God does not return void. Why? That thing is piercing, and it will cut you to your heart and to your soul. Maybe you will never get saved. Maybe you will never do anything with it, but you will never forget it. One verse dropped like a knife 30 years ago, cut you for 30 years, because it pierces.

Not only does it pierce, but it divides asunder. It is "piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit." You know what the problem in the world is today? I like to make things real simple. You know that, because I am a simple kind of guy. You know what the problem is today? If you want to put the problem in the world today in one sentence, I will tell you what it is. Here is the problem: we live in a world that has a Bible that wants to divide, in a world that wants to get everything together. That is the problem. We live in a world that wants to get everything and everybody together, and we have a Book in this world that wants to divide and tear everything up. That is the problem. The Bible is never a Book to get anything together without dividing it first. Never, never. That Bible divides before it ever puts back together.

The conflict in my life, my body, soul, and spirit, is a new nature versus an old nature, and God divides those things out. Everybody talks about Jesus coming, and the lover of my soul, and Jesus being a great, compassionate person, and all those things, and He would never do this, and He would never do that, and we get the wrong idea. He says in Matthew 10:35:

*For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

Everything Christ does, He does to divide. Every time He shows up, every act God did, Genesis divided. Genesis 1:4, He divided the light from the darkness. Genesis 1:6, He made a firmament and divided it. Genesis 1:14, He made two great lights, one to divide the light from the darkness. That is the whole story of God. Why, in John 7:12, it says:

*And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.*

They were divided. That is the problem today. We live in a world that wants to get everything together. We have a Book that is the best Book in the world on dividing. This Book will divide

you on everything in life. It pierces to your heart, and then it divides the soul from the spirit, and the joints from the marrow. It divides everything in your life and my life.

That is why you are going to find in everything that Jesus did, He came to divide. Israel was getting along, they were fine. They made a nice deal with the Roman Empire, and everybody was just happy. It was the little guy on the bottom and all the big guys on the top. When Jesus shows up, what did He do? He divided them. He gets His twelve apostles in there, and a bunch of other people around there, and all His disciples. Then they go over there, and He talked about eating His body. What happened? The Bible says after that, many of them did not follow Him. He divided them. That Book divides. If you do not go with the Book, and you do not adjust your attitude to the Book, it will divide you all your life. That is what happens in families. Some kid comes in and gets saved, goes home, and he is all excited about the Word of God. Mom and Dad are not excited. That Book divides them. It is just the way that it is. That is what Jesus said that He came to do. He did not come to, I know He came to save the world, but you see, He has got to divide you from the world before He can save you. He has got to set a man at variance. You have got to get divided out, and that is the problem.

That is why everything you see in Genesis, He is dividing, He is dividing, He is dividing, He is dividing, He is dividing. He takes that thing, and He divides it, and He splits it, and He takes that thing all the way through, because number two in your Bible is a number of division. That is the problem in the world. We have a Bible that divides, in a world that wants to get along with everybody, and it just is not going to happen. You see, we do not like differences today. We do not want any difference between men and women. So, we want to accept all of that and just make everybody. There was a time when you had a male bathroom and a female bathroom. Now, a lot of places you just have one bathroom, unisex. Everybody is one. There was a time where a wife was a husband and wife, and now we want everybody together. We want men to be able to be married. We want two women to be able to be married. We do not want to divide the thing out. Right now, our country wants to take a stand. The president wants to take a stand. He said, "We need to take a stand on the definition of marriage is one man, one woman." In a world that wants to get everybody together, let everybody be married. Of course, that just is not going to happen. The problem is, we have the Bible that divides, the right divides. You have right and you have wrong; you cannot get them together. The Bible says a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. You have to divide it out.

## VI. The Word of God Is a Discerner

The next thing, "dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Every month, we all get the same thing: we get our bills. You get your telephone bill, you get your gas bill, you get your electric bill. Everything we do in this society, I do not know if you know it or not, they do not do it like they used to do it. It used to be that you had a gas man come around and come in your yard and look at your meter and write down how much gas you used. Then the electric guy came around, he read your meter and he marked down how much electric you used. They do not do that anymore

because people do not like people in their yards, and too many dogs and people getting shot and all that, and too many people.

So now, you know how they do it now? I do not know if you know this or not. They have cars now; they just drive up and down the street, they have sensors on to read your meters. Yeah, I mean, I do not think they do that all the time, but they do that. They do that. They have little sensors in their cars, and they have little things out there, and they will drive up and down real slow, and you are blocking. As you pass through your house, it reads whatever your meter is on your gas meter, your electric meter, and puts it into their computer. Then you get a bill every month. That is what they do. I do not know, we do not even know it. We are sleeping, we are in there, we are playing with the dog, playing with the kid, we are eating dinner, somebody is reading your meter while you are doing that. You think everything is just fine, and you know, "Oh yeah, yeah," and the bill comes, and "Wow, \$30! I did not even know. How did I know I used that?" Somebody read your meter while you did not know it. It is a subtle thing. Somebody on a monthly basis is reading your meter and sending you a bill, and you have got to pay. It is as simple as that.

That is why I hate computer bills. Computers are all right, but I will tell you what, you just never get ahead with them. You do not get a gas bill for four or five months, and you are saying, "Oh man, I am not using any gas. This is really good. We can spend the money, go to vacation, go see Grandma." Then one month comes in, and you get a \$5,000 gas bill. Why? The computer was on vacation. He just said, "You know what? Let it ride, let it ride." I know what goes on. The little computer's little mind down there, the little guy down there, and he is saying, "Hey, let me get this Alexander guy. I am going to get him a false sense of hope. He thinks he is not using much gas. Watch this. Give him two or three months, and I am going to whack him with a big gas bill." That is what happened. It is a conspiracy. It is a conspiracy, but I am telling you, that is what happens.

But I am going to tell you something more than that. Every day of your life, not only is the guy driving up and down reading your gas meter and your electric meter, but God is reading your meter. God is the greatest meter reader this world has ever seen. He reads your heart. He reads your heart. One of these days, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the bill is going to come due. The bill is going to come due. You see, the Word of God keeps us honest. That is why it is so important. That is why one of the reasons God wanted believers in the New Testament to meet together for the preaching of the Word of God, because while I am preaching today, the Holy Spirit of God is reading your meter. It is as simple as that. It does not matter what I preach. I do not have to preach a message on salvation for somebody to get saved. I do not have to preach a message on holy living and preach on something else for somebody else to know they are not living right. The Word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of my heart. It does not matter what it is.

I am still thankful that I do not have to, you know what it would be like if you had a bad heart this morning, or you had something in your life that you should not have in your life, how you could escape if the preacher in a year's time just never hit on that subject, and hitting on that subject is the only thing God would use. You have to preach on drunkenness before a drunk gets

worried about it. You have to preach on stealing for a thief to get any conviction about it. Would it not be a terrible thing? Let me tell you something. That Holy Spirit of God can take the most extreme abstract thing that some guy is talking about, as long as it is the Bible, and He will bring it back and whack you with something that has nothing to do with what he is preaching. But the Bible says that the Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and He goes wherever you are at, and He will read your meter. You do not have to wait until the end of the month to get the bill. You will get it today as you leave. He will not let it go for two or three months and then hit you one time. You will get it every time you open up the Book. Then, once you come and hear it, you may reject it and be mad and say, "I do not want to get right, I do not want to do it, I do not like it," and you may blame it on me, the preacher, the person that brought you, whatever the case. But you know what? All the way home, and all the way to the rest of your day, and as you go to sleep tonight, and you wake up in the middle of the night, the old meter reader is right there, boy.

## VII. The Word of God Is Naked and Open / A Companion

You know why? The next thing: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Everything He sees every day. You know the best way to come to God? Just come to God, lay it right on the table. Do not try to shellac it. Do not try to pretend that it is not the way that it is. You may pretend that way with me, or your wife, or your husband, or your kid, but do not pretend it with Him. Between you and Him, it is all naked and open. You tell Him the way, just the way it is, because He already knows just the way it is. Because there is not any creature that is not manifest in His sight, not a one.

That Book is alive, and the greatest concept of the Word of God is the fact that it is alive. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:23, it "abideth and liveth for ever." I like back in the Old Testament, some of these things that most people do not pick up on, but when you understand these things, it really shows you something. For instance, Psalms 34:15 says:

*The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

Proverbs 5:21 says:

*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.*

Simple enough. Then He says this in Psalms 11:4:

*The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*

Now, I can understand "the ways of man are before his eyes." I got that. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." I got that. But how in the world does God's eyelids try the children of men? You know how? God never blinks. When you blink, you do not see for an instant of a second. If somebody was fast enough, they could punch you when you blink. They could do something you did not see. Because when you blink, you close your eyes for just a split second. In that split second, you are vulnerable. If the guy is fast enough, you are vulnerable in just that.

We all blink. We all blink. It is just part of our natural automated motor skills of our body; we blink. In that fraction of a millisecond that we blink, we are vulnerable because we cannot see.

God sees everything. The way His eyelids try the children of men is because He never closes His eyes. He never blinks. There is not any second you can do anything that He cannot see. He does not blink. His eyes are always going to and fro, and you cannot hide even in the split second that your eyelids close and open again. In other words, no matter how fast you think you are, no matter how good you think you are covering your sin, no matter how fast and slick you think you are, what you do, God sees it because He never blinks. I may blink. Your wife may blink. Your kids may blink. Your best friend may blink. God never blinks, and in that, His eyelids try the children of men. All things are naked and open under His eyes. He sees everything. He understands everything.

Lastly, human nature as human beings, we love companions. That is the way God made us. We love to have companionship. The Bible said, "I have made man," and "it is not good for man to be alone." So, He made man a woman. Our whole character makeup is we love companions. That is why when you are growing up, if you are a boy, you find a girlfriend. If you are a girl, you find a boyfriend. A little bit later on, you get a husband, or maybe you get a wife. If that does not work out, you cannot find anybody, you get a cat, or you get a dog. I never understood it, but some people even find companionship with goldfish. I do not understand it.

But you know what? The greatest companion in this whole wide world is not a wife, a husband, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a dog, a cat, or a goldfish. It is a Book. It is a live Book. It is the greatest companion you will ever have. You do not have to feed it, you do not have to walk it. It will do everything in your life that you need once you receive it as the Word of God, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe. It quickens you, it is powerful, it makes you sharper, it is a two-edged sword (defense, offense), it divides asunder, it shows you what is right and what is wrong, it discerns the thoughts and intents of your heart first, and then everybody else's, and everything in our lives.

We do not have to put up a front with God. Do you not like to have some place in your life when you can be just you? We all put on fronts to a certain degree; we all do. It is just human nature. If you do not feel good, you say, "I am fine." When you do not want to be somewhere, you smile and say, "Your spaghetti sauce is unbelievable." We all have our things that we do that we really do not want to do. But you know what? Is it not nice to have a place where it can just be you? That you do not have to dress, you do not have to put your hair, you do not have to put your face on. Life is such a shame. I am not saying those things are wrong, but you know what? We all do the outside so we appear to be what we think people want us to see us to be. That is just the way we are. But when it comes to God, it is so great to know that all things are naked and open under the eyes of Him, with whom we can just be who we need to be with God. We can just be who we are. The one place and person in your life that you can just simply be what you are. God does not expect anything else. In fact, He likes it.

I come to your house in the morning, and you have got curlers in your hair, no makeup, bathrobe on with big fluffy shoes. I really, for a minute, I think it is your mother, and then I see it is you.

Here is what I am going to say: "You know what? I have caught you at a bad time. I will be back later." See? God, He will take you just the way you are. In fact, He likes it better that way. He likes it. He says, "Nice pop cans in your hair. I like that." He loves it just the way you are. You do not have to fix yourself up to be with Him. Just take it the way it is. All things are naked and open.

These are the seven things you get from the Book when you receive the Book. There are seven things that will help you understand in a greater way what the Book will do for you, how God looks at you, and what He wants in your life. Let us pray.

Father, we thank You, praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much, and we thank You, Father, for the time we could have today. Truly, Lord, it has been good to be here today and just to have a time around Your Word. We love You and thank You so much for all that You do for us. Lord, I love You, and I just pray in a great and mighty way, Lord, that You will bless our people today. Help us to grow from what we have learned today. Give us a good Bible study this week, as You did last week. Lord, may we endeavor to see people saved and come to our church and just grow. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.