

I. The World's Rejection of Contrast

There are a lot of things for you when you understand it. The reason the world hates the things of God and has such a tough time grasping this is because of contrast. The world wants to blur the lines of truth so that you cannot really see what is real versus what is phony; it all just goes together. That is where we find ourselves today. That is exactly where we are, and that is why they hate the Bible. The Bible is black and white.

That is why, in my own personal life, I am just that black and white. I have never met anybody; you either love me or you hate me. Some people love to hate me. There is no middle ground with me. I am either black or I am white. To me, it is just that simple. You will not talk to me for fifteen minutes without understanding where I am coming from, because to me, life is very simple when everything is just black or white. Everything else just makes it very confusing. That is the way the Bible is, and that is the way churches ought to be.

I read in a paper this week that one of the major denominations, I forget which one, is having a big deal over the fact of having gay and lesbian pastors and same-sex marriages. The guy said, "We just do not have a real clear directive on this." Do you know why we do not? Because the lines have been blurred. Now, I know where you can go to get a very clear directive on it, but we do not use that anymore as the final authority. That is the Word of God.

As we speak right now, as we are having church this morning, out in California, a law is before the state board and all the lawmakers. This law, which is probably going to pass, mandates that from the second grade until graduation, all textbooks in California educational schools will have any reference to "mother" and "father" removed. That is right now before the state of California legislature; they want to erase from your child's mind the concept of a father and a mother. Do you know why? Because they are contrast. They want to blur the lines of truth. So same-sex marriages will appear to be acceptable because there is no contrast to show the difference. I am telling you, the concept of contrast is absolutely the key.

What the devil has done is destroy the Bible. I remember five, six, seven, or eight years ago, they wanted to take the Bible and thought it was prejudiced. So what they did was get rid of all references to God being male. It just moved right through the whole world. You cannot find a policeman today; you have to find a police person. Firemen do not exist anymore; they are like Tyrannosaurus Rexes; they are extinct. You have to find a fire person because it is offensive to say "men" and "women" because that is a contrast. The world cannot exist and do what it wants to do as long as there is contrast.

II. The Biblical Principle of Contrast

No, for this thing to work, we see it in religion. We see that we do not want to have a heaven or hell. We want a fatherhood of God and a brotherhood of man. But there is no heaven. There is no hell. There is no judgment. I was looking at one of the new translations just last week, the NIV,

and Luke 16, the clearest story in all of the Bible about a man dying and going to hell. The story of Lazarus and a rich man? Where it says "hell" in your Bible, it says "hell" there. Then there is a little paragraph when you come down to the study, and it changes the word for you from "hell" and says the real word should be "Hades." Then it gives you a little footnote that tells you very nicely that there are many, many people out there that really do not believe this literal concept anymore.

Now I am telling you the bottom line: there is a heaven and there is a hell. Do you know how I know that is true? Because there is an up and there is a down. There is a left and there is a right. It is that simple. The world is filled with contrast because before you go four verses in Genesis 1, it is God divided the light from the darkness, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. It is as simple as that. I know that is true.

But you see, that spills over into the Christian mindset and the Christian world. It really does, and we see it all the time. Now this next tirade that I am going into, you need to blame on Jimmy Steinman, because I was fine until Thursday night. Then Jimmy asked a question because he heard some Christian guy on the radio say this, and that got me started.

So the next morning, Friday morning, I had to go to Phil's father's funeral, which was up north. So I had some drive time. So what did I do? I departed from my normal procedure. I do not do that very often. You can set your clock by what I usually do. I try to be a very self-disciplined, organized person, even though I am not in some things. I try to be in things that are really important. Picking up your clothes in the bedroom is not an essential for me. No, I am just kidding.

As I was driving up there, Jimmy told me that this guy was worth listening to because he was an idiot. Now, talk radio never infuriates me. I do not like Darla Day and Michael Savage and those guys. Those things never infuriate me; those things are entertainment for me. I like to listen to that, and I just think, "Boy, although there are a lot of people out there that have a lot of strange ideas, I enjoy that." It stimulates my mind, but you want to light my fuse.

You see, I am a preacher. I do not know anything else to do. I am a preacher. I believe the Book. I love the Book. I love to preach the Book. I love to help people with the Book. And I somewhat know the Bible. I do not know it as well as I need to; I will give you that, but I know it. I do not know it very well, but here is my claim to fame: what I do know, I believe. Just put it that way. I do not know it all. I do not know it very well, but what I do know about this Book, I do believe.

So I was driving up there and turned this thing on, found this guy, and I found him. I will tell you what, for the next fifteen minutes, I had a bad case of road rage. This guy drove, lit my fuse because he represented exactly where Christianity has gone, just as the world and the liberal world of religion has wanted to blur the edges. That is exactly what we do in so-called fundamental Baptist churches today. I listened to this guy for twenty minutes, and he used every adjective in the world to describe and get around one word that he did not want to use: the word "sin." This guy used every adjective that described our shortcomings, our failures, our trespasses against man. He could get every word out of his mouth except one word, and that is the word "sin."

I will tell you what, because we want to get rid of all the contrasts in the world. That is exactly what we are, where we are at in the church today. That is exactly where you and I are at. So goes the world, so goes the church. It creeps into our own lives that we, as God's people, do not want to take personal responsibility and accountability; we do not even want the word "sin" in our lives anymore.

Somebody asked me a question last week, and I did not give them this answer because I was not smart enough to think about it at the time. But many questions you ask me, I ponder them because they kick off something in my mind. Somebody made a statement to me, something I was discussing with someone this week or last week, I forget when it was, and they talked about David. They made the reference that the greatest thing about David, the thing that made David a great man, was his relationship and his attitude toward God. Now, on the surface, that looks like the truth, but that is not low enough yet. That is not the final common denominator yet. The thing that made David a great man and made him a man after God's own heart was not the relationship that he had with God when things were good, but rather the relationship he had with God when things were bad.

Do you know what made David a great man in God's sight? The answer is in Psalms 51. I cannot remember who asked me now. If I could find out and remember who you were, I would buy you lunch. I am glad I cannot, but anyway, I would. And I ran over to Psalms 51. Do you know what David said? This is David in a nutshell. David had just committed the greatest sins that any man could commit: adultery and murder. And when he was confronted with it, he said to God in his famous prayer in Psalms 51:

Psalms 51:4

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Do you know why? We do not like the word "sin." Do you know why we like to get rid of that contrast? We like all the other nice words because we do not have any sinners left in America today. We do not. I have not seen a sinner in ten years. We have victims today. We do not have any sinners anymore. A guy comes up, and he does not have a good lifestyle, and he has all kinds of problems, or a woman grows up, and she has a bad lifestyle. He grows up, and I look at all these people that are just terrible people around the world, and they get into court, and they take them in there. And you know what? It was their father's fault. It was their mother's fault. It was their schoolteacher's fault. His mom denied him a Pop-Tart, so he wound up being a serial killer. It is just the most ridiculous stuff you find in your life. And we do not have any sinners today. We have victims.

Because with the word "sin," you can blame your problems on somebody else when it is just your shortcoming, but you cannot blame your sin on anybody but you. So we do not like the word "sin." The word "sin" is a contrast. We want to get rid of it. It is true of everything around us. And what we want to do is blame our problems on everybody else, so we do not look at it as sin. Therefore, we do not have any personal accountability or responsibility to it, because the one

word that will not allow you to blame your problems on anybody else is the word "sin," because sin is between you and God. And we do not like that.

III. The Devil's Strategy: Eliminating Contrast

The world is the same way. Every twenty years, fifteen years, ten years, we get a new buzzword. Do you know what the buzzword is today? It is the word "globalization." The world wants to do the same thing that we have done in Christianity and in all aspects of society: it wants to get rid of contrast. So now we want to get rid of all the differences of the nations. So we want to talk about globalization. Globally, everybody forgetting their differences and getting along. We want to talk about the unification process. We want to talk about affirmative action. We want to always focus on the power of positive thinking.

Personally, I like the power of destructive criticism. That is the Bible. The Bible does not tell you what is good about you. The Bible tells you what is wrong with you and me. But we do not like that. Who does? Who likes being told there is something wrong with you? Only a child of God who loves God so much that he knows he is a sinner and he strives every day to be like God. That is who. The Christian life is a daily perfecting of the things that are wrong, becoming more like Christ in everything we do, and it is a natural process that you cannot get away from contrast.

Contrast is just that simple. We want a new world order with new world peace. Do you know how we accomplish that? Do you know how we get a new world order? Do you know how we fulfill globalization? Do you know how we fit everything around? It is simple: we just simply get rid of all the contrast. The peace process comes through getting rid of contrast. So we have a United States. We have a United We Stand. We have a United Nations. We have a United Emirates. We have a United Europe. We have a United Council of Churches. We have a World Council of Churches. We have a United Way. We have Unity Village. We have all the things that want to lend to it becoming one, and the way you become one is by getting rid of the contrast. That is where we are at today.

Now, I said all that to say this: do you know where that comes from in every aspect? Do you? It comes right out of Genesis 11, where in Genesis 10 you find the first Gentile kingdom. We studied in Genesis, which is Babylon. Then from there, you come down to the next chapter, which has the first established man-made concept of the devil's kingdom. Genesis 10 is the beginning of the first kingdom in your Bible under Nimrod, a type of the Antichrist, a very wicked individual, and that kingdom in that city is Babylon. The last kingdom in your Bible that is run by the Antichrist is also Babylon, run by the Antichrist. And you know what? In both cases, they do exactly what they do in Genesis 11.

Do you know what the Tower of Babel was all about? It was about a bunch of people being of one language and one speech, a bunch of people unifying and getting together, unifying and getting rid of contrast, unifying and putting all things together so that they could do what? They could get out of any kind of relationship or accountability to God. That is all it is. That kingdom right there is the dark side of your contrast in the Bible. That kingdom right there is a kingdom

established by the devil that stays in power right up to the day and age that we are living in today, and it exists for one purpose: that is to bring the world into one mindset, one unification, one concept, to destroy the contrast of everything: that all the churches are together, all the doctrines together, all the teachings together, all the nations are together. That is what they want, and the only way that happens is to get rid of that Book, because that Book will never put anything together until it divides. That is the Bible.

Now, that is why men do not like the Bible, and that is why the greatest way you learn about your Bible is by contrast. God shows you what is different, and that is why it is so hard to grasp, because you and I are bombarded from the world, from everything that we see. Then we have our own human nature on top of it that wants to lend itself to that kind of philosophical concept that it is not my problem, everybody else has the problem. That is where it starts, and that is where it ends, and that is what will destroy the body of Christ, and that is what is destroying America today. And it is a sad time, but that is where we are at. Of course, if you know your Bible, you know that you are living in the greatest period of time in the history of the world. You have a front row seat on a fifty-yard line for the destruction of planet Earth. Wow, what a great deal! You have a Book that is a program of the game of life that shows you every player, every nation, every king. It shows you every contrast so you do not miss a thing with what is going on on the playing field, unless you just want to.

So contrast is absolutely vital, and that is why God takes something back there like Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel, in 2400 BC—24 years before Christ, 4,000 years from us—and shows you exactly what it is going to be like today. You see, life is not hard; figuring things out in life is not hard. You just have to have the Book that defines the contrast, and when the devil takes away contrast, then you have no way of figuring it out. So whenever you come to the place in your life down the road, when you begin to really see what is going on, and you say, "Hey Lord, I really want to be able to work with people on a level in the Bible that I think I have some value to that."

IV. Situational Awareness and Discernment

I think personally, in all of our military forces, as far as the 'fly guys' go, Navy pilots are probably the best in the world. I do not take anything away from the Air Force; I think they are good too. But Navy pilots have one thing, one edge over Air Force pilots, and that is this: when an Air Force guy lands his plane, he lands on a big runway that is 2,000 feet long and 500 feet wide. When a Navy pilot lands on the deck of a pitching carrier, he is trying to put it down; it is like being in the dark and taking your thumb and putting it on a postage stamp at 100 yards. I cannot think of anything more terrifying than trying to land a fast jet going at 200 knots on a pitching deck in the middle of the sea, in the middle of the night, with no landing lights on because you are in a combat situation, and have to land on that without killing yourself. That is an incredible thing to me.

I talked to a Navy pilot one time, and I asked him if that made him afraid. He is a good friend of mine, and he talked about the fact that he had over 300 carrier landings, and half of them at night. Now, it would be bad enough in broad daylight, but I cannot even imagine. I would be so worried about missing a deck, I would miss the deck. I guess you just have to get yourself to the

place; it is like learning to park your car the first time. Do you know how you learn to park a car? You do not think about it; you do not think about it. When you start thinking about it, that is when you knock the poles over. And if you do not think about it, you will just zip, zip, zip, and you are done. If you think about it, you will just screw it up every time. That is the way we are. You have to get into the place, and I guess that is what those guys have to do.

Oh man, I am telling you, come around that buoy, and you see that deck getting closer and closer. You are going to get your airspeed, you are doing 200 knots, you know you are going to slam down on that deck, and you only have four things you have to catch, and then you are done. And do you know what you have to do when you hit the deck? Oh, this is really scary. You do not shut the engine off and a canopy and say, "Here I am." Do you know what you do when you hit the deck? You have to jam your throttles all the way forward, hit your afterburners in case you missed a line, so that you can take off again. Now, that is a neat little thing to it. I am going to hit the deck, I am going to hit my throttles, full afterburners, and then I am going to hope I am going to catch one of four lines. That is tough. At night, when the deck is going like this, when you cannot see out there in the blackness, and you know you make one mistake and you are dead, how do you just forget that and land the plane?

I do not know. He told me the greatest thing a pilot has to have; he named a number of things, and he said the greatest thing a pilot has to have he called "SA." I said, "What is SA?" He says it is called "situational awareness." You have to always be aware of the situation around you. There is never a time in flying that you can just daydream, or somebody is going to get on your six and run a rocket right up your rump. He says there is never a time. He says, "Do you know why the World War II pilots used to wear silk scarves?" Everybody thinks that they wore those because it was flashy and daring. Do you know why they wore silk scarves? Because back in World War II, their uniforms were wool. And the reason they wore a silk scarf was not because it was dashing and flashy and they wanted to impress the girls, and you see the guy standing on the wing of his plane with his scarf flapping in the wind, with his goggles on. Do you know why he wore those things? Because from the time they took off, they did nothing but look at the sky, and everywhere they checked everything every time. They never flew in a straight line in a combat zone. They were always moving left so nobody could drop out of it, and they were always looking around at what was happening. By the time they were done with an eight or nine-hour combat mission, it had rubbed the skin completely off of their necks. So they wore a silk scarf so that would not happen.

Situational awareness, folks. You always have to be aware of the situation around you. As a child of God, there can never be a time. As a pilot in a combat zone, as an infantryman on the ground, there can never be a time when you can just say, "I do not have to be on my guard." And the Bible was given to you that you might use it the right way to understand how to survive on planet Earth. And I am telling you, situational awareness is you, as a child of God, never going into any situation, never getting into a situation in any way, shape, or form, with anybody, anything, or any circumstance, that you do not understand biblically what is going on around you, by biblical principles dictating it to you. It takes a while to get there, but it is the only thing that will save your life. And you have to always be looking around you, in every angle, in every

direction. And one of the tools that God gives you is the tool of contrast. You look at what is different. The Christian life is supposed to be one thing. When you see in a Christian life something that portrays something else, it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what you have. You have a contrast.

There are people that are going to come into your life at work. There are some people that are unsaved people that you can have somewhat of a relationship with. There are other people that you just cannot have any relationship whatsoever. I am sorry. Do you know why? Because they will do nothing but pull you down and destroy you. And you learn that by contrast. Now, what we call 'situational awareness' in a worldly military term, the Bible calls 'discernment and discretion' in the book of Proverbs. But he tells you in the book of Proverbs, in the first three or four chapters, that everything in the book of Proverbs, as with all the Bible, is for one purpose: to give the young man discretion and discernment. Discretion and discernment is the Bible's interpretation of SA, situational awareness. And you always look around you and understand what you are in, in every given situation, based on what you know the Bible to be. And that is such a crucial concept.

V. The Power of Context in Bible Study

So we see that, first of all, the Bible is when it talks about contrast first. Now you can better understand how it works. Contrast is probably the most powerful tool that you have in the Bible. And you start in the Bible by looking at things that are opposite. You look at things that are different, and then you make your judgments on what you do or how you define the context. Now, coming down in this thing, in time, I am going to devote a whole Sunday to context. Because without a doubt, context is the key to figuring out the Bible. You have to get to the place in your life when you can open up your Bible and see the context immediately.

I have told you this many, many times: on Thursday night, you can ask me any question you want to ask about the Bible. You come over my house, you can ask me any question you want about the Bible. People ask me about the Bible all day long. My phone rings from morning to night with somebody saying, "What does this mean? What does that mean? And how is this?" And you know what? That is fine with me. But if you think I know the Bible that well, you are nuts. I found out a system in the Bible that shows me what it says. If it had to rely on my intelligence, my phone would never ring. Because I am not that smart. But what I figured out to do is what I am trying to get you to figure out to do, and that is to make the Bible work for you.

The older you get, and some of you older men will understand this, you learn something in life. Do you know what you learn? You learn to work smarter, not harder. That means paying the neighbor kid to mow your lawn instead of you. You will be happy to know that I mowed my own lawn yesterday. My neighbors applauded me. I never mowed my lawn. My neighbor over there told me one time years ago that he told me I was a lousy Christian. He said, "You cannot be very good. You must be a lousy Christian." I said, "Why is that?" He says, "Because look at your lawn." And I said, "You know what? If you knew as much about the Bible as well as you take care of your lawn, you would be a Bible scholar." You know that.

So yesterday, they always give me a tough time. They applauded, and I play right along with it because it does not bother me. I mean, I do not care. If I had my way, I would cement the whole yard and paint it green. I do not care. I could care less. You think my yard looks okay. To me, I have three dogs. What do you expect? I keep my lawn. These guys are always funny. If you hang out with me long enough, I am going to show you how to deal with every problem going on in life. How many are on the no-call list? You still get calls, do you not? I do. MCI calls me twice a week. They call me on a phone that we do not use. It is usually a computer-line phone. We do not have internet anymore, but it is a number that I hardly ever use. And that phone, so I know when somebody calls me, there is nobody that I know because nobody has that number. I will show you how to get rid of everything in life.

How many have been through a drive-through McDonald's and they cheated you on your food? You want to get back. Next time, go in and eat, and when you throw your stuff away, throw the tray away too. You get even. I will show you how to feel good every moment of your life. Now, these telemarketers, I have a ball with them. They call me twice a week, and every time they call, I am somebody else. Last week, I was Jerome the drug dealer. Then I was Manuel the undocumented alien. Then I was a Filipino who just came here to visit, and I would talk. You ought to hear me do Jerome the drug dealer. My wife knows; she has heard; she has wondered, "Who was that drug dealer down the basement?" I have a ball with them. I have asked you not to call me. I am not interested. I am a fair guy. I told you four months before God gave me this idea. And now, if you call me, you may get Jerome. You may get the little Filipino guy who does not speak very good English. You may get the Mexican guy who speaks no English. But you know what? They got the message. The Kansas City Star is another one. We have had the Kansas City Star since I was four. And I lived in Ohio for the first twenty years of that. And they call me. I do not know why this. I do not know why they have to do this. So I just played a game. Either that, or I get mad. I do not want to get mad. So I just make it fun. So you know, you got your own today. And Jerome cannot come to the phone because Jerome is... you just have fun with it. The Filipino guy is my favorite because I can do Filipinos really well, or Orientals very well. And I just... he is on the other end, and he says, "Welcome. Welcome to America. Welcome to America." You know, it is work where they welcome you to America. I love it. I have not got enough courage yet, but I am going to be a Samoan one of these times.

Hey, this old world is no friend of yours. And I am telling you, you have to come to the point where you learn how to use the Bible. God gave it to you that way. And you learn the Bible by getting into the Scriptures and deciding that is what you are going to do. And I am telling you, today we are going to look at another way. Contrast is the most powerful way; it shows you what is different. The next word is the word 'association.' God not only shows you by what is different, God shows you by what is the same. And the concept of association: God will define the context.

Now, that is your goal. You have to come to the place in your Bible where you immediately learn the context. And there is a way to do that. I am going to show you how to do that, and then I will help you through the process. And it is a thing where if you just follow these basic things, you will begin to put the thing together. I know in my own personal life, I remember years ago when I was just a young guy, and I remember I used to hear these guys teach the Bible. And I have to

tell you the truth: when I got saved, I just wanted to learn the Bible. I had come out of a life of twenty-some years that was without God. I had been everywhere, done everything, and I was disillusioned at some big point in my life because it just was all so phony. I had seen all of the phoniness of it. I had seen how it was portrayed as one thing, and it was just terrible. And I was somewhat disillusioned. When I found the Bible for the first time in my life, I found something that was pure and something that was true. And brother, I just wanted it.

And I cannot say I have done what is right in all my life, and I have made many mistakes, and I continue to make many mistakes. But I will tell you this: there has not been a day in my life since I got saved that I have not, whether I am in fellowship or not, believed and known what that Book is. I believe that Book is the Word of God. I believe that Book is everything it is, even when I do not do it right myself, because that thing is fixed in my mind. And I am telling you, when I saw that thing, I heard those guys get up there and lay that thing out. I said to myself, "I want to do that; that is what I want to do." And so I attacked it, and I said I saw how they did it. I knew how I needed to do it. I saw how easy it was. I saw that very quickly. I had some men show me basically what I am showing you. And I just went to work on it.

And you have to get the context of the Bible. The biggest problem God's people have, bless their hearts, is when they read their Bible, they do not know what they are reading, and they do not know what they are looking for. You see, a lot of things are offered today. They offer great programs for your children. They will have sixteen thousand soccer leagues. And people look at our church, and they look at us like we are not even a real church. When I talked to a guy two or three weeks ago, I forget when it was, I told him where we were and what we were doing. And he said, "When are you going to get a real church?" And he said to me, I love it, he said, and he is saying, "This is where you have fun." He says, "Our church, we have a... what did he say? Oh, our church, he says, we have a beautiful sanctuary." And he says, "In our church, we have all kinds of... the sound system is just like being... that is what we have in our church." And I said, "We have a jungle gym. Do you guys have one at your church?" I said, "We have a jungle gym. Do you have one of those?" He did not have one of those.

Hey, do not get hung up on things. Do you know what we have here? We have a Book. That is all we have. I am not saying the other stuff is wrong, but we have a Book. I found years ago that if you get the Book, everything else takes care of itself, and the jungle gym. We are doubly blessed. But we have a Book. And people today have come to the point in their lives where they think the church is a building. They think it is stained glass windows. They think it is fountains out front. They think it is a big megaton sound system. They think it is all the things in splash and splendor. And they have all of that, but they do not have the Book. We do not have any of that; we have the Book. Which would you rather have? Forget you. I know what I would rather have: the Book. And that is where we are at. You have to learn the context, because the context will tell you where you are at. It will give you a place of understanding in your Bible, that you begin to figure out exactly how it all comes together.

And I told you that every verse in your Bible, and I have said this many, many times, we are really digging into it now. I have told you every verse in the Bible has a doctrinal application. That is an application that goes to the future. We call it prophetic sometimes. I told you that the

Bible has a historical application, and that is its truest history. The Bible is an absolute, pristine record of the history of man. And the Bible has an inspirational application. It is something that you and I need to have to get through tomorrow, or get through today, or get through what we are struggling through in our own lives. And we all struggle with different things.

And you see, years ago, when I heard these old boys laying this stuff out, I wanted it so bad. I said, "Oh God, make me, make me, make me to understand Your Word, because it is not in my nature." I said, "Lord, I am someone that wants to go play ball instead of studying Your Bible. I am someone that wants to go play golf instead of studying Your Bible. I am somebody who wants to go do this instead of studying Your Bible. God, You have to make my priority so that all I want in life is to learn that Book, and I will put everything else aside." And you know what? When you get to that point, and I went after it, I said, "I am going to get this thing." And you know what I found? I always thought the doctrinal application was the hardest. And I think I thought it was the hardest because it was the scariest, because it was something that was elusive. I had never heard it taught before in most churches because most pastors do not have a clue about it. So it was something I thought was out of reach. I would love it when somebody would go to the Old Testament and lay it out.

The first message I heard was in 1971. I heard a man, Dr. Peter S. Ruckman. And you know what he preached? He preached "The Gospel According to Exodus." Now, is there anybody here that does not know that the Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Is there anybody? Where in the world? I thought to myself, "The Gospel According to Exodus?" I thought Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John was the Gospel. You know what that old boy did? That old boy got up there, and he started explaining how there are many pictures of the Gospel. And then he explained the Gospel. And he took me down that thing that night on a Sunday night. And I remember sitting there as just a young Christian, and I was hanging on every word. And you know what? I still have that cassette. It is old. It is cracked. I do not play it very much because I am afraid it will... John, could you put that on CD for me? Good. I will tell you what, it was the message that changed my life. He came down to that thing, and he showed the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in an Old Testament passage that I had read fifty times before and never saw any of this. He showed me how it was a picture of Christ coming down and dying. He showed me the Lamb of the Passover was the Lamb of Christ on the cross. He showed me that back there in Exodus 12 when they put the blood on this side of the door, and the blood on this side of the door, and the blood on the top of the door.

Well, I had looked at that, read that five, six, seven, or eight years. I had heard preachers talk about that, but never until that night did I understand, and I can hear him saying, "Oh, I can hear him saying," just like I was there. He is up there, and he said, "Well, the Bible says they took that hyssop, dipped it down into blood. They put the blood on this side of the door, blood on that side of the door, and the blood on the top of the door." He says, "Now, you know what, folks," this is how he taught, "you know what, folks," he said, "Now, whoever wrote that thing in Exodus saw Calvary. How do you know that? One thief over here, one thief over here, Christ in the middle. Now, folks, you see this? He is numbered with the transgressors, both sides of the door, but He is

higher than they are because He is dealing." I had read that passage a hundred times, never saw that.

He came down through that thing, and he says, "You know what, folks," he said, "Read down there in Exodus 12:1-5." When he read, he made everybody read it, and he says, he is drawing while he is doing it, he is drawing this whole thing out, and he says, "Now look down there, folks." He said, "Look at verse 1. You see what it says there? It says 'a lamb.' Then look down there at verse 3. See what it says there? It says 'the lamb.' Now look down at verse 5. See what it says there? It says 'your lamb.' And this is what he does: 'Now, you see, folks, the first thing you need is a lamb without specifying any kind, but just having that lamb will not be enough. You need the Lamb.' And he says, 'You can know all about that Lamb, ladies and gentlemen, but you have to take that Lamb and make it your Lamb.'"

And then he walks up there with that smug look on his face saying, "Now what kind of mind do you think is behind the King James Bible that it says 'a lamb,' 'the lamb,' and 'your lamb?'" He came down that aisle and showed how that Passover Lamb was killed on the fourteenth day of the month, so was Christ. He came down through that thing and showed how that it was a picture of the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. He came down through that thing and showed the fact that the Lamb had to be a male without spot. He ran it back to the New Testament that showed that Christ was a Lamb without spot, slain before the foundation of the world. He came down there and talked about the fact, oh, and I love this point, he says, "They walked over here." I love it. He wanted to put the blood on the door, and you know what the Bible says? He says, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Then he looks around back to that thing, and he says, "Now, you know what, folks, tomorrow morning I am going out to Canton Airport, and I am going to get on an airplane going back to Florida." He says, "When I get up there," he says, "I am going to walk up there, there is a ticket counter, and the woman is going to say, 'When I see your ticket.'" And he says, "I am going to say, 'Well, I do not have a ticket.'" And she says, "Well, Mr. Ruckman, he is going to get on this plane. I have a ticket." He says, "Well, I do not have a ticket. I want to get on this here plane. I want to go home to Florida." He says, "Well, you do not understand, you have to have a ticket." He says, "Well, wait a minute, you let so-and-so on that plane, and if you knew what I knew about so-and-so, you would not let him on that plane. He is a rascal." She says, "I do not care anything about him. He had a ticket. You have a ticket?" He said, "No, I do not have a ticket, but you let that guy on, that guy on, that guy on. That guy is a crook. That guy over there is a fornicator. That guy over there is drunk. That guy over here is this. You let all those people on that plane. I want to get on that plane. I am as good as they are." She says, "Mr. Ruckman, they got a ticket. You do not." You know what he said? He said, "Now, everybody understand that?" He says, "Then why would you..." I love it, you can hear it on the tape, John. "Why would you blink at something like that?" His glasses fell off just like my dad. I timed that for hours yesterday. I worked four hours on hitting the Bible and the glasses hitting the floor just like his. I am happy now. We are done out of here. Beat it. I am Debbie. No, he says, "The Bible says, 'When I see the blood.' No blood, no ticket." I got it, man.

I went home that night, and I said to myself, "I want to know the Bible. I want to learn the Bible just like that." So I started going through that thing, and I started finding out the key words. I

started to find out words of contrast. I started to find the words of association, and I started to find the words of similar things, of similar tune. And I laid them all out. You know what I used to do? I was so sure, and I was right. I would take a Strong's Concordance, and I would take these particular words, and on a rainy day when you could not do anything, and you were just bored with life, and nothing on television, and you just did not... I would sit down that thing, and I would start in the concordance, and I would take one of those words, and I would start in Genesis, and I would mark every word in yellow. Took me probably ten years to get it all done. There are a lot better shows on TV back then than there are today. Took me probably ten years to get it, but you know what? I knew what I needed to do, and I knew that there were about twenty-five or thirty key words, phrases, what I call primary words, that just jump out to you and tell you the context. And when you mark them in your Bible, when you start to either read your Bible yourself, or sometimes you get a call from me. My father in the Lord used to do this to me all the time. I think looking back on it now, I think he was just trying to... he knew what he needed to do to keep me on top of things. He used to have a Thursday night Bible study back home in Ohio. It was the same kind we have now: any questions about the Bible. And he would do this to me every time. He knew he was not going to be there until Thursday. He knew he was not going to be there on Thursday, so he would wait until Thursday afternoon, call me, and ask me if I could do Bible study that night, when he knew the Sunday before he was not going to be there. You see, he did not want me prepared because he wanted me to live in a state of preparedness. You see, and I will tell you, nothing will get your head in the Bible quicker than getting up in front of 150 people and not knowing what to say. I look back at those days, and they are laughable. I had tapes of them; it would make Bill Cosby's routines look like nothing. I remember the first time I did Bible study, I was so nervous. I got up there and prayed, and I started... I do not know how this happened. There were 150 kids there, all single adults, and they got me on the eyeball target anyhow because they are... and I am nobody, and the godfather is not there, and it is me, second stringer coming in, fifth stringer, just got caught up in Omaha. And I never had no... how I did it, it was the stupidest thing in my life. I started to pray, and I was so concerned about doing a good job for God. I do not know how this happened. I got praying, and I got moving, and somehow I got turned around, and I said, "In Jesus' name, amen," and I said, "Okay." And they were all back here. Everybody just died laughing. I do not know how that happened. All those days, they were some of the greatest days of my life. They were the first days of really seeing God take me and use me even when I did not know what I was doing. It is a lot like what old Joe when God used him to win his grandfather. Most of you maybe do not know this, remember the story Joe told you about winning his grandfather? Well, his grandfather died a week and a half after he won him to Christ. Knowing that God used you, as wicked as we are, and as worthless as we are, as ungodly as we are, that God would still reach down and tap you on the shoulder and say, "Joe, I got a job for you." Nothing I can teach you, nothing I can do can motivate you like that, because I am just a cheap imitation, and if you forget that, you are in trouble, because God just showed you that he wants to use you, and he puts you on the spot. And I do not think you will, but I am just saying, you never forget things like that. I do not. I remember something stupid is turning around and praying backwards. I just thank God that he did not make my words backwards. Nobody thought I was speaking in tongues.

But I wanted it, and so I began to take these words. And then what I found out, I am going to tell you this: the doctrinal is the easiest. Finding the context doctrinally is the easiest. I thought it was the hardest back then. I am telling you now, I learned it very quickly. If you just get some words down and lay the words out and get them to work for you, they become easy. Once you get the doctrinal context, the inspirational is only a half a step behind, because once you know what the context is doctrinally, then you start using all the parallels between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and you see what it is. And then the historical takes care of itself. It is just that simple. It is just that simple. And you have to start a context.

VI. Key Words for Doctrinal Context: The Second Coming

Now we are going to start where the Bible starts, and we are going to start, and I am going to show you how to determine the doctrinal context of the greatest doctrine in the Bible. It is so easy, unbelievable. I am going to lay it out for you. We will not get through it all today, but we will get through a portion of it, and enough to get your appetite wet about it. And as always, on Thursday night, the way you guys have been doing it, if you want clarification on something, you bring it, we will deal with it. Thursday nights have just gone off the charts as far as I am concerned with people that are putting their Bibles together. And I say, I understand, I am going to tell you right now, and I do not take this in a bad way, it is just the way it is. I know in any given situation, any given group of people, you always have to have this, and this is not a criticism, it is just a matter of fact. We have been in this thing now on Genesis for about, I do not know, five or six, eight, maybe two months, I do not know, not very long. But long enough to know that everybody in here knows now that when it comes to the Bible, and this is the beauty of it, and this is something that I, again, this is the extra added benefit, everybody in here knows now what your biggest problem is when it comes to your relationship with God. Everybody does. You have people who, very frankly, there were young Christians that never got through discipleship, they never had the advantage of being here for two and a half, three years, and those people, boy, they just blew me away with what they have done in the Bible. And you have people that have been around for two, five, six, seven, eight, nine years, or three years, and you know what? Their Bibles look like they just took a nap all last two months. You get out of the Bible what you are willing to put into it, and it is one of those things where you know what? You cannot fake. You cannot fake. You just cannot fake loving the Bible. You just cannot. You can fake a lot of things. You can fake a lot of things, but you cannot fake loving God and loving the Bible. You can pretend, you can say all the right things, but you know what? You cannot fake it because you cannot cover your bases that many times. You just can, because loving God and loving the Bible is a lifestyle. It is not a pick it up on Sunday and leave it off on Monday. It is a lifestyle. And it becomes part of everything you do because it becomes part of everything you want. And it is so, everybody learns.

But when you get into the Bible, the Bible says in the book of James it is like a natural looking glass. It shows you what you are really like. And that is another reason we do not like the Bible. We do not like to see what we are really like. We like the mirror, mirror on the wall deal. We like to look at ourselves as we perceive ourselves. Not too many people enjoy looking and reading the Word of God and its reflection of what they really are. Unless they are somebody that really

loves God, because you want to be part of that perfecting purpose so much, you are willing to accept whatever you are. Listen to me. You are willing to accept, listen to me, you are willing to accept whatever you are to be able to get what you need to be. That is the key. Do you know where that starts? It starts right in here. Right there. That is what? That is how it works. That is how it works.

So the greatest doctrine and teaching in your Bible is the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. Now I start where the Bible starts. Trying to stay as biblical as I can. We are going to walk down through God's order of things in here. And of course, the theme of your Bible is the second coming of Christ. Every event, every story, and every chapter will point to that day, the day Jesus Christ comes back. And you know what? Inspirationally, that is what it is about for me because my whole life once I got saved is geared toward the day Jesus comes back. Every day I live my life, I am one day closer. Every day I live my life, I ought to be more like Christ today than I was yesterday. That is how it works. Historically, every event in history looks to this day. That is why before Christ was born, it is called BC, Before Christ, and after He is crucified, it is called AD, which means in the year of our Lord. After He is crucified, every year is named and favored looking for that year that He comes back. It is as simple as that. So that is the number one theme of the Bible. It is the number one theme of history. It is the number one event in my life when God comes back and establishes His kingdom and we get on with what He wants to do.

Now I am going to show you three of the most important words in your Bible. And these three words are absolutely incredible. You say, "Well, why are they so important?" There are over 1,000 references, over 1,000 references in the Old Testament to the day the Second Coming of Christ. Why are these three words so important? Because you can knock out a thirty-year Bible as far as context if you just get these words done. You can knock out one-third of your Bible. You can knock out 1,000 places in your Bible. Today you can go home with 1,000 text chapters, verses, books of the Bible in your pocket by just three little words because that is the way God designed it. We will not go to the Greek. We are not going to go to the Hebrew. We are going to take three little words because every word is pure. Every word is pure. Now those three little words are: "the day," "that day," and "the day of the Lord." "The day," "that day," and "the day of the Lord." Once you get this in your mind, this thing is going to jump out at you. If you had time to do it at some point, I would go through my Bible and I would mark every time "the day," "that day," and "the day of the Lord" shows up in your Bible. If you just have that, you will figure out more of your Bible quicker than anything else I know.

Now, I am going to show you some passages in the Old Testament that you probably have read before and had no idea what you are talking about. But I am going to walk you through them here as we start this, and I am going to show you. These three words, when you get them down and you read them and you find them in a passage, you have just zeroed in on the context. You may not understand all the details of it, but you have the context. That is where you start. If you do not get the context, you will never get the details. I tell people this all the time when they come over, they will read a verse and then they will say, "Bob, what does this verse mean?" And they will run all through the Bible to try to find out what that verse means, and they fail to read three or four verses before or three or four verses afterwards to establish the context. Context has

to come first. A text without a context is a pretext. You have to have a context. And if you want the context to the greatest event in the Bible that is found over a thousand times in the Old Testament, I am going to give you just three examples. Now you may want to look along these, and I would suggest you might want to look at these. First, we will do Malachi 4, and we will get through these three, and then we will hold up today, and we will finish it up next time. But this will get you started. I do not want to just overwhelm you with material. I do not want to for the sake of bombarding you for the sake of saying, "Well, I really dumped a lot of stuff on them." It does not do you any good. We have to do this thing in a protracted way where you get things as we go. That is what you have to do.

But I want you to look at Malachi 4, and I want you to look at verse 1. We are going to read the first five or six verses here. Now keep in mind "the day," "that day," "the day of the Lord." Now just pretend that I do not know anything about the Bible. Just pretend you do not know anything about the Bible, and you just came home from here in my sermon, and you are all fired up just like I was when I heard "The Gospel According to Exodus." You are going to make up your mind. You are going to tackle the doctrinal first, and then you are going to work from the context out. And you are just going out with three little words in your pocket today: "the day," "that day," "the day of the Lord," and you know wherever you find those words, it is going to set the context for the second coming of Christ, the theme of the Bible.

VII. Examples of Doctrinal Context

All right, let us read it.

Malachi 4:1-6

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Now see that thing? You got all three of those words in that context. Now let me tell you how this works. When I read it, we immediately get the context. The context now is the second coming of Christ. In time we want more out of that than just the context. But that is where you

are going to start right now. Now as I read it, I found how many times was it in there? I found four times "the day of the Lord," "that day," or "the day." That gives me the context. Now I have to tell you when I read it, I see eleven other things in there, eleven other words that give me the detail of the context. But you are not there yet. I do not care that you are there yet. I am telling you once you start with the words and you take the basic words and you establish the context as you grow, you will pick up the more words that give you the meat to the context to show you the detail. When I am looking at that thing and just read it down there, I did this this morning, I looked at that thing and I thought to myself, there are four references to "the day," "that day," or "the day of the Lord." There are eleven other references that give you the detail within the context of the day of the Lord that put that right as a specific place in the second coming of Christ. It is right there. But you have to learn to get those. You just start with the context, the context.

All right, let us look at the next one, Isaiah 17. Isaiah 17, pick it up in verse 4. All right, here is what it says.

Isaiah 17:4-11

And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.

At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.

In that day shall his strong cities be as forsaken a bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.

Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:

In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

All right? Five times you find a reference to the primary context. I look at this, I find twenty-two other things in here to give me the exact details of that context. Right? And they are all in words or small phrases that mean something. I could take those and run you over to Revelation, run you over to someplace else and show you how they define out that gives you the details of the context. But you do not worry about that. Right now you work with "the day." You get the

general context. When you grasp the general context, you know what you are reading. As you continue to learn through Thursday night, I will point these things out to you as we go through. But at the time we are done with our study, I am going to give you all the other words. You are going to have them all. But I do not want to give them to you without showing you how to use them. So we just have to do this thing in a staged form here. But you are going to find that in time as you focus on that passage, you get the context. You get the context by three little words: "the day," "that day," "the day of the Lord." A hundred percent of the time in the Bible. You find one of those three words, you will have the context doctrinally: Second Coming of Christ. Your whole Bible points toward one day. And that is the day God's Son comes back and sits down on the throne in Jerusalem and is crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Revelation 19. Your whole Bible points toward that, doctrinally. Now when you see that and you understand that, you have a context. Every time you flip through your Bible and you mark "the day," you will mark it more than two thousand times in your Bible. And every time you flip through your Bible, you will see that little word in yellow. You will know what the context is and you will never have to guess it again. And then all you will have to do is build upon that context as you learn more of the key words. And pretty soon, just like you can fillet a fish without getting any bones in it and come out with the most perfect piece of fish you could ever want, you will do the same thing with the truth in the Bible. No bones to choke on. No bones.

Let me give you another one. Last one here. Zechariah 12. Zechariah 12. Now on this one here, there are twenty-six. There are seven of "the day" or "that day," and there are twenty-six other key words, phrases in here that detail the context. And as you learn your Bible and as we go through the books of the Bible, you will see how these things work. All right? Chapter 12, verse 1.

Zechariah 12:1-10

The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

You see how if you just, what is all this cutting with a stone and bird? What is all this stuff? You see? You read it and you just do not have a clue until you get the context. And then once you get past the context and you get the other words down, it tells you what this stone that cuts is. That is Daniel 2. It tells you how all this stuff lays out. It is Revelation 6, Revelation 9, Revelation 19. It is Isaiah 34. They are all defined somewhere. And what it does, it starts out with a text and when you get a text, it immediately goes by three little words to a context. And then you take the context and read it within the context, see the other key words and you have the whole thing put together for you. And then you place it where it needs to be. And you mark them just that way.

All right, let us go on. Verse 3, and in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people and that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. On that day, saying of the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment and his rider with madness and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah and upon every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart in the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You see, you read that stuff and you think, what is the deal making horses blind? And the rider is blind. Well, when you go over to Revelation 6, you find out who these horses and these riders are. But you have to get that. You start with the context and you work down. Verse 6, in that day I will make the governor of Judah like a hearth, a fire among the wood and like a torture fire in his sheep and they shall devour all the people round about on the right hand and on the left. There it is. See that thing? Remember I told you a little while ago about the right and the left? There it is. Right and the left. You know what he does? It is the judgment of the nations when he judges all the nations at the end of the second coming of Christ, found in Matthew 25. You know what he does? He separates the nations, one on their left hand and one on the right. Why? Contrast. These are sheep. These are goats. Everything.

Verse 7, the Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. That day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and it shall be as feeble among them as that day shall be as David and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. I will give you 120 verses on that one. And I will pour upon the house of David and

upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced and whom they mourn for him as one that mourneth for him only son and shall be the bitterness for him and one that has bitterness for his first boy. In that day shall there be a great morning in Jerusalem and on down it goes. It is all set just that way. It is all set just that way. So when you get the context down then you have what you are working with.

VIII. Applying Biblical Principles to Life

And you are going to find that I told you one of the things you always want to remember, and you want to remember this, and there is a great... and I started out when we started this message showing you contrast and how the world and Christians do not want sin anymore. They want to blame their problems. They go the world. The whole thing breaks down that way. Well, I told you that for a reason because you are going to find out this thing here that God never violates his own principles. If you never learn anything else about the Bible, learn that one truth: God never, never violates his own principles. Once he lays down a principle, whether it is in the Old Testament or the New Testament, dealing with Israel or the church, dealing with Saul, David, Samson, or me, you, and the next guy, it will always follow the same line of principles. This is what is called going from the doctrinal to the inspirational. And if you are ever going to work and be good with people, or even yourself, you know the first thing you do with all of this once you get it from the doctrinal to the inspirational is you point that finger to yourself and you look at where you are at, and then you use it as a principle. Trying to deal with other people without being willing to deal with yourself will never, never work. It will never work.

And all this leads to a great truth. You cannot fake knowing the Bible, and you cannot fake living the Bible. You cannot. You have somebody who will get up and he will talk about how much he knows about God and the Bible; just give him twenty minutes, and you will know. You see, people get fooled because they do not know the Bible. Once you understand it is the key words and the principle and the phrases that teach you the truth of the Bible, then when you listen to a man or a woman teach the Bible, you will listen to how he uses or abuses those words, and you will know exactly what you have. Do you know why? Because you will have discernment. You will have SA, situational awareness. You will understand by how he uses or abuses the words what he knows about the Scriptures. Once you understand that doctrinally, take it into your own life; the same principle applies. Once you understand that it is those same key principles and phrases that make you a working, walking fellowship relationship with Christ, you will find the same system.

Jesus himself said in Luke 6:46:

Luke 6:46

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

That is the greatest question in the Bible, and I have never heard a satisfactory answer to it. Never. I have never heard any woman, any man, any teenager, any senior citizen who claimed to be saved who just did whatever they wanted to do that had an answer to that verse. If you are saved and you are a child of God, and God says do this, why do you call him on Sunday, "Lord,

Lord, Lord," and not do the things which he says? You see, it is by principles. You figure out a phony Bible teacher by how he abuses the words and the principles and the teachings. You find out a phony Christian by how he uses and abuses the principles of everyday living his Christian life. Just that simple. It is not hard. It is not hard. It is called discernment. It is called situational awareness. It is called understanding that the principles of God never get violated. We violate them. God never violates them. You want to stay true to the Word of God and stay true and not be deceived in life. You get on that course with biblical principles and do not deviate from it. And when everybody else deviates from it, you stay on it, and no matter what they do, and no matter how they justify it or how they rationalize it or what you hear them say or what they claim or who they blame, you do not have to ever get caught up in that. You just follow the principle. So simple. It is so simple.

Now that is why men hate the Bible. That is why the world hates the Bible. And that is why for this whole gigantic thing to happen the way it is going to happen, they had to get rid of the Bible. First the world: no Bible in school, no Bible here, no Bible there, separation of church and state. Then they get rid of it in the churches. And when they do that, they get rid of contrast. And when they get rid of contrast, then there is no right and wrong. It is all situation ethics, and it just all falls right down the hill from there, and God's people are left in the middle to try to figure it out on their own. It is just that simple. It is just that easy. Life is not complicated. Man makes it complicated by blurring the truth, shading it to his own satisfaction, coloring it in to make it work for her or him or them. And that is how it works. And that is why people do not like the Bible. It lays it out as it really is and leaves nothing else to say. What do you say? "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" What do you say to that? There is no answer. There is no answer. There is no answer. It is just that easy.

Now next week when we get back into this, we are going to take it to the next step. And I am going to, I gave you a couple of words. We are going to look, we are going to come down the events just as we have them in the Bible, and then we are going to zero in on them. And when you are done with this, you are going to get about forty or fifty key words that half of them are major things that it is all you have to worry about right now, but I am going to give them all to you so you can make a list of them down here, and in time as you go through your Bible, when you see those words, stop. You know what? I am going to tell you this, and then we are done. The biggest problem that we have in our Bibles, and you already know what your problem is, but I am going to tell you what all of our problems. You may have different problems than me or somebody else, but we all have this same problem, and that is self-discipline. We are not a very disciplined people. We like to think that we are, we like to give the illusion that we are, but you know what? How much time you spend in your Bible every week is the answer to that. You can kid yourself all day long. That is something we all have to work on. We all have to come to the point where we carve out the time that we need to spend in the Word of God, and it is as simple as that, and everybody is on different levels, and everybody is growing at a different pace, and I understand all of that, but the bottom line is it is. You have to begin that process of learning the Word of God, and it only comes by understanding that we are not very disciplined, and we have to start with that basic format of disciplining ourselves.

And one of the things you need to do, and I told you this as we are coming through our Genesis material. When you have an Old Testament passage and I give you or you see on Thursday night or whatever it is, New Testament references, stop right there and take it, put it in and stop whatever you are doing, make your cross references. Do not delude yourself into thinking, "I will do it later," "I will do this," "I will do that." You are going to get more out of your Bible and save yourself time if you just take a little time and do what needs to be done. It is the same way with these words. Every time on Thursday night if you do not have you a yellow China marker by now, you are not saved. As my grandmother used to say, "You cannot go to heaven without a red pencil." I mean she had some great sayings, but that was a great one. "You cannot go to heaven without a red pencil." You have to, and right now on Thursday night, on Sunday morning, you start marking those words. You start marking them words. You start laying them out. You start just, when Thursday night comes and I read a passage, situational awareness. Be aware, come to Bible study not just putting in your time, come looking for something. Come when somebody asks a question, come with a purpose of learning from that person's question. Come in there trying to get out of it what you can. You will accelerate your growth by doing that. You will cover the bases and you will get down a lot quicker if you just use every advantage time you have. But that takes self-discipline. But that is where it starts. That is where it starts.

Well, let us pray. Father, we thank you and pray.