

## I. Setting the Context for Parenting

We started our study based on the Bible on training up your children. We talked about Daniel chapter 1, and I told you when we did this that for the first couple of weeks we have to set a context. If you do not understand basically what you are up against as a parent, you are never going to know how to deal with the problem.

I think today parents are overwhelmed with all of the things that are in their children's lives and the tremendous responsibility that goes along with that. Many times, and I told you last week that I think most of you are in this category, most of you are very good people who really want to do what is right with your children. The problem is you do not know what to do. Nobody has ever taken the time to lay it out for you.

Many of you, before you came to this church, were not really in a church that cared about your children one way or the other, or maybe you did not go to church. It is immaterial. But right now in your life, you want to do what is right with your children because you are beginning to see the tremendous responsibility and the problems that are out there.

Last week we talked about the point in your child's life that the clock is ticking on. We went back to Daniel chapter 1 and we talked about how your child is going to face an evil day. That evil day will be the day that that child has to face the world, the flesh, and the devil without you looking over their shoulder.

We saw how Daniel and his friends were taken captive by the most wicked system the world has ever seen, the Babylonian system. We saw Nebuchadnezzar as a type of the devil and all of the things there that show you what your child is up against: how Nebuchadnezzar had a daily portion for those children, how he wanted to change their names, change their character, change the thinking patterns that somebody had instilled in them as little children. We saw that, and that day came in their lives when Daniel was faced with all of those things.

The Bible says in Daniel 1:8 that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat. I showed you last week what we are up against, what you and I are up against as a parent.

Today I want to talk to you about the perspective. I want you to see this thing as it really is. I think if you get these two down, and you get these two concepts in your mind, and you begin in your own heart to say, "Okay, I know what I am up against, and now I know what I have got to do," if you follow what we talk about in the weeks to come, you are going to work this thing through the way God wants you to work it through.

All we do for the rest of our study, next week is going to be the key. This is basically a foundation, a kind of an introduction, a kind of a perspective of where we are all at. Next week is going to be the key time, and then everything else that we do through the rest of our series is going to come back around next week.

I told you that it does not matter if you have children or you do not. We are looking this fall at opening up a counseling ministry, reaching out to people and helping them with their problems. Obviously, many of the problems that you are going to get into in people's lives are going to be what they are dealing with with their children. It affects every aspect of their life, from their marriage right down to their own personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of you have children right now, and some of you are children yourselves, or young adults, or even adults. The same principles you have to apply in your life. If you want to build a relationship with God, no matter where you are at, you may be 18, 19, 20 years old. You may be 30, 40 years old. In relationship to God and the Bible, we are all God's children if you are saved. I do not care if you are 100 years old here today, the bottom line is God still looks at you as a child. The faith that you display toward God is always to be that childlike faith. So wherever you are at in your life and your spiritual relationship with God, even if you do not have any kids, these are the principles that will cover you in both scenarios.

In the weeks to come, we are going to talk about these systems. Again, I ask you to write down for me on three by five cards things that you want me to deal with, particular things that you want me to cover that I may not cover. If I see there is an area for that, then I will put that in and build that in, and I will help you with that.

We also talked about by next week, most of you that want to do this ought to be getting into your little parenting classes. That means you have small groups of you, maybe five or six couples, that you want to come over to my home every other week or once a month, whatever you have to do. We sit down and we dissect what we have talked about. It will be a place where you can have that time where you can ask me questions.

You know how we operate here. I will spend an hour a week with anybody in this church that wants to learn the Bible. You can come over to my home, we will sit down, you can ask me, I will plan a study for you, I will work through a study with you. You can ask me whatever questions you want to ask. Your spiritual relationship with God is very important to me. I want to make sure as a pastor that I do my job. My job is one-fold: to make sure that you have everything you need in your life to become everything God wants you to be. Certainly, with your family, with your children, that is my responsibility too, to help you to do that.

So in those areas, we will be able to sit down as a small group. We will be able to talk in a smaller setting where you can say, "Hey, Bob, I do not understand this," or "You said hit him with a ball bat. How big a bat should I get?" Whatever we have to talk about. I was talking about your kids, not your husband.

On top of that, if you need to come in one-on-one with me, you and your husband or you by yourself, I will work with you any way that we can. You are number one in my life, as you always are, and your children along with that.

But we are going to talk in the weeks to come about how to build your child's value system. That is one of the problems we have today. Children do not have—we saw the value system in Daniel last week. I hope you went out of here last week saying to yourself, "How do I build that value

system in my child's life?" Your child desperately needs a value system by which to gauge things that he or she is going to have to come up against.

The other thing we are going to talk about is how to take the Bible principles and shape his will, how to develop his mind, how to mold his spirit. Obviously, as your child is growing up, that is your responsibility. You can develop his mind, you can shape his will, and you can mold his spirit, which brings you to the end result in your child's life, which is saving his soul.

We are going to talk about the four types of parents. We are going to talk about the absolute six principles of parenting. I am going to show you how you instill these. I am going to show you how basically the same way I build a church is the same way you build your children. So there is going to be a lot of parallels between the two.

We are going to talk about disciplining your child. We are going to talk about situations with your child where you may have a strong-willed child. We are going to talk about that. That will be an easy one. We just give everybody a "will blubber." Somebody says, "Will blubber?" Yes, you will on them until they blubber. It works. It works.

We are going to talk about setting goals for your children, how to build biblical character traced into life. We are going to talk about those of you out there that find yourselves as single parents. How do you deal with all of that? We are going to talk about how you deal in a situation where you are married but maybe the wife is saved and the husband is unsaved, or vice versa. We are going to talk about how you deal in situations where your children are caught in divorce. We will talk about the difference between dealing with boys and girls.

We are going to build this. Our goal now is to take all of the things that we are going to talk about. As I said, last week and this week is kind of getting it all into perspective, showing you what you are up against, talking about what you have got to do. Then we are going to build this thing into a workable model based on the Word of God that shows you a plan for training up your children the way God wants them to be trained. I will help you every way that I can and whatever time it takes to get you to that place.

Now, before we get into this this morning, let us have a word of prayer.

I asked you last week to put a picture of your child in your Bible. So if you will take that picture out right now—I know some of you were not here, so you may not have it. If you decide to come back next week, take that picture out. What we are going to do every week is pray over your children before we go into these messages. So if you did that this morning, let us go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we do thank and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, we thank You first of all for the Word of God, for its truth, for its power. We thank You, Lord, for how much You love us, and as Your children, how You put up with us. You have a plan for us; You have a model for us. Lord, the same model that You have for us is the same model we should have for our children. I ask You this morning, Lord, I ask You in a very special way to be with us. Lord, I have a lot of things I want to say. I have a lot of things that I need to say. But Lord, I want to say them in the right way, and I want to say them under the power of the Holy Spirit of God, that I do not just say it

because I want to say it. Lord, we love You today, and I know that the people here, Father, for the most part, they care about their children, they love their children, and they want to do what is right with them. Help me today, Lord, this is such a vital thing in our church. The greatest commodity we have, Lord, is our children. We need to look at them and understand, Father, all that we need to do together to work together. We ask You now, Father, to bless these little children that are represented by these little pictures today. Lord, every one of them represents a plan of God, something that You want to accomplish in their lives. We in this church, their moms and their dads, and all the people, Lord, that have responsibility for them, whether it is Sunday school or me preaching to their parents, we always have to have that in the back of our minds that we are the ones that will mold them and make them what they need to be. Thank You for today. We pray now, Lord, that You will bless us in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

## II. The Pastor's Role and Church Philosophy

As I said last week, basically most of you are all in the same boat. You are good people. You love the Bible. Many of you have come from churches where there was no Bible taught. Many of you came from churches that all they ever got from you was what they wanted. They never gave anything back. Some of you know who I am talking about here this morning.

Some of you came to me when you went to your pastor with problems with your children, or problems with your marriage, or problems with your life. He subcontracted you out to some professional counselor, or he simply said he was not prepared, or maybe you never even got a hold of him. That is typical today in what we find in churches, and I apologize for that. But that is just the way it is. It should not be that way, but unfortunately, churches have become big businesses. They no longer look at their people as individuals. They look at their people as giving units, just a number on an offering envelope.

I told you before that, and I am not sure there ever was, but there certainly is not today any such thing in churches anyhow as mass evangelism in building a church. A pastor has to build a church one person at a time, one couple at a time. As the brother said, what a great verse over there in Timothy, taking what God has given to me and committing it to faithful men. That has been the verse around here for the last couple of months as we have talked about this. That is the job of a pastor. It is that unbroken chain of taking the Bible that somebody gave to me, and me giving it to you, and you giving it to somebody else. That is the process, and that is what a church should be. That is what a pastor should be.

I do not build buildings. I build people. The building is God's responsibility. If they take the building next week, we will meet in the tent. I do not care. It does not matter to me. The most important thing in this building are the people that are in it. That is what matters. Everything else is secondary. How easy we lose our focus on that as pastors and leaders in churches, where we just get it backwards.

## III. The Urgency of Parental Action

Some of you were here this morning, and your kids are still small, but you already see some difficulty. They are already testing authority. The very proof of that is if you have worked in our nursery, you know that some of your children that are one and a half, two, three, four years old, there are some real issues there. Those issues are not going to get better by themselves. Those issues are going to get better as you apply and you get a process involved in your child's life.

We have some of you in here whose child has already hit that evil day. They passed the point, and they were not prepared for it. Now you are seeing some real issues that you have to deal with.

Some of you, bless your heart, that evil day came and went, and you basically have lost your child. You may not want to admit it yet. You may be in denial. But the bottom line is you are not controlling them; they are controlling you. It is a terrible situation to find yourself in, but that is where we are at.

No matter where you are at in your life, I do not care. I do not care if it is your own Christian life. I do not care if it is with your children. I do not care how many mistakes you have made. I told you before, this message is certainly not to castigate anybody. I am not standing up here as somebody who has all the answers trying to beat you up. I am here as your pastor trying to help you. What I am trying to tell you is this: I do not care what mistakes you have made in life. I do not care how bad your situation is. There is always something you can do. There is always something you can do. There is never a time in your life as a Christian, unless you die or unless the Lord comes back, that you cannot begin to turn around the situation that you are in.

That may be true with your children as parents, or it may be true as individuals. Maybe you do not have any kids, but your life is an absolute disaster this morning. Maybe you are saved, or maybe you are lost, and you are all confused, and it is a mess. My point is these principles work for everybody, and I do not care where you are at in your life. The moment you stop, clear off a spot, and say, "God, I want to do what is right from here," you begin to turn that process around.

It is not always an easy process. A U.S. Navy aircraft carrier is about four football fields long. It takes an hour and 15, 20 minutes to turn that aircraft carrier in a complete circle. You think you drive down the street to make a left turn in your car? You just turn the wheel, and your wife steps on the gas to help it along, and you are around the corner. You cannot do that with a 400-foot aircraft carrier. You turn that thing like that, you are going to capsize it. It takes a long time to turn something that big around. My point is this: the longer you let your life go, no matter what it is, the harder it is, and the longer it takes to make that turn. It is just that simple.

I will tell you something else. I had a guy that I knew a number of years ago, and he is dead now. In fact, he got killed. This guy said he was a Christian. I do not know if he was or he was not. We were not real personal friends. He was a very rich guy. He owned just about everything in Kansas City. If I were to say his name, you probably remember it if you have been around Kansas City for a while. He got killed in a plane crash. This guy claimed to be a Christian, but he was a playboy type.

He was taking off from downtown airport. He was a good pilot. He was flying a double-engine Cessna. He took off from downtown airport, and he no more got off the ground and got about 300, 400 feet, then he lost an engine. He came to the point where he tried to balance out. Let me tell you, a single-engine plane is tough enough to fly. They say, "Well, if you have a two-engine plane, then if you lose one engine, you have another one." I always look at it the other way: if you have two engines, then you have twice the chance one of them is going to go wrong. That is how I look at it.

He lost an engine. When you lose an engine on a twin-engine plane, you have to revert all the trim and everything over to the other engine. You cannot balance it out anymore because you lost one. So you have to get everything over here, and you have to—it is fine if you have 20,000 feet and you have lots of room to maneuver. He only had about 600, 800 feet. He crashed, and he burned, and he and his girlfriends and whoever in there all got killed.

They did an investigation on it. These were the findings: they said he was killed not so much because of the engine. The engine failure was survivable. He got killed because of pilot error, that he did not follow a procedure that he was taught that goes against everything that you would think in flying a plane. They said that when you lose an engine like that, what you have to do—and the engine was kicking gas and smoking and spitting and sputtering from the witnesses—they said what you have to do is ram the throttles forward, and you have to put it into a nosedive to pick up speed. Then when you do that, at a certain speed, you will be able to pick up lift, and you will be able to come back around and land it. He said it is the scariest procedure you will ever find in your life. Most pilots cannot do it simply because in their mind, they think that is a suicide thing.

My point is this: in radical situations in life, sometimes you have to make radical maneuvers. Sometimes you let it go so long, so far, that all you can do is ram the throttles forward and put it into a nosedive and pull out before you hit the ground. The longer you wait to solve your problems, the bigger the turnaround in solving them. You need to understand that is true also with your kids.

I believe after last week there is no question in your mind that there are some things out there that want to hurt your child. I believe today that parents are basically afraid for their children, and that is not a bad thing. Protecting your child is a good thing. But there are a lot of things and a lot of people out there that will hurt your child.

It is hardly a week goes by anymore in a paper or on the news that some little child is not abducted. I cannot think of anything that has got to be more terrible or more heart-rending to a parent than having your child abducted. They just walk out on the front porch and somebody scoops them up. You take your eyes off of them for one second and they are gone. Fourth of July, we had a little girl that just walked out in the alley to watch the fireworks. Some guy drove up in a van and scooped her up and was gone, and they found her dead a couple of days later. Terrible thing. Absolutely terrible. Parents are afraid of that. Parents are afraid of that.

I think molesting a little child—I do not know where you feel on it. I do not really care this morning. The bottom line is if you molest a child, you ought to be taken out and shot. That is my

feeling on it. You ought to be taken out and shot. I mean, I cannot think of anything more despicable than a grown man or whoever coming to the place where you abduct a child, you take it in terror from its family, and then you perform some kind of sexual acts on it. I just cannot even get to that point. I just cannot even get there. It is an absolute ludicrous thing.

We just saw last week when the Roman Catholic Church settled out of court for \$660 million. Over 500 children molested by priests. It did not tell you that in the last 20 years, the payout of the Roman Catholic Church for molestation within their own church was \$50 billion. It is rampant everywhere. Terrible.

There used to be a time where the two safest places for your children were in the mother's womb and in church. That no longer exists. Now they are ripped from the womb with abortion, and the church has molested your children. It seems like there is no safe place on planet Earth for you as a Christian with your child. We know that is not true, but it seems that way.

I even had parents come to me, and they were honest in this. They said, "I do not know if we even want to have kids, bring them into this world." I understand that on one hand, but that is not a reality in life. The Bible says the word "occupy till He comes." You should go on with your life simply by this: because you have the Bible and the Word of God and God Himself that will protect you. The greatest protection for your child is the Word of God and the principles of the Word of God. There is no question about that. But I understand your fears.

I understand in your own homes the violence, the sexual exploitation on TV, in the video games, even to the place where they are taking children's video games and then planning porno movies into it that your child can get the right key in there, and you think he is watching whatever, and he is watching something else. Incredible. Absolutely incredible.

Then parents worry about drug abuse. When I was growing up, nobody did. Who did drugs in high school when we were growing up? The idiots. Nobody did drugs. Now they are doing drugs when they are eight or nine years old. The evil day has been moved forward.

Teen pregnancy. When I was in high school, this was 1968. I know that sounds like the Stone Dark Ages to you. It was not that long ago. Teen pregnancy was a shameful, unheard of thing. Today it is commonplace. It is just the way society is. Parents are worried about alcohol. They are worried about teen pregnancy. They are worried about drugs. They are worried about all of these things. On top of that, all of the peer pressure.

But I need to tell you this morning, and this is where I want to get to, without a doubt, in spite of all of those things, the most terrible, tragic, damning influence that will ever, and probably in 90% of the cases of children today, will destroy your child and make that child just exactly what the devil wants. It will not be the drugs. It will not be the alcohol. It will not be teen pregnancy. It will not be some abductor, some molester. Very bottom line, it will be you as a parent. You are the worst. You can be your child's greatest nightmare or your child's best asset.

*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

I watched one time over at one of the sports places. They had the—I am not into archery. I mean, I like Robin Hood, but I am not into archery. I watched this guy over at one of these sports places. He was the world champion in archery. He could take a bow and arrow, and he could hit that thing. He even split an arrow, supposedly like Robin Hood did.

I thought to myself while I was watching that, this verse came to mind. Just as a man can train himself and get down the art of archery to such a degree that he can take a bow and arrow and hit the target every time, the Bible says that as arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. You launch your children. You, sir. You, ma'am. You launch your children to one of two targets in life, and they will hit it based on your ability as a parent. They will hit the target of heaven, or they will hit the target of hell. It will never be in between. They are either going to heaven or they are going to hell when they die. There is no la-la land in between. You, not your molester, not your child abductor, not some Roman Catholic priest, not some Baptist preacher, you are the ones who will launch that child and hit that target based on the absolute, infallible Word of God that says, "As arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are children of the youth." You launch them in life. You and you alone will hit the bullseye.

J. Frank Norris was a great guy. I have to preface this. I am glad we have all the visitors here today. I am so happy you are here. But I wish you would come next week. Please do not take that wrong. Because this is going to be a hard message today. This is going to be a tough message.

My people know me. Some of these people have been with me for 25, 26, 30 years. They know my heart. Most of the people in here have been with me for the last two, three years. They know my heart. They know what I have to say today, I have to say. They will take it because they know me. They know that I have their best interest at heart. They know that I love them. They know that there is nothing more important in my life outside my family than them. They know that I would do anything for them, and I do all the time, day or night, 24/7, with their children. They will tell you I make every birthday party. I go to everything. I try to be a vital part so they can take this because in their lives I have earned the right to say what I have to say today.

All you new people, you do not know me. I am probably going to scare the fire out of you this morning. Let me just say this to you: I am really not the three-headed ogre that I appear to be today. I am really a nice guy. I am not my wife. But I have to say some things that I have to say today because you are never going to get the right perspective. You are never going to get the right perspective in the right context if I do not lay this thing out as it is.

I talked about J. Frank Norris. J. Frank Norris was a great guy. You will find people that like him and people that do not like him. I have studied his life intently simply because what we know as fundamentalism today started with J. Frank Norris. There is not a fundamental church in this city that is not Southern Baptist that has separated out and calls themselves a fundamental church that does not trace their roots back to J. Frank Norris. You know that because we have talked about that before.

J. Frank Norris is the one guy who stood up to the whole system back in the 20s when the whole system went to hell in a handbag and the seminaries were teaching evolution in the schools,

teaching their seminary students the Bible was not true, that Adam and Eve were a fable, there was no flood. He stood up, and single-handedly he was some kind of guy.

Now, I do not agree with everything he did. He was accused many, many times of being a sensationalist. They said J. Frank Norris will do anything to get a crowd. That may or may not be true. I did not know the guy, but I know this: I know that sometimes you have to do some erratic things, some radical things just to wake people up.

I do not know how many people I have had saved in my ministry over the years that the first time they heard me speak, they hated my guts. I am like a wart, I will grow on you. Sometimes you have to get mad at me before you listen. Sometimes you have to get so mad you walk out that door, slam that door, and say, "I am never going back." Then in the process of the next couple of weeks, next couple of months, God's Spirit works on you, and you come back, and now you and I are best friends.

J. Frank Norris one time, he was a crazy guy back in prohibition. He was preaching against all the illegal whiskey. Down in Dallas-Fort Worth, in Texas, prohibition was a wide-open thing. J. Frank Norris was preaching against all the liquorheads who were running the speakeasies. He is down there in the twenties, and there was one district attorney. This guy was plugged in and connected to the booze. He took a stand against J. Frank Norris, and he was corrupt and he was being paid off.

The thing was this: when they arrested these guys for bootlegging, they went in before the prosecutor, and the prosecutor would find some way either to drop the charges or give them a slap on the wrist. J. Frank Norris knew it. J. Frank Norris had no problem getting up on his pulpit on Sunday morning and talking about the 10 most wicked men in the mayor's office and preaching on it on Sunday morning, naming names and passing out telephone numbers. He was something else.

This guy called him out, and this guy made innuendos that if J. Frank Norris did not shut his mouth, J. Frank Norris might have a terrible accident along the way in the next couple of months. That did not move J. Frank Norris. It did not move God either, by the way. The next Saturday night, this guy, drunk as a skunk with all of his party girls and all of his old cronies, was speeding down the road in the middle of Dallas and turned around the corner and stepped on the gas, laughing and having a great time in life, and they hit head-on into a streetcar. Everybody was killed. Absolute total destruction. There were body parts lying everywhere. The cars exploded. They were thrown out of the cars, and it was just an absolute travesty.

One of the Dallas police officers went to J. Frank Norris' church. While he was cleaning up the mess, he looked over on the curb, and there on the curb was a half a bottle of whiskey, broken off halfway, with a big hunk of human brains in it. He called J. Frank Norris and said, "You are not going to believe just what happened to this guy. And I found this." J. Frank Norris says, "Bring it Sunday morning." He took that half-broken bottle of whiskey with that prosecuting attorney's brains in it and set it on the pulpit and preached, "The wages of sin is death."

Now, what is wrong with this country fundamentally in Christian churches? There is nobody that has got the guts to stand up and say that kind of stuff and do it. That is the problem. If you want the average Baptist preacher, and you want a similarity of what he is like, just go down here to Hy-Vee or Quick Trip and go over in the little cake section, and it will be Twinkies, Ho-Hos, and Ding Dongs. That is the average pastor today.

Now I am not saying what I am about to say this morning to be sensational. I do not know if J. Frank Norris was. I know what: he got his point across, and sometimes it takes something that graphic for men and women to wake up out there and say, "Yeah, the wages of sin is death." You betcha it is. I am not sure if he was a sensationalist or he just knew when God gave him a great object lesson to use.

Every time I preach a funeral, I have one text I preach a funeral out of. It is over there in Ecclesiastes chapter 7. It says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting." I will take that verse and I will say, "Why it is better—and none of us want to be here today—but why it is better to be here in this funeral today than it is to be at your house having a good time at the party and watching the Super Bowl? Because the verse says, "This is the end of all living, and the living will lay it to his heart." You have the greatest object lesson of any funeral that brings everybody back to the point of reality: you are going to die someday.

You go through the obituary, you find time after time, "So-and-so died. We are going to have a celebration of his life." "Oh, so-and-so died. Come and celebrate her life with us." Whatever happened to the fact of just getting up and celebrating somebody's death? The Bible says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Why do we want to talk about the celebration of life, but we do not want to talk about the death?

Let me tell you something. If some of you people die and I preach your funeral, it will be one duck-down, drag-out, and I promise you that I will preach the truth, and I will give it out, and we will get the honor and glory out of your death that needs to come forth. We will not talk about how nice you were. We will not talk about your life. People will say, "This guy was a rotten sinner, and God saved him, and he is in heaven today because he trusted Christ." What a great object lesson that is. Of course, we cannot do that today. We just cannot do that today.

#### IV. The Destructive Forces: Pride and Selfishness

There are two things in your life that I want to talk about this morning that are going to probably destroy your family, probably your marriage, and certainly your children. In the Bible, you have the study of two men. There are a lot of men, but two men in particular, and these two men are both parents. They both have wives, and they both have wives with children. Yet you also see that through their lives, they not only destroy their own lives, but the lives of their children.

The two things that destroy their lives, and each man has a different characteristic that we are going to talk about:

1. The first characteristic that a guy has is pride.
2. The second characteristic is selfishness.

I want to talk about these things today because I am going to tell you something. I am going to tell you right now, and I love you with all my heart, and you visitors, I already told you through that spiel what a nice guy I am. But I have the brains sitting on the thing this morning, and I just have to tell you like it is. The thing that is going to send your kid to hell is your pride and your selfishness. The thing that is going to break the spiritual line of Christ in your family is your pride and your selfishness. I want to talk about these two guys in just a moment, but before we do, there is a principle that you have to get down.

*The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*

That is a great verse, but it is also a terrible verse. When you start to understand this great principle, there are some things you have got to know. First of all, in your Bible, there are seven laws. These seven laws, and we have studied them before as we come through our system of sevens, are seven absolute laws in your Bible. These laws are non-negotiable. By these laws, everything on planet Earth, not only physically but spiritually, operates. These laws are in operation 24/7. These laws never cease. These laws are absolute and constant. These seven laws never change. By these seven laws, the stars shine, the Earth rotates, the sun goes through its deal, and the moon does its deal. All the physical and all the spiritual properties of science, metaphysics, whatever you want to take, come back down to these seven. In other words, when God made everything, and He did, He put it running by seven absolute laws.

Man constantly is trying to get around those laws. Man cannot stop those laws. In reality, he cannot get around those laws. It is like this: we have in our world something called the law of gravity. It did not take Isaac Newton and the Leaning Tower of Pisa to figure that out, but he is credited with that. He took a big ball, a little ball up there, and he hung them up there, and he found that things of different weight, they fall at the same speed. The law of gravity, we could go on and impress you with my terminology of great terms, but the bottom line is, it means this: what goes up must come down.

From a Bible stance, there is something in this universe that wants to keep pulling you down. If you know anything about the Bible, you know that hell is in the center of the Earth. There is some unseen force that continually wants to pull you down. In fact, it is so prevalent that years ago when somebody got a body when it died, they were called an undertaker. There is something that wants to take you under. Now today I got saved, I cheated the undertaker, I got me an upper taker. So death has no more sting for me. The undertaker will not get this body, but the upper taker is going to get what is real. But there is something in this world that wants to pull you down. We call it the law of gravity. That is an absolute law, an absolute law.

When you go down to KCI International Airport, you get in an airplane. That pilot taxis down the end of the runway. He has got a plane that weighs probably 20,000 pounds, 50,000 pounds. He puts his flaps in a certain position. He gets a long enough runway. He gets his engine fired up. He releases the brakes. He starts to roll down that runway. Now, the law of gravity is still in effect. When he hits a certain airspeed for that plane, given its weight, with the flaps and

everything in the right position, the law of gravity temporarily ceases to exist, and the law of aerodynamics takes over. That big old plane—I mean, they keep making them bigger and bigger and bigger. They weigh thousands of tons. That old thing will rumble down there, and pretty soon it lifts off that thing. It is like, what has happened? The law of gravity has been overridden with the law of aerodynamics. Does that mean the law of gravity ceases to exist? No. It just means temporarily everything else has taken it over.

Your life is a lot like that. Your life with your children. Your individual life, how you conduct your affairs, is like that. When you become a pilot, you have a great education, you have a master's degree from MIT, and you have four or five years in the Navy flying the jets, and you are very self-confident. You run that big old jet down the runway and pull back on that stick, and that baby flies up, and you have got 60 million pounds of thrust coming out of those engines, and you bank that thing up, and you look down, you just have to have some kind of feeling like, "I am in control. Wow, look at me. I am a pilot. I just lifted this plane off."

I used to fly with a guy, and he used to go back and forth to places, and he said, "Oh, I will teach you how to fly." Well, he taught me how to fly. I am flying down there, and I am getting the hang of it, and I am flying there, and I will tell you what, I decided that I—it happens. I thought, "I am in control." So I am pulling back in this thing, giving it up there. He is sitting over there watching me, and I am banking left. There is this big tower, and I am flying a circle around it. He says, "Pull it up and get some altitude." I pulled it up and got some altitude, and I am thinking to myself, "Man, this is incredible." About that time, he says, "Look over there." I looked out there and I said, "What?" He said, "We still have to shut an engine off." I looked at him, and he just smiled. He said, "Now what are you going to do?"

In my mind, I was invincible. In my mind, I was like your dog looking out the window with his ears as you drive. "Look at me, I am flying." I had actually thought in my mind that I had gotten so good with all this power and man-made technology that I had overcome the law of gravity. In reality, when the engine went off, I was headed for a crash. It is a man's illusion that you can overcome gravity, just like it is an illusion that your life can get outside the principles of these seven laws and you can be successful. Temporarily, it will look good. You will make a lot of money. You will have a lot of friends. You will have a lot of this, have a lot of that. You actually think you are in charge now of your own destiny until you run out of gas or the engine quits, and then you crash.

Look at the movie stars: Anna Nicole, what a lifestyle until her engine ran out of gas. Marilyn Monroe, wow, what a dish until her engine ran out of gas. You could get endless lists of men and women who seemingly have it all, and they give the illusion, the appearance, "I have overcome the laws of God." No, God just reaches over and shuts off the key, and down you come.

These laws automatically come into your life. When you do not do what is right, three of these laws start to come into play in your life.

3. The first one is the law of human collapse. The law of human collapse is taught in the book of Judges. It is the worst book in the Bible, showing man in his worst state, because the concept of Judges is man doing his own thing.

4. The second law is the law of sowing and reaping. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
5. The third principle—four of these laws are for the universe and for physical things, three of them are for you and for me—and the last one is the law of God's perspective. That will be Isaiah 55:10-11. You look at things one way, God sees them another way.

Those three things, when you start to get into your world that you really can overcome God and you are going to live your life the way you want to, there is going to be an automatic progression, and the Bible says that progression in the book of Numbers goes on, "the iniquity of God to the third and fourth generation."

Look at America. Look at America in 1907 compared to 2007. America now has been almost 120 years without a Bible. They took your Bible in 1888 down in Sarasota, Florida. They replaced it with a piece of trash, and now this country has dumped God's Word systematically, and look at where this country is at today, spiritually speaking. It is an absolute mess.

What is sin today? Compare sin in 1907 to sin today. There is no sin today. I am in dire straits of being put out of work, brother, because I have nothing left to preach anymore. As far as the world comes in, nothing is sin anymore. It has gotten worse as time went on.

Look at our country and its government. Our government cannot even pass anything now. They fight about this. They fight about this. They are so caught up with who they are and the power they have, they cannot get one piece of legislation through that means anything. The longer you wait to do what is right, and once you start to go down that road where you are going to disobey the laws of God, that thing begins to come into your life. I am telling you this: where you are spiritually good or bad, your children will be less than you are, and their children will be less than them. It runs down. It is the law of human collapse. We call it the law of entropy in college circles. It is the first and second law of thermodynamics. If things left on themselves in a random state do not run up, they run down. In technical terms, your watch runs down, not up. When you enter into this, unless God keeps injecting Himself into man, into your family, into your life, you start a spiral that comes into your life, goes into your family, that goes down, and the iniquity of God gets visited to the third and fourth generation.

Now you can break that anytime you want by just doing right. But we do not. Why? Pride and selfishness. We think just like the pilot that because you think you are in control and the engines are humming and you are off the ground and you are flying a plane, you beat the laws of God. You have not beat anything. You have not beat anything.

I read a book about JFK Jr. I will show you how this works. We all know JFK was the president, whether you like him or not is immaterial. But JFK was a womanizer. He had women stashed everywhere from the time he was in the Navy right on up. It is an open book now. Nobody has to hide it anymore. But he had a lawless lifestyle that he did whatever he wanted to do with every woman he found. Now they just came out with a book on his boy, JFK Jr. His issue was, they said in that book, that his old man liked the women, but JFK Jr. liked transsexuals and transvestites. It just got a little lower down the rung. It got a little farther down. It got a little more into the mess. That is exactly what it does. It does spiral. You drink, they will become drug

addicts. It goes down. Whatever you are, Romans chapter 1 says, the progression of sin is down, not up.

I have a pastor friend of mine in New York. This guy is a nice guy, but he should have gotten out of ministry a long time ago. He does not know anything about the Bible. He has got the standard party line mindset. He had two or three kids, and he raised those kids up in his mindset that had nothing to do with the Bible. Now his own kids, who are now in their 20s and their 30s, will not come to church, will not go to church anywhere. They saw the fallacy of his pride and his selfishness, even though he was in the ministry. They saw the fake of it, and they saw how it was not real. Now they will not even go to church. They have got kids now, and now their kids not only will not even go to church, they do not even believe there is a God anymore. Each generation gets worse until you stop and get honest with God and break it. You have to break it. You have to break it.

My advice to you is clearly this. My advice to you, do you really think—now I am talking to Christians now—do you really think that God Almighty is going to allow you to get saved, allow you to take His grace? I mean, look at the verse. The verse said, "The Lord is longsuffering, of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression." God is a loving God. He is a good God. He is a forgiving God. Do you actually think God is going to allow you or me to take His goodness, to take His grace, and to get saved, and then just thumb your nose at God and go live your own life? Do you really think a holy God is going to put up with that? If you think that, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." There is absolute law.

## V. The Illusion of Control: The Ant Farm

My advice for you? Go buy an ant farm. The wisest man that ever lived said in Proverbs 6:6:

*Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:*

When I was a kid, I had an ant farm. Somebody gave it to me on my birthday. It was one of those ones that was a square like this. You took it out of the box, you put the dirt in, and then you had ants, you had water, and the ants came alive, and you put them in there. You could actually watch the ants work. Ants are incredible animals. I have a pretty good-sized backyard. Years ago, when I saw that verse, I figured it was good enough for Solomon and good enough for me. He said, "Study the ants." All the time I will walk out there and hide the dogs out or something about this spot. Then I will watch all the ants in my yard.

Have you ever seen how they build? You realize that ants are incredible societies. They have queens. They have worker ants. They have army ants. They are just like us. They communicate back and forth. When they build their little chambers, they build them so when it rains, they will not get flooded out. They are incredible little architects, and they love picnics.

I am out there, and I am watching what they are doing. You realize that the longest battle between two ants ever recorded by two scientists, two ants, two army ants from two different armies—one was a red ant, one was a black ant. I guess one was Russian and one was whatever.

They fought. They fought for 48 hours without stopping. That is tough for your little ant. They just walked in battle, man.

I walk out of my yard, and they build these grandiose castles. I look at those things, and the architecture is incredible. They build them up. I will walk up there and I will just... Next day I will come out, they build it back. I kept a running record one time. I am coming over to get you guys, and I have been working on them enough. 44 days in a row one time. 44 days in a row I destroyed their nest or their little castle or whatever it was. The next day it was built back again.

I came to the conclusion why the wisest man in the world wanted me to study ants. Because ants are like a lot of you. Those ants think that that is their land. It is not their land, it is my land. I pay for it every month. I watched those little ants in my ant farm. They were oblivious to this big eyeballed face looking at them. They thought that ant farm was theirs. Those ants in my backyard, they have no concept that I am the man who owns that land, and I say when your nest is there or not, and I will keep mashing it out, you keep working it. They keep saying to themselves, "How did that happen again?"

One day I grew up. I came to be a man. The ant farm ceased to be. One day my mom said, "You need to get rid of that. Those ants in there are crawling out the top. They are all over the place, and you need to get rid of that ant farm." So I walked into my room, and there was that ant farm that I had for five or six years. I picked that ant farm up. I walked out to the trash can, and I threw that ant farm away. It did not matter what one ant thought about it. The ant thought it was his ant farm, just like they think that they are nesting in my backyard. The bottom line is it is my land, and it was my ant farm. When I got tired of the ant farm, I just threw it away.

You think it is your world. You think it is what you want to do. It belongs to Him. One of these days He is going to tire of this whole world, and He is going to throw it in the trash can. You will have no say in it. You need to get your ant farm. You think it is your life. You think it is your world. You think it is your career. You think it is all about you. It is not. God saves you for one purpose. God has a plan. When He saves you, He wants you to be part of that plan. God is driving His bus on planet Earth, and you either get on the bus or the bus is going to run you over. It is an illusion in your mind that your great powers are going to overcome the natural laws by which God is doing His plan. He is going to run you over. One of these days, brother, God is going to reach over and shut that engine off, and you are going to run out of gas, and you are going to crash into this whole world, and it is going to destroy you, and you are going to wonder what happened to you. I am going to tell you right now, I am doing you the best favor anybody ever did you. It is His, not yours. You are in it. Play by His rules, or you are going to get run over. Get your ant farm. Get your ant farm.

The last couple of weeks I heard President Bush, and I am not political, so I do not care one way or the other, but I heard him on there, and he was making a big talk about the fact that he was going to—and this is another thing that proves my point. He said, "We have just allocated \$208 billion to bring peace to the Middle East. Now we are going to create a Palestinian state that lives side by side with a Jewish state in peace. And we have just allocated \$208 billion." Well, I have some news for you, George. In Galatians chapter 4, God said that is not going to work. It does

not matter how much money you put to it, how you delegate all the nations. God says those two nations will never get along. They are not going to get along, and Palestine is in Israel's land, and in the book of Galatians, God says kick them out. All the national policy of all the United Nations can say something different, and when God is ready to kick them out, He will turn this world upside down and kick them out. You have no say in it. I learned something a long time ago, brother. This is God's place. This is God's planet. He is running it the way He wants to, and we just think we are in charge.

## VI. Jephthah: The Danger of Pride

All right, now we have to get to our first guy here. Our first guy is over here in the book of Judges chapter 11. In Judges chapter 11, we have our first guy, and his name is Jephthah. Jephthah is a great guy, and if you read down through here—I am going to kind of shave some time this morning, you can read it on your own. I will make some reference to it here, but here is the bottom line. Here is what Jephthah does. Jephthah represents most Christians you find today. All my years in ministry, I have seen pastors that are just like Jephthah. I have seen deacons that are just like Jephthah. I have seen leaders in the churches that are just like Jephthah. I have seen men and women who call themselves Christians, parents who are just like Jephthah, and Jephthah is a parent. He has got a daughter. When you come down through this great study, it is a great study. Here is what happens.

The book of Judges is an incredible book, and Jephthah is one of the judges. It is called the book of Judges because there is a series of men who lead Israel, and they are called the judges, hence the book Judges. Jephthah is one of those judges. When Jephthah comes there, they are in trouble. The Ammonites are persecuting the nation of Israel. Nobody really likes Jephthah, but Jephthah is a guy who can get the job done. So they come to Jephthah and they say to him, "Hey, look, Jephthah, will you deliver us? Will you go smite our enemies?" Jephthah is a smart guy. He says, "Well, yeah, I will do it for you, but if you want me to do that, then you are going to have to make me your leader." They make a little deal.

Jephthah is a big old guy, and he walks out there. He likes to pretend he is spiritual. Then old Jephthah says to the Lord, "Lord, if You give me the victory today and You are with these Ammonites, Lord, I am going to give You as a sacrifice the first thing that I see when I come home." So he goes and he fights the battle. He wins over the Ammonites, and then big old tough Jephthah is coming home, and he is bragging about himself and God, bragging about all that God did with him. When he turns the corner of his house, guess who walks down the steps of his house? His only daughter. Jephthah takes his only daughter and he kills her as a sacrifice to God. Yes, he takes his only daughter, and people say all the time, if there is any question I get in the Bible, and any question you want to ask, it is this question: "How in the world could something like that happen?"

First of all, you are in the book of Judges. In Judges 17:6, it says:

*In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

Nobody was listening to God. Everybody was pretending they were spiritual, but nobody was going by what God said. It is a lot like today. We have a lot of Jephthahs today. They talk about God. They talk about the things of God. I like it like this: a lot of things in Christianity are Christian and they are spiritual. They are just not scriptural, nor are they biblical. Brother, there is a big difference between Christian and spiritual, and biblical and scriptural. A lot of difference between the two, and if you do not understand the difference between the two, you need to find out.

Jephthah is one of those guys who is spiritual. He talks about spiritual things. He just does it all in his own flesh. This is a great study. When we start to come down through here, we need to look at it. In old Jephthah, there is a picture of 99% of the parents you are going to find today. I have had people all my life, and they will say, "How in the world did that happen? How in the world would God let that happen? How in the world, I just cannot believe that God..." Oh man, God let all kinds of things happen. You are naive, are you not? Let me tell you something. God let six million Jews burn in the furnaces of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibor. God let men drown out there in the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean during World War II, starved to death, dehydrated by the sun. God let lots of things happen. It is kind of naive to say, "How in the world could God let a man kill his own daughter?" The same way He will let you kill your own spiritually. Because most parents are Jephthahs.

Now look at this. Here is your example of pride. First of all, when you go back to Judges 11:9, if you want to mark it down, you will find that as I said earlier, he says, "I will fight for you, but I want to be your head." He is only interested in the political. He likes power. We all like power, do we not? Most deacons in most churches, they want it because it is power. Most pastors want the power. People like power.

You have a big thing running around here today. Everybody is talking about spiritual gifts, spiritual gifts. Churches will give you your test to show you what your spiritual gift was. Let me tell you something about spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts in your Bible are the power of God. But there is more than just the spiritual gifts in the Bible. There is the fruit of the Spirit in the Bible. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of God. The gifts of the Spirit are the power of God. You cannot have the power of God without the character of God. In fact, this power of God comes through you getting the character of God first. Jephthah is a man just like most Christians. He wants the power, but he does not have the character. He is not operating by biblical principles. He is operating by what he wants. People say all the time, "Well, how can God let something like that happen?" It goes on all the time. In 35, 40 years of ministry, I have seen parents kill their children spiritually because they were just like Jephthah. I know you do not like it. I know you do not want to hear it, but the brains are on the pulpit this morning in a glass of booze. Look at it. Jephthah destroyed his daughter. Some of you are going to kill your child spiritually just like he took her out and killed her. Nobody wants to deal with that.

In fact, if you go to Bible college somewhere, they tell you, "Well, Jephthah really did not—" They just cannot buy it either. The standard teaching at Bible college is, "Well, he just did not—he did not kill his daughter. He killed a rooster." That is the standard teaching. I do not know what they do with the end of the verse down to the end of the chapter where it says that she went

out and bewailed her virginity for 30 days. I can just see a rooster bewailing his virginity for 30 days. Think about what the Bible says. No, he killed her just like some of you are going to kill yours.

Power out of control always leads to pride. Look at Judges 11:30-31. I love this. Here it comes.

*And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,*

*Then whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.*

I have to tell you, there is no place in the Bible where Jephthah was told to make that vow. But look how spiritual it sounds. Sounds great. Sounds pious. I can just see him walking out there. "Oh, Lord, if You deliver the enemy, the first thing I see..." God always keeps you accountable for what you say. He always will keep you accountable for what He says. He thinks He is Abraham. Remember back in Genesis chapter 22, 23, 24, 25, Abraham took Isaac, laid him on the altar, had the wood on his back, put him there, took a knife, and was going to plunge it into his chest, and God stopped his hand. God told him to do it back there in Genesis. God did not tell him to do it here.

Jephthah, he is Christian. He is spiritual. He is not too biblical. I love this. He comes home, Judges 11:34, bang! Right out the door comes his daughter. Look at Judges 11:34-36.

*And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.*

*And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.*

*And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.*

"Oh yeah, it is her fault, is it not?" It could not be Jephthah's fault. He is the man of God. Her fault. It could not be Jephthah's. He is the great spiritual leader. It is her fault. "Oh daughter, thou hast brought me very low." Yes, your fault for coming out the door. It could not be my fault for shooting my mouth off. It has to be your fault. "Oh look at this, and thou art one of them that trouble me." She is coming out the door singing praises to meet her daddy. This guy has no reality of what is going on in his world. He is caught up in his pride. He is caught up in what he wants to do and how big he is. When his little sweetheart girl came down those steps to meet him, and he shot his mouth off, he cannot say, "Oh God, I am sorry I was wrong." He cannot say, "Oh God, I made a mistake." He says, "It is your fault. It could not be mine. I am Jephthah." I love Judges 11:35: "And when it came to pass, he saw her, he rent his clothes, and he said, Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low. And thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have

opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back." Sure you can. I told you this morning, there is always something you can do.

Over in the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 4, it says that if you make a vow and you shoot your mouth off to a vow, you better keep that vow. But it also says in Leviticus 5:1-4, if you make a stupid vow, and it is not a vow to God, and it is a dumb vow, then if you get on your knees, tell God it was stupid, tell God it was wrong, and after He forgives you, He will release you from the vow. Jephthah would rather kill his daughter than to say, "I was wrong."

So she dies. Judges 11:37-40. What a thing. When I look at this thing, she says to him, "Father, okay, you opened your mouth, if that is the bottom line, and you do what you said to the Lord." I look at that girl and I think to myself, she did not argue with him. She did not say, "Dad, you are stupid, you are going to kill me?" This girl was obedient unto death. What potential she must have had to be something great for God if her dad would not have killed her because he was stupid. I look at your little kids down there, and I look at what potential they will have for God if they did not have you for parents. If they did not have somebody that was so prideful they could not say, "Well, I am wrong," always blaming them. Let me tell you something. Somebody said to me one time, "Well, that child has really caused some problems in my family." I said, "No, no, no, no. That child just revealed the problems already in your family. Children do not cause problems. Children just make manifest the problems that are already in your family." But oh no, we cannot go there. "It cannot be me. I am the perfect father. My name is Jephthah." Because of that pride, you killed that kid. I have seen 10,000 in my life just like it. He carried her out and he killed her. Some of God's people kill their kids every day. At the end of their lives, they wonder why their kids care nothing about God, care nothing about going to church, care nothing about this. I will tell you, it starts at the top. It starts with a pastor so busy doing everything he is supposed to be doing, he does not do things like this. "Oh, I know. Well, we are going to have brother so-and-so come in, he has got a great series on training." Hey, let me tell you something. Nobody has to be closer to your heart than your pastor. Nobody can say to you what I am saying to you this morning. I even feel bad. I am saying to some of you visitors, do not even pay like I am talking to you. I am talking to them. Next week you come back, come back. I will be so syrupy, I will be dripping sugar out the end of my mouth. But somebody put a bottle of brains on my pulpit this morning. Whether you care about it or not, I do not want to see your kid wind up in hell. I do not want to see that little picture that you have down there, that little child. I do not want to see him burning in hell someday because Mom and Dad were too proud to do what they have got to do.

Sometimes I feel like Jesus, when He talked to His disciples, He said to them, "I become your enemy because I tell you the truth."

## VII. Lot: The Danger of Selfishness

I will talk about the next guy. The next guy is over here in Genesis chapter 19. Let us look at him quickly. Here we have our other setup. Jephthah's wife did not say anything at all. I will tell you why. She is a typical wife that you find in most Baptist churches, that her husband tells her to shut up and he will tell her what to think. You find that all the time. She has no say in it. Big

tough Jephthah, he is the spiritual leader, and he leads his family. Yes, he led them right into hell. He killed his daughter.

In Genesis chapter 19, we have our other set of parents. This one here will be the story of Lot and his lovely wife.

*And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.*

I have to kind of set the story here, and I am saving a lot of time from reading all this because I can tell you this story, and you can put it together from there. The reality of the story goes back to the preceding chapter in Genesis 18. The Lord and two angels go down to see Abraham. They meet down here in Genesis chapter 18. That is a tremendous chapter and a tremendous study. It is a great picture of the fellowship that you ought to have with the Lord. The Lord and two angels go down in Genesis 18, and they meet with Abraham. They have a great time. In the process, God tells Abraham, "Hey, I am going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah." That place was wicked. Abraham gets all nervous because his nephew Lot was down in Sodom. So he starts to—what a great study this is on prayer—he starts to go through and to work out with God so God will not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because he wants to save Lot. God says, "Okay, I am going to get Lot out." So in Genesis 19 now, I want you to see this. Genesis 19 says, "And there came two angels to Sodom." The Lord did not go down to Sodom. I want you to hear me when I said the Lord did not go down to Sodom. In fact, in Genesis 18:22, the Bible says when the two angels left, the Lord stayed yet with Abraham.

Lot is a picture of a child of God who God has no fellowship with whatsoever. In fact, the Bible says in 2 Peter 2:7, talking about Lot, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." Where Jephthah was a picture of your pride, Lot will be a picture of you and I, my selfishness, of the things we want versus the things of God. Boy, he is a great picture of it. He is a picture of a saved man, just the opposite of Jephthah. Lot is all about him. Lot is all about his lifestyle. Lot is all about what he wants. Lot, like Jephthah, has forgotten, they have lost their ant farm. They think that it is not God's plan, it is their plan. They actually believe that they can live this kind of lifestyle. They do not understand that the cycle has already started, and God is going to visit the iniquity on the third and fourth generations because they will not stop and do what is right. Do not find yourself in that circumstance today.

Now look at his value system. Look down here at Genesis 19:2-8.

*And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.*

*And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.*

*But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:*

*And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.*

*And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,*

*And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.*

*Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.*

What a value system. The first thing I want you to see is those two angels go down to Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah is faggot city. I know we do not like the word "fag" today or the word "faggot." To me, it is a very biblical word. Do you know what a faggot is besides a queer? A faggot is a stick you used to put in bundles to start fires with. They get called faggots because back in the early days when they were still preaching the Bible, somebody said, "You are a bunch of faggots," meaning you are going to be clustered together by God when He comes by, He is going to stoke the fires of hell with you faggots. That is where it comes from. I like that. Now you cannot preach that today. Well, you cannot anywhere else maybe but here, but that is where it comes from.

I know it is a big generous world out there today, and I know you turn on the History Channel, and I know this: I know the latest great theological piece of information that came out just a number of months ago was the fact that God did destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, but He destroyed it not because of the homosexuality, because that is an alternative lifestyle and you are born that way, yes? No, He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because they did not have hospitality. That is the new teaching now. The only thing dumber than the guys that put that out are the people who buy it. Sodom and Gomorrah.

The first thing I see is that the angels, knowing what Sodom and Gomorrah is, would rather stay in the streets than stay in his house. Something must have been going on in there. I wonder what satellite channels he had. What did they have on his laptop? Down around Genesis 19:4, the word gets out. Some new men in town. In Genesis 19:5, they show up, and they are beating on the door. "Hey, Lot! Hey, Lot! Where are these men? Bring them out that we may know them." I have to tell you, they were not saying, "Hi, my name is Joe, I am from Sodom. Well, your name is Ralph, good to see you. Well, your name is Mary." That is not how they wanted to know them. "Hi, your name is Beth, my name is Bob. Welcome to Sodom, good morning." That is not what they wanted. The "know" there is the sexually explicit intimacy of knowing them. In other words, they wanted to rape them. They wanted these men for their own sexual pleasure. Lot went out the door, Genesis 19:6, and shut the door. He did not want anybody to hear what he said. When he comes down here, Genesis 19:7, he says, "I pray unto you, brethren!" Lot has been in Sodom too long. He thinks these guys are... and then his value system. "Hey, do not do this terrible thing. Do not do this terrible thing to these men. I will give you my two daughters. And you do with them as is good in your eyes." What a value system. Yet, that is the same thing I see God's people do with their children to the world. "Here, world, take them. Do whatever you want

to do with them. I am not too bad. I do not do this or I do not do that. But world, here, take my kids, do whatever you want to do with them." Some value system he had.

I want you to see something, keep that in mind. "Take my two daughters." That is exactly what some of you have done by your own actions and your own lifestyle. "Here, world, take my child." We get so busy flying the plane, do we not? We get so unbelievably into ourselves because we think we are in control, and we now have overcome the laws of God, that you are the exception to the rule. "Yeah, you can do whatever you want to do, and your child will turn out okay." You are wrong. That starts with you.

I remember years ago. We just think the kids do not see. We just think they do not know about all the beer in the refrigerator. We just think we do not know that it is marijuana you are smoking at home. We just do not think that they understand. I remember years ago. My two girls were real little. We had some people over from church. The kids would always play around, and they were probably five or six years old. We were playing around there, having a good time, and it was about six o'clock, and they always go to bed at nine. We wanted to play some games and have some fun, but you could not do that with little kids around. Nine o'clock, church was the next day. We did not want to stay up real late. So Dad gets the idea. "See me, Dad, that is what I will do. I will divert the child's attention." It is now 7:30. "I will set the clock ahead an hour, and it will be 8:30." Remember that, Barbie? Remember when you told me to do that? So, Jephthah, while the kids are not looking, walks over to the clock, turns it an hour and 20 minutes ahead, whatever I did. But it only just beat me up on the street. That damaged me, that hurt me, but I needed that because I was under the illusion that I had them fooled. You do not fool them at all. They are like a sponge. They suck up everything they see. Why do you think every child psychologist out there tells you by the time your kid is four years old, they have got every character trait already established in their life for the rest of their life? Because they are like sponges. They are like vacuum cleaners. What they are picking up right now on your life is not the right thing. Your value system is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong. You actually think that they do not see.

Now look at Genesis 19:14. All right, here is where you are at right now. Here is where it is going to be. This is where some of you are going to be someday if you are not already there. Finally Lot gets it. Finally Lot says, "Oh, He is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah." The Bible says in Genesis 19:14 that he has got some other daughters and sons-in-law. He has got two daughters that are virgins. Then he has got some more daughters with sons-in-law living in a little condominium down the road. When he finally gets the fact that he has woken up and now God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he runs down to his kids in a little condominium and he says, "Hey, boys and girls, God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. We have got to get out." The Bible says they looked at him and listened to him as one that mocked. They said, "What? Lot, you got a message from God? Anybody but you, Lot, you got—God told you what? God told you, Lot, you, who are brethren with all the queers, God told you, gave you the message. Thanks, Lot, but no thanks." He did not even have enough power over his own children. He lost them. He lost them. He lost them.

I want to tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, and here is the brains on the pulpit this morning. You better get this. Those sons and daughters-in-law, when God sent the fire down, it burned them up, and they got burned alive in Sodom and Gomorrah because they had a parent who played with God, thought he had overcome the laws of God, thought he could get away with it. God thought he was the exception to the rule and vexed his filthy flesh with a filthy conversation in this world. His boys and girls died in the fire of Sodom, and some of yours are going to burn in the fires of hell if you do not get your head out of the ground. That evil day is on the way.

Look at Genesis 19:16-20.

*And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.*

*And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.*

*And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:*

*Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:*

*Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.*

He says, "Lord, get out of town." Look what Lot says. "Oh, no, no, no, no, Lord, that is not the way it is." I have never met one of these people in my life that all their life, they did not get the situation they are in because they think no more about it when God does, when they do not know anything about it. Here God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. God is telling them, "Get out," and Lot says, "Oh, no, no, no, no, Lord, that is not the way it is going to work."

Look what he says. Here is the real issue. Genesis 19:19-20: "Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life: and I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil take me, and I die. Behold now, this city is near to flee to, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither." Hey, his own kids are about to die in Sodom. Millions of people are going to die in Sodom, and all he can see is "me." "Let me escape thither. I cannot die. I am going to die." His own family is going to be dead. Everybody else in Sodom is going to be dead, and all he can see through his selfish eyes is himself.

Look at his wife. What a sweetheart she is. Genesis 19:24-26.

*Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;*

*And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

*But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

She is not only behind them, lingering behind them, she keeps looking back at Sodom. "Oh, my new house. Oh, the camper we just bought. Oh, the pool is going to get so full of that brimstone. Oh, the ladies' garden society. Oh, this, oh, that." It made no difference to her that she just lost her kids and lost everything she had. The Bible says there is a final act of God's judgment. She looked behind and looked behind and turned into a pillar of salt.

I taught in Sunday school one time years ago, six-year-olds—I love six-year-olds. I was telling this story about Lot. I said, "Boys and girls, I want to tell you the story of Lot and his wife. Now Lot was a bad man, he was hooked up with the world. Boys and girls, you do not ever want to get like that. You always want to love God." They are nodding their heads. I said, "Now let me tell you. Here is what happened. Lot did not want to leave, and his wife did not want to leave. Lot leaves out there, and he is trying to get out. Lot is a very selfish man. The Bible says that Lot's wife, she is behind him. The Bible says that Lot's wife looked behind and turned into a pillar of salt. What a terrible thing." I said, "What do you think about that, kids? She looked behind and turned into a pillar of salt." A little kid in the front row raised his hand. I said, "Yeah, Johnny, what?" He said, "Oh, that is nothing, preacher. My mother was driving down the street today. She looked behind and turned into a telephone pole." I said, "That is not what I am talking about, Johnny."

A great principle here, folks. It is a great principle in dealing with people in their lives. It is a great principle for you this morning. No matter where you are at, whether you have got kids or not. Do you know what the principle is? The problem was not getting Lot and his wife out of Sodom; it was getting Sodom out of Lot and his wife.

Changing geographical locations will never solve your problems. You have to identify your problems, and you have to deal with them, and you have to realize that you are responsible for them. You have to realize that in your family, when you started to do wrong, that automatic law to the third and fourth generation begins to come into effect. You can break it any time you want. You can stop it any time you want, but thinking that you are going to overcome it, thinking that you are going to do something, get somewhere in life, make enough money, have a better job where you are going to cancel that law out! Ludicrous. Just like Lot lost his kids and Jephthah lost his, you are going to lose yours. You are going to lose yours.

Now, I want to see this, and then I am done. Look at Genesis 19:30.

*And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.*

*And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:*

*Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.*

*And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.*

*And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, This night I lay with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.*

*And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him, and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.*

*Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.*

*And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.*

*And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.*

The first thing I want you to see is this: he transferred his value system right into them. The one daughter says, "Oh, there is no men out there to raise up a child." That is a rationalization. That is not true. The world was full of men out there. That is situation ethics. That is what her daddy taught her. Where her daddy said, "Oh, do not do anything to these men. Take my two daughters," he had instilled his value system or lack of value system into them. Now in a cave, they say absolutely not. They just lost their mother. Not an hour before this time, they lost their mother, and they have no grief whatsoever. Now they are worried about their seed and have incest with their own father. Some value system, Pop. Some value system, sir. Some value system, Mom. Very good.

Yet when you look at this, notice it is Moab and Ammon. Two of the nations that become Israel's enemy all the way down through the rest of the Bible. What is going on in the Middle East today in 2007 is a mixture of all those races, including Ammon and Moab, who are mingled in with the Iraqis and Iranians today. They are Israel's problem today, just like they were in the Old Testament. It starts with a man and his wife getting away from the Word of God, putting a bad value system, and that generation goes on and on and on right down to 2007. When the Antichrist finally goes against the nation of Israel, go back to the Old Testament and start the nations. It is Ammon and Moab that are with him. Pride and selfishness. I am done.

## VIII. Conclusion and Call to Action

Years ago, when I was a young guy, there was a guy that I worked with who was a blind man who was a pastor. I kind of hung out with this guy, and I learned very quickly I could learn a lot from him. He would get all of the funerals that came into the church that nobody wanted to do. But he had such a way about him that it was an incredible situation. He always had something to say that I learned from.

I remember, it was a time, it was a Chiefs football game. It was back in the late 70s. A guy went to the Chiefs football game and got killed because somebody hit him in the head with a thermos. In fact, it was after that that you could not bring any thermos into the ballpark. He actually killed him. They called us, and this pastor was going to do his funeral. He is blind, so he asked me if I would take him and bring him back. I said, "Sure." I always liked going with him because I always learned some things.

I knew that this guy that had just been killed was unsaved. He was a troublemaker. He was a member of a motorcycle gang, and he was a real bad dude. Somebody killed him. I will never forget this as long as I live. I thought to myself, "I want to see how he handles this." Because someday I am going to have to preach a funeral for somebody that everybody knows is lost. I want to learn from this because you have to be careful with those scenarios. He has got his mother, he has got his father, he has got his aunt and his uncle. Everybody is here, and this guy is lost. I know he cannot get up there and pretend he is in heaven because you just do not do that when you tell the truth. You have to find a way to say it without saying it in the wrong way. That is tough.

I will never forget it as long as I live. To this day, I took him up to the thing up there like in the funeral homes, and everybody was sitting there about where you are at. The place was full. He cannot see. I leaned over him and I said, "Place is packed. Good luck." He leaned over to me and said, "How is the guy looking in the casket?" I said, "He looks dead." "No," he says, "he has got his motorcycle colors on, and there are a lot of big motorcycle guys here. So whatever you say, if you say anything wrong, you walked here with a cab or took a bus. I am not your friend any longer. Good luck."

His family was all sitting in the right front row, and they are all crying and wailing. It does not mean anything that afterwards we are all going to have a big beer bash over there, and he is over there, and they are all going to get smashed out of their mind. Right now they are all crying. He comes up to that thing, and he pauses for a moment, and he is blind. He put his hands down here, and the mic was right here. He says, "I have been asked to do this funeral today." He says, "I do not really know what to say. So let me start by saying this, because there is probably somebody out here that does not know the Lord as your own personal Savior, and you need to know that there is nothing that we can really do for this guy. But let me just tell you this: if you folks had wept for him on your knees when he was a little boy, we probably would not be weeping for him right now." I thought to myself, I have never heard it said truer than that.

There is always a method to my madness. I told you guys last week to put a little picture of that child in your Bible. Some of you did, some of you did not. Why some of you did not? The same reason you will not follow this thing all the way down the line. You got too busy to do it, did you not? Some of you husbands let your wife put it in. Oh no, you are Jephthah, you will not put it in. Let her do it. That translates out to me: when we start doing this thing, you will let her do it, and you will not do it. It is a simple little thing, is it not? There is no simple little thing when it comes to your child. If I had told you to bring a piece of your child's clothing and put it on a stick and hold it up, you should have done it. You know me well enough to know me that I am not just saying it to be saying it. If I tell you to do it, there is a reason for it.

Every Sunday I do not want to just tell this, this is about your children. I want to lay those kids out before God. God is so busy doing your own thing this week, it just slips your mind, and you will be the same parents that will not follow this thing through because it is not really you either. I am going to tell you something, kids. I am talking to my people now. Your children's souls are on the line in that room down there, and you better get your head out of the ground or wherever it is at, and you better realize that I am going to tell you something. Some of you husbands and wives ought to have a hell of a fight on the way home today. You say I should not talk like that. Oh, the word "hell" is used 53 times in the Bible. It is a good Bible word. You have just been using it the wrong way. Yes, you ought to have a hell of a fight. What is the hell of a fight over? It is about your little kid going to hell down there. It is a hell of a fight.

Did you ever read back with Moses and Zipporah his wife back there when God told big Moses, the big-time man? Remember him? Circumcised his children, and he did not do it? When God was coming to kill his children, and his wife went in at the last minute and circumcised the kid and brought the foreskin out and threw them down at the nose of his feet and said, "A bloody husband now art thou to me." They had a hell of a fight. What was the hell of a fight about? Your kid was going to go to hell, and your child is going to go to hell, my friend, if you two do not get together on this. It is not about you. It is not about her. It is not about your own life. Those kids did not have to be brought into this world. Those kids were brought in by you and your wife through a union, and you better look at the responsibility God has given you.

You are either going to be a Jephthah or you are going to be a Lot. You are going to transfer what you have in your life to them one way or the other, and it is going to be less than what you have. If you have a standard that is less than what God wants you to have, and you do not keep injecting God into your family, and you keep bringing it around, and you let me work with you, and you let these people work with you, and you let us help you, you in this world today are going to lose your child. It will not be through a molester. It will not be through some abduction. It will not be through drugs of their own taking. It will not be through somebody else doing it. It will be because you as a parent failed in your responsibility because of your selfishness and because of your pride.

I am going to tell you, some of you this morning need to mark a spot on this floor. Some of you need to get on your knees before God this morning. I have never given an invitation in all the years we have had here. People have gotten saved, but I cannot see just giving an altar call for the same people. I taught you to deal with it. Today, let me tell you something. If there is something in your heart in your life as a husband and wife, you better nail that thing down. You will be better off to have your hell of a fight up here than on the way home. Settle this thing right here and make sure that you are going to do what you have got to do for your child.

At the same time, every head bowed and every eye closed. At the same time, maybe you are here this morning, and you are not saved. If you are here this morning and you have no idea of what I was talking about, you just know that if you died right now, you do not know that you would go to heaven. Hey, I want to talk to you for just a second before we move on through this thing. If you are here this morning, and right now, if you died, if you do not know that you would go to heaven to spend any time with the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever you had to say, you