

## I. The Importance of Biblical Principles

I told you that I wanted to take a little exodus from Romans 8 in particular, even though it still goes right along with it, and talk about the importance of biblical principles in your life. We started that last week, and I began to show you that every week we are going to get a little more into it. I showed you how to identify them, how to find them, and then what we are going to be talking about throughout all of our classes, no matter where we are at, is how to apply them. So far, we have a very good foundation, if you are following along with it, of key information to better know how the Bible principles work in your life.

One of the things I think that probably, and I do not know of anything we have ever done, that I have gotten more reaction from than the biblical principles. All week long, Thursday night, people have talked to me and asked me and showed me things that they have seen. I showed you how absolutely crucial and how absolutely important the biblical principles are in our lives. I showed you that when you follow them, and remember, this is going to be key to the whole thing we go through.

I talked to you about the four or five things that following biblical principles do in your life for you that makes your life less complicated. Let us face it. If you live in America today and you have a family and you have a job and you are married and you have all of the things that go on in the issues of life, some decisions are always going to have to be made. There is probably never going to be a time that you do not have some situation. Sometimes it will be a problem. Sometimes it maybe will not be a problem. It will just be a decision that has to be made. Sometimes there will be issues that you have to make as far as a father with your family. Sometimes as a mother you are going to have to make decisions, but they are going to have to be made.

I showed you what biblical principles, when you learn them and once you follow them, what they do for you. This is absolutely vital, and I will probably talk about these over and over again so you will get them down.

1. It simplifies any issue. Any issues that we have to deal with, if they are dealing with your children or you are dealing with things in your own life, they seem very complicated and at times they can be very confusing. But the Bible says that God is not the author of confusion. God has made a way to simplify any issue that you have to deal with, and the way that He does that is by biblical principles. Why is that? Because biblical principles take the guesswork out of anything you are dealing with. You do not have a big X-factor unknown. Biblical principles will show you clearly and will limit the guesswork or completely take it out of the way of anything that you have got to do with the decision that you have got to make.
2. It removes our emotions out of it. As a parent many times dealing with your children, the things that you have to deal with, many times parents make a terrible mistake. That terrible

mistake is that they operate out of emotions and they make decisions based on their emotions because of the fact that that is the way that they operate. That is a very dangerous way to do things. What biblical principles do is not only will they tell you exactly how you need to deal with any given situation with your children or whatever, but they also will take the emotion out of the way that you do not have to rely on your emotions. As we talked about last week, one of the greatest verses in Proverbs says,

*Proverbs 25:28*

*He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*

Your emotions and my emotions are the biggest problems we have. As parents, as husbands, as wives, as human beings who get our emotions involved, making decisions based on grabbing at a straw, an emotional outpouring of, "I have got to do something." Doing nothing when you do not know what to do is the best thing you can do until you get a clear biblical principle on it.

3. Biblical principles in any given circumstances take the friends and the family out of it. Many times we feel peer pressure by our families, but many scenarios where, and I gave you a great example of a friend of mine down in Florida, many times where there was a right thing to do, but because the family was connected in it emotionally and because it was somebody in their particular family, they overrode the biblical principles, and you cannot ever do that. You have to stick with the book, know what it says. No matter what, we cannot pick and choose what principles we want to use.
4. It takes you and me out of it. The last thing I want to do is make major decisions about my life on my own. The first 20 years of my life, I saw how that went. Some of God's people never get past that, and that is a tragedy.

I guess the two words that using biblical principles do in these areas here do for you are they bring into two key words that every Christian ought to have in their life: discernment and discretion. Discernment and discretion, we know from the book of Proverbs, is what we get when we put God's principles in our lives. The only way you and I are 100% sure of any circumstance we find ourselves in, the only way we know 100% for sure that it is God and not you and me, is by dealing with biblical principles because they take all of us out of it in the areas that we looked at. It is God's only way that He works. It is His more sure word of prophecy, as the Bible says in 2 Peter 1:19.

*2 Peter 1:19*

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

I told you that as far as a church is concerned, real biblical leadership is the ability to, and this is how I look at it, I really do not care how much you know about the Bible. You may be able to answer every question on Thursday night and you may know who the Antichrist is and the date of the rapture and everything in between. But that is, in my mind, not what makes a strong Christian leader. A strong Christian leader is somebody who has the ability to make hard decisions based on biblical principles when issues in their life face them when there is an easy

way out. I have seen many, many parents not be able to do that with their children. I have seen them not be able to do that with their family. I have seen them not be able to do that with spiritual issues in their own personal lives.

## II. Formats of Biblical Principles

I showed you that biblical principles come in three formats:

5. Whole books of the Bible
6. Passages or stories in the Bible
7. Standalone verses

I gave you a great principle. In fact, we have used this throughout the week, and it was Proverbs 20:18 where it said,

*Proverbs 20:18*

*Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.*

You ought to have a biblical principle for everything you do in your life to keep you between the white lines so you do not mess it up. Of course, the obvious question is how do you learn biblical principles? That is what our study is all about. The best way on how to do that is, I have broken it down into five areas.

Last week we began to talk about our own Christian life, and we will finish that up today. Then we are going to talk about principles in dealing with people because we all have to deal with people. Then we are going to deal with principles in relationships. Many of you want a husband or you want a wife. Many of you in time want to have a family, and there is nothing wrong with that. But there are certain principles that if your number one goal is to give honor and glory to the Lord in your life, then there are certain principles that you have to follow. Because if you do not follow those principles, that is never going to happen. So we are going to deal in relationships. Then we are going to deal with principles dealing with ministry. Then we are going to be dealing with general principles in all areas of our lives, and we are going to just try to give you a complete understanding of how all that works.

So far we have looked at a couple broad examples. I showed you the plight of America and showed you how easy it is to understand what is going on in our own country when you just use biblical principles. Then we talked about in your own Christian life how to know God. I showed you how the idea is that God is some complex being up there that we can never attain to have a relationship with. Therefore, because of that mindset, we never have one with Him. But in reality, I showed you how God has relegated Himself into seven basic principles. You take these seven principles, and we gave them to you last week, and you learn them, you will know God. You take those seven things and exhaustively study them through the Bible, learn every attribute about them, you will know God. Then if you want to be like God, you take those same seven principles and you become those. You put them into your own life.

### III. Principle vs. Promise

A question arose last week, and Sevelya asked me this, and it is a great question. I love it when you help me clarify things and you bring things up. Several people asked me last week after last week's message, "Okay, what is the difference now between a principle and a promise?" That is a legitimate question because you hear me talk a lot about promises in the Bible. I talk about you should have a book of promises, and you hear me talk a lot about principles. So the honest question is, what is the difference between a principle and a promise? That is an excellent question. Let me explain it to you as we go on.

You are going to find that there are certain verses in the Bible that go specifically to you. There is something that God gives you that means something to you personally. We call those promises. Listen very carefully what I am about to say because here lies the key. All promises in the Bible are principles. All promises in the Bible that you have in your little book or in your heart, wherever you got them, all promises will be principles. But here is the key: not all principles are promises. See how it works?

I will give you an example. Last week I gave you Philippians 4:19, a great principle and a great promise.

*Philippians 4:19*

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

That is a principle. It is a true statement. The Bible is built on that, but it is also a promise, something that you can take into your life. When we get over to Proverbs 9:1, here is an example of a principle, but it is not a promise.

*Proverbs 9:1*

*Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:*

It is said in that passage that wisdom has built herself on seven pillars. That is a principle, but it is not a promise. You are not going to put that into your life as a promise. I mean, I guess you could, but I would not think you would. I guess in essence, if you were, wherever you were, you could make anything a promise. But not all principles will fit into that category. One of them is directly to you. The other one is a general statement about truth and how it affects everything in life. So those are the kind of things you want to remember, and I enjoy when people ask me that because I think it really helps clarify things and gives you a better understanding.

### IV. The Book of Proverbs and the Christian Life

Last week we got into the Christian life. We talked about your relationship with God. I want to continue with that and show you a couple of more principles that you want to put into your life. Turn over to the book of Proverbs. I told you that Proverbs is like the book of Job. Proverbs is a book that the whole book shows you a format of how to put it into your life to be what God wants you to be. At the same time, Proverbs has individual stand-up verses and Proverbs has

passages. But I want to take it from a standpoint about your relationship with Christ and show you how these things work.

If there was one book in the Bible that if God would grant me a total recall where I could know it so well backwards and forwards that I would just have it memorized and apply it in my heart and life and everything that I do, I would not have to think twice about it, it would be the book of Proverbs. As far as I am concerned, everything else in the Bible runs back to a principle found in Proverbs. I think the key really, once you understand the seven things about God, Proverbs is as a stand-alone book. It is an incredible book as a book based on a principle of how it defines itself in your life.

Look at Proverbs 1. Look at the beginning of Proverbs 2. Look at the beginning of Proverbs 3. Look at the beginning of Proverbs 4. Look at the beginning of Proverbs 5. Look at the beginning of Proverbs 6. And look at the beginning of Proverbs 7. You see how it starts out? Every one of those chapters starts out, "My Son." One or two of them might say, "My Children" or "My Child" or something like that. But they all start out basically by the designation "My Son."

I am going to give you something in Proverbs that, and I am not expecting you to fully understand this today, but I am going to give you something that you want to keep in the back of your mind and then work on when you see these things. The outline of the book of Proverbs is really the outline and really the key as far as I am concerned to you becoming everything that God wants you to be. Because in Proverbs 1-7, he starts out those chapters saying, "My Son," because he is giving you and me personal instructions. This is incredible. Everything in Proverbs 1-7 is going to be about what the book of Proverbs will do for you once you understand it and get God's wisdom and God's understanding. It is an incredible seven chapters. That is why each chapter starts out with "My Son" or "My Little Children" or however it goes. It is directed directly at you and me.

You are going to find in those chapters, and we do not have time to go through them all, but it will be a great Thursday night. I told you we are going to do this tied into Thursday night with the questions you asked that you can help lay all this out. You are going to find that in the first seven chapters you find the format, a very basic biblical format of how to find God and get the wisdom of God. You are going to find the dangers that you and I need to understand and look out for. One of them is a strange man. The other one is a strange woman. You are going to find that those two characters represent something that you and I need to watch out for in life in the 21st century. They represent something for you and for me. You are going to find in there the two words that I told you to get: discretion and discernment. Proverbs 1-7, when he addresses you as his son or his child, shows you how to get those two. It is an incredible introduction to the book of Proverbs that basically says this, and I will put it in everyday language: "If you are my child and you want to have discretion and discernment, here is how you get it." In Proverbs 1-7, he shows you the intricate workings of how to do that. He shows you what you should expect out of the book of Proverbs.

When you get to Proverbs 8, those subject titles are not there anymore. You do not find them in Proverbs 8, you do not find them in Proverbs 9, you do not find them anywhere else in the book

of Proverbs from Proverbs 8-30. You know what you have? You have the one-liners, the standalone principles by which everything in life runs by. Every chapter is just, some of those verses in there will just make you sit down and take a deep breath because of the fact that they are so loaded. Some of them tie together. But if you want the wisdom of God and you want the understanding of God, of how God views everything in life, it is Proverbs 8-30. You see, the first seven chapters tell you how to get it, what you should look for, what you should watch out for. The middle section from Proverbs 8-30 tells you where they are at, gives them out in detail.

Then you come to Proverbs 31. Everybody knows what Proverbs 31 is, it is the virtuous woman. All the sermons we hear on Mother's Day about mothers being virtuous mothers. That is great, praise the Lord, I am happy for that. But there is more to it than that. Where Proverbs 1-7 shows you how to get it and Proverbs 8-30 shows you where it is at and lays it out for you, Proverbs 31 shows you the end result. The end result.

Somebody asked me a question this week, "Why in a book of Proverbs is wisdom always identified as a female?" She was hoping that my answer would be because women are smarter than men. Of course, I hated to disappoint her, that is not necessarily true, though women are very smart. But the bottom line is, the reason why wisdom is called a woman or a female gender in the book of Proverbs is because she represents the body of Christ, which is a virgin, which is female, which is the bride of Christ. So what we have in Proverbs, if you want to understand this, is a series of principles.

Both the book itself, the first seven chapters, are principled on how you get discretion and discernment. The second set, Proverbs 8-30, are the principles and the issues of life, one after the other. They are incredible. Then Proverbs 31 shows you the end result: you and me as the bride of Christ, getting the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, and the understanding of God, and through that becoming the virtuous woman. In that chapter, there are probably no less than two or three hundred basic principles of what happens in your life and my life once we get to that point. That is how the book of Proverbs lays itself out.

We are under the impression that the Christian life is so hard. We think, and we have been told this, we think it is so elusive, so unattainable, so confusing. A guy that used to come to church here, in and out for two or three years, finally pulled the plug and probably will never be back to church again. His reasoning for it was the fact he said, "I do not understand how you guys do this church thing. I do not understand how you just stay with it all the time and come there every Sunday and all those things." Of course, other than the operation that he had that removed his brain about 15 years ago, the answer is real simple. The reason why he cannot do those and you cannot do those is because he has got one foot in the world and one foot in Christianity, and you cannot survive that way with God.

If you are married and you have a husband and a wife that maybe do not get along, you can probably at some point come to a compromise and mediate the thing halfway in the middle. If you have friends, the famous quote, "We will agree to disagree." That is a nice, soft, nice thing. That is the lay of the sea in church. A guy said to me a couple of weeks ago, "Well, we will agree to disagree." I said, "I do not care if you agree with me or not. You are wrong because the

biblical principle lays it out this way." I am not mad at you. You are still my friend. But I cannot help it if you cannot follow the Bible through. A lot of things in life, you can work it out. Christians can agree to disagree, so to speak, and still get along. But I will tell you one place where you cannot do that, and that is in your relationship with God. You have a simple choice. The Bible says,

*Amos 3:3*

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

That is our basic problem. The Christian life is not hard. We just want the best of both worlds. We want to live like hell throughout the weekend and have a relationship with God. It will not work that way because how can two, you and the Holy Spirit of God, walk together except they be agreed? The Christian life is not confusing. It is not unattainable. It is not elusive. It is not even hard. Just as I showed you last week how America's plight is not hard to understand and how the concept of God is not hard to understand, the Bible principle is making it very easy, neither is the Christian life.

In my life when it comes to things in the Bible, and I have spent 35 years doing this, and I did it for me, not for anybody else. I just need it for myself. I know how the Bible, and I am not going to explain this very well, the Bible works down through levels of laying things out. For me, I have learned that if I want the bottom line definition of something, I have got to find where it is at the lowest common denominator. You know how you take a number and you can divide it by itself and you get down to the last number and you cannot divide it anymore? That is the way the Bible works. The Bible has a lot of things that it says. We define them in different ways and different scenarios, but the bottom line is if you work that principle down through the Bible, it will come to the lowest common denominator or what I call the defining point. What I have done, if you look at my Bible, is you will find that over the years what I have tried to do is, and I say it all the time, this is in 3rd Genite Bible study or in Sunday morning, this is the defining chapter on this subject. This is the defining verse. This will be the defining word. I mark those in my Bible because for me, getting to the lowest common denominator where I get the bottom line definition where there is no other layers below it.

You could take the Christian life and you could say, I will give you an example. You could say, "Give me the definition of the Christian life." Being like Christ. That is a good answer. But there are lots of levels under that. You have not defined that yet. You could even say, based on what I told you last week, you could even say, "Tell me what a relationship with God is." It is keeping those seven things. That is true, absolutely true. But even that is not the lowest common line yet. You could say, "Well, it is to find out in my life what God wants me to do and then do it." That is a great answer, but it is not the bottom line yet. Let me show you in the Christian life by the biblical principle, taking it down to the bottom principle and then showing you the principles in there, how to make your Christian life a lot easier.

I am going to tell you right now, I have already seen how this has changed some of you. I have already seen how this has changed your perspective on things. In just a short couple of weeks, we have done this. If you ever grasp what I am about to give you today, there will be no stopping

you. You know why you do not get the church thing? It is because you do not understand the bottom level of what Christianity really is. You think it is coming to church. You think it is loving God. You think it is tithing. You think it is this. You think it is that. All those things are important, but it is not the bottom line. I am going to give you the bottom line. The bottom line of what your life, the lowest common denominator, is one principle in the Bible. It is one word in the Bible. It is the word stewardship.

## V. The Principle of Stewardship

Do you know what stewardship is? I know what you have heard if you have been around most churches. It is how the preacher gets money out of you. That is what we use. We use stewardship bank. We use stewardship pledge card. We use this. We use that. Everything to put a double hour hammerlocker on you to give you to give, so we use stewardship. Let me define for you what stewardship is in the Bible. Here is stewardship. This is what your Christian life is. Bottom line. This is the bottom. You can add everything else on top of this, but there will be nothing underneath this. This is the bedrock definition of it.

When Christ went back to heaven, everything that He had, everything that God gave Him, everything that God wanted Christ to do and fulfill that He did not fulfill, everything that God gave His Son, you and I now became a steward of it. You know what a steward is? A steward is someone who has a billion trillion dollar business. He has assets in everything. He has money around the world. He has a conglomerate that does everything. He does not want to necessarily deal with it, so he gives it to a person and he says, "You know what? You take care of all of my stuff." You are going to find that they had stewards in the Bible. When a man was very rich and he had a lot of things that he was accountable for, he would pick one guy that he thought he could trust, and he would say, "You take charge of everything I have got." "What I want from you on a regular basis is an accounting. I want you to come in to me and say, 'Well, this over here, you made some money, you lost some here, you stayed the same here, you made a lot over here, and this is where everything is at. You got this, you got that, you got that.'" He did not have to deal with it. He gave it to somebody else to take care of what his stuff was, but there was going to come an accounting for it. That is, in a physical sense, what a steward did.

Now put that in a spiritual concept of being the Christian life. You know what God did? He put Jesus Christ inside of you. He put the Holy Spirit of God inside of you. He put all things under your feet and he gave you all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Then God took everything that he had, everything that he had, and he asked you to be in charge of his goods. You know what your problem is? You think you are a doctor today, or maybe you are a lawyer, or maybe you are a nurse, or maybe you are a fireman, or maybe you are a policeman, or maybe you are a factory worker, or maybe you are an architect, or maybe you are this, or maybe you are that. That is how you go through life. If I would ask you today, "What do you do? What are you? What do you do?" You would say to me, "Well, I am this or I am that, or I am this or I am that." But the truth of the matter is, you are none of those things. If you are saved this morning, you are a steward. It is just that simple.

You have all heard the old analogy that, "Okay, we are going to play firemen today. I am the fire chief, and we have got a big firehouse here. We have got a nice, shiny fire engine. So what are we going to do here? Well, I am going to give everybody a job. All right, Joy, you are going to drive the fire truck. Remember that. You are going to be in charge of the hoses. You are going to sit on the back and drive the back of it. Do you know how that thing goes? Are you with me this morning? Hello? Are you here? There is a truck in the back, okay? Now, Matt, you are going to be in charge. When we get off, you are going to get the hoses from her, and you are going to hook them up to the deal, okay? You are going to have the wrench that he needs to put that thing. Pam, what you are going to do is you are going to stand out there and get the traffic so nobody gets down and runs over the hoses, okay? Everybody know what their job is? Okay, what is your job? What is your job? What is your job? What is your job? What is your job? What is your job? What is your job? What is your job?" Nope. You are all wrong. You know what your job is? Your job is to put out fires. See how the thing works? Your job is to put out fires. The fact that you got another job that you have to do ties in to the whole overall job. Your job is to put out fires. Firemen, or in some cases, firepersons, politically correct. Your job is to put out fires. You may think you are an architect. You may think you are a lawyer. You may think you are this. You may think you are a doctor. You may think you are a nurse. You may think you are a factory worker. But in reality, you are a steward. Because God has given you everything that he has. Someday, at the judgment seat of Christ, you know what you are going to do as a steward? Yes, you are probably getting it now. You are going to give an account of your stewardship. See how easy it is?

As a Christian, life is just that simple. You have been given God's stuff. You ought to take care of his stuff for him. You know what the problem is? You do not even know what that stuff is. You know what the real issue is? You have got too much of your own stuff that you have not got time to take care of your stuff. That is the Christian life in a nutshell. It does not get any easier than that.

In the Bible, there are seven stewardships or seven principles of stewardship in the Bible that we need to be stewards of. Seven being the number of perfection.

8. Your house. This is the first time you find the word steward in the Bible, in Genesis 15. The story of Abraham and Eliezer. Eliezer was his steward. You are going to find that one of the reasons God picked Abraham to be the leader of the nation of Israel was because he had good command and rule of his house. The truth of the matter is you do not have stewardship in that one, you can forget the rest. So the first thing that you are a steward over is your house.
9. Your perspective of God. You find this in Luke 12:42. There is not one of these that has anything that says money in it. The second thing you and I in Luke 12:42 are to be over is our perspective of God. We are to be stewards of how we think and look at God. That is why I did Song of Solomon on New Year's Eve. I cannot think of a better book in the Bible that shows you your perspective that you can be a good steward.
10. Your time, your possessions, and in relationship to the Word of God. This is found in Luke 16:11. He talks about the riches of the world and the true riches. I just love the fact that the true riches in your Bible, the word true riches in your Bible, is found in Luke 16:11 because

the true riches you have in your lap come out of a 1611. The bottom line is this, if you cannot handle your own personal life, if you cannot manage your own budget, take care of your own family, take care of the balance of things out in the world that you live in, how in the world is he ever going to trust you with the true riches? You know why some of you will never learn the Bible? It is one word: undisciplined. You are not disciplined enough to do it. You know why you are not disciplined enough to do it? Because you are not disciplined in your own life to do the basic things of life of taking care of the things of this world that God has entrusted to you and just in the area of life. How in the world is he going to trust you with the Word of God?

11. The mysteries of God. This is found in 1 Corinthians 4:1. These represent the teachings of the Bible. In the mysteries of God, you will find that there are seven mysteries to the church and 12 to the nation of Israel, and they are basically the key to the whole Bible.
12. The manifold grace of God. This is found in 1 Peter 4:10.
13. Blamelessness. This is found in Titus 1:7. He says in Titus 1:7, "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." The book of Titus is the key book of the New Testament that shows you what a good steward should be. Have you ever tried to figure that out? As a pastor, you are to be blameless, and yet how does that work when a pastor gets blamed for everything? He gets blamed for the things that he does, but he also gets blamed for a lot of things that he does not do, and you will too as you go up that line and begin to get to the place where you start to deal with people as you grow through the Word of God.
14. The nation of Israel. This is found in Matthew 20:28, Romans 9, and Romans 11.

If you are faithful, if you take these seven principles of stewardship and understand that as a Christian you are accountable to God for these things. These are the seven things God left you with. These seven things encompass everything that he has, everything that he cares about, everything that he is.

Let me ask you a question. Let us say you have to go into the hospital and you are going to be in there for six months and you are going to be flat on your back and you have at home a couple of dogs, goldfish, parakeet, you have bills that come in every week, mail comes every day, you have a house that has to be taken care of and you are going to be flat on your back for six months and you come to me and you say, "Bob, I am in a bad situation. Would you help me?" I say, "I will do what I can do." You say, "You know what? I am going into the hospital next week and I am going to have an operation on my back and they say I am going to be down for six months. I have got my house, my dogs, my cats, my goldfish, my parakeet, all these things plus my house, my mail, my bills and I just, there is no way I can do it. Would you take care for that six months? Could I rely on you? I know it is a lot to ask but would you take all my stuff and manage it for me for that six months? I will pay you. I will do whatever you want to do. Would you just kind of, you know, whatever you want to do, you want to live in my house, you want to do this, you want to do that? I do not care. I just need somebody to manage my stuff for six months until I get out of the hospital and then I will take it back." I say, "Absolutely sure."

So six months goes by and you come home and I say, "Everything is fine. Took care of your house." I gave you the keys back. I said, "I will go in and show you here. You know, I made a

few little changes here but here is what we got." You say, "Where is the dog?" I said, "Oh, I got rid of them. Oh, they were just too much of a hassle. You know, nasty. Dog hair all over the thing. I felt like it would be easier just to not have them here and I would not have to clean as much. So I got rid of them." Then you walk upstairs and the goldfish is belly up in the bowl. "You know what? Must have been that ground hamburger I gave them." You walk into the bedroom and on your dresser over there, you had your little jewelry box and you had your grandmother's wedding ring with her wedding picture. You say, "What happened to this?" "I threw it out." You see, the problem is I never really thought what was valuable to you was invaluable to me. When you looked at your grandmother's wedding ring, you saw something that was irreplaceable. When you had that wedding picture of her and that gal when she was 20 years old with grandpa when he was 22 back in 1843, that was irreplaceable. You know what they say when a tornado falls or everything hits? They say, "Well, you know what? We got our photographs out." People like that. That is your link back to your heritage of people. But what if I came in and said, "Who is this old geezer? We do not need that. Well, look at this woman here. She is, we do not need her. What is this stuff here? I bet I could send that off to that place on a TV that you put a little bag and they go through and get you the gold and get \$4, \$500 out of it." So you send it off. You come back and you say, "What did you do?" The thing that I thought was absolutely invaluable, you threw it out as trash. You know why? Because to me it was invaluable. Now if I would have sat down with a list and said, "How about these rings?" "Oh no." "How about these pictures?" "Absolutely not." But I never took the time to find out what you held so dear in your heart and I just went in and trashed your stuff. Would you like it? Well, God does not like it. When you do not take the time to find out what is really personal and precious to him and you and I through our life when we are given the stewardship of it, we just trash his stuff. That is what we do. That is the Christian life.

Is that hard? Does that take theological thinking? Does that take philosophy? Does that take hours in prayer? No, because the Christian life in its lowest common denominator is about one thing. You are a steward of God's stuff. Someday you are going to give an account. There are seven principles in your Bible that show you what those are. Of course the problem that God's people have, they have been saved 10, 15 and 20 years. I mean, is there any, do not do this, but I am just, I throw these out as challenges. You have been saved 10 years or more. Anybody want to stand up and give me the bottom line definition of being a steward of the manifold grace of God? You see, you can talk about the grace of God and all those nice things, but in stewardship, the manifold grace of God is the lowest bottom common denominator on grace. The key word is manifold. I bet you know where it is at on your car. Just do not know where it is at in here. How about blamelessness? How do you be blameless when you get blamed for everything? What is the, how do you be a steward of being blameless? How does a bishop be blameless as the steward of God when every time there is a problem that somebody does not like, he gets blamed for it, whether he did it or did not? You see, this is the idea. This is the bottom line of the Christian life. You want to be a successful Christian? You find out who God is, seven principles. You want to be like him? You take those seven principles and put them in your life. You want to find God's purpose in your life and you want to understand what God wants you to do with your life, then understand first of all, you are a steward. You are not a fireman. You are not a policeman. You are not a doctor. You are not a nurse. You are not a factory worker. You are not a

secretary. You are not this. You are not that. You are a steward. You are a steward of God's stuff. Then you realize that there are seven things that you and I are going to give an account for, bottom line of stewardship.

## VI. Principles in Dealing with People

Now let us move into the next section. Let us talk about dealing with people. I showed you last week, or I told you last week, as you get wisdom and you get understanding, God promotes you. You get to the place, and there are many, many examples of this in the Bible. Timothy, in his own church, is a great example of it. How Paul and Barnabas got chosen to be missionaries is a great section on it. But you get promoted. You do not get to become the pastor's buddy. You do not give a lot of money. In some churches you do, but in a biblical New Testament church, your promotion or rising up through the ranks, so to speak, is based on how much wisdom and understanding you get by getting into the book and getting your life operating by principles. When you do that, you get promoted. God puts you in scenarios that bring you up on different levels. You have heard me say it for many, many times.

I want to say this to you, and I said this last week, and I am going to reiterate it again. Nothing grows you faster as a Christian when you are into the book and doing what is right. Nothing grows you faster as a Christian than getting you to the point when you are ready to work with people. I do not know of anything that does more for you, will get you promoted through the system faster, will get you the wisdom and understanding that you need. The reason for that is because you are working with what you have. You are not just taking it. A sponge is a great invention. You can take a sponge and you can just about mop up anything. But you know if you have done any sponge work, you know that you mop up so much and then pretty soon you just start pushing the water around. What do you have to do with that sponge to be able to take up more water? You have to take that sponge and wring it out. You are just like that as a Christian. You can sit around here Sunday morning, Thursday night and sop up everything I give you. But there comes to a point if God does not have some way of wringing it out of you, you are just going to be like a big old fat sponge full of water that is just floating at the top of the bucket. You cannot take any more in because you cannot, you have not put anything out. That is a simple illustration but that is exactly where God's people need to be. I do not know of anything that will get you to the point faster than working with people and dealing with their issues.

I am very careful who I put in. I test you thoroughly, I watch you. It is not a thing where you can be like that commercial for the transmission thing where a guy had a garden hose and squirt, he said, "I only wanted to fix the transmission." That is not what we are looking for. I watch you for a long time. I watch what you do with the Bible. I watch everything about you. But as you grow and you do the principles and you begin to have all these things in stewardship even though you may not have them all down because it is a working process, I understand that. But you begin to deal with people and help them maybe starting in discipleship and then moving on up or there are times that there are some of you in here that if I had a person that came in and had a need, I know I could pick up the phone and call you right now and I know that when I hung down the phone, you do it as good as I did it. That is what I am looking for. Really my goal is to have

everybody in the church at that point even though I know that that is not a reality of life today if ever there ever was. I know that is not going to happen. But that is what it needs to be. That is what it really is all about. It will be the greatest single thing you ever do as a child of God but at the same time it will be in many cases the most frustrating thing you ever do.

I have been in this business now for a long time. I have dealt with, I do not even know how many thousands of people in my life. I have come to this conclusion. You probably have to go through 10 people to keep one that is going to make it. You are going to find, and we are going to see why here in just a minute because these are principles that you need to know. I am not going to get into all of it because it does not affect all of you but you need to understand these things. You are going to find that you will find one person that you will find eight or nine people that will come in and they say they want to do what is right and then they just blow out after six or seven weeks or they are in or out or up and they are down. Then you will find out one little jewel. You will find out one little sweetheart gal, that one little guy who will just say, "You know what, tell me whatever you want me to do. If you want me to stand on my corner in my head over there for 40 hours a week, that is what I will do for God if that is what God wants me to do." Those are rare and they are like pearls and oysters. But when you find one, I will tell you this, and I am just speaking now out of my own heart, when you find one, they make all the goofy ones worthwhile. My point is this, working with people will be the greatest single thing you will ever do as a Christian, no question about it. But at the same time, in many cases, it will be very frustrating. You will have people who just very obvious that they do not want to do what the bottom line is.

Here is the bottom line. The ministry is people. The ministry is not this building. The ministry is people. We do not have a choir, but if we had a choir, which we never will, but if we ever had a choir, we talk about you need to be in the choir ministry. Choir is not a ministry. I am not saying they are not good, they are not nice to listen to, but you know what? You are the choir. Why should a select group of people up here sing so you can sit? You say, "Well, I like to listen to it." Well, listen to the person next to you. "Well, he is terrible." So what? I have a problem when you have to be wanting to be in a church choir. You have a tryout? The principle, and this is how simple it is, the principle says,

*Psalms 150:6*

*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

If you have to have a tryout to be in a choir, to sing before people, that is your problem. You are not singing before people, you are singing before God. John Hill is the worst singer I ever heard in my life. He sounds like two broken gears with six sprockets left out of it with a chain off the lap. When I stand next to him in the back, I have to move over because my ear hurts when he is done. But you know what John Hill does? John Hill to God sounds like pecky kakayake. He is the great opera singer. He sounds great. He sounds wonderful. You know why? Because his heart is the right place. He is singing out of his heart, even though out of his mouth it sounds like something dumb busted inside, the heart is right. I have a tough time. I mean, I have a, and I do not see, but I do not listen. If we, and we do not, but if we did, if we had somebody up here that just sang and murdered the song, but I knew that person was doing everything they could

because they loved God, I think it would be the greatest thing that ever happened. If I saw somebody laughing, I would tear you out the back and make Joe beat you up. Because a pastor cannot be a striker. Of course, if you get the Bible bottom of the tarponation, it means you get three strikes before he has to go out. But to me that would be everything. Because I do not look at how good it sounds. I do not look how professional it is. I think the better it sounds and the more professional it comes, the farther God gets away from it. The trap is that you can get trapped into that, that you think here are 12, 20, 30, 40 people up here who sing while everybody else sits out there and enjoys it. You ought to enjoy the person sitting next to you no matter how good or how bad they are because of the fact that it is coming from a heart that they want to let everything in half breath praise the Lord. So that is how it works. That is the principle on it. That is the principle. The ministry is people. It is not about things that we do. It is not about the ministry is people.

There are two principles that ministry and working with people are built on, and it is simply two verses. The first one is in Galatians 6:1, the second is Romans 15:1. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the only reason we exist. The bottom line of this church are these two basic principles right here.

*Galatians 6:1*

*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

*Romans 15:1*

*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

You know why that is the principles that any church should be built on? Because that is the principles that God saved you on. That is exactly what Christ did for me. He restored my fallen state, and then now that I am saved every day, he bears my burdens and infirmity through his strength. Now why in the world should a church ministry be different than his ministry does? But now we are operating on principles. Now you are getting it. The ministry is people. Your job and my job is to restore the fallen, either fallen images or Christians that have fallen in the sin, and then once we get them where we are at, we bear their infirmities and help them. Understanding that these two things are exactly what God did for you and me. That mindset is what makes a good minister. That mindset is always what I am looking for in a life of somebody who is going to work with me and people, because at the end of the day, that is the bottom line. Do not get caught up in what they have done, what they are doing, where they are at. Do not get into that. You look at, and I will teach you how to do the rest.

In dealing with people, you are getting into a world that is obviously not for the faint of heart, certainly not for a novice. I am very careful who I ever put to work with who, and if somebody ever says, "Well, I will disciple you," or somebody says, "Well, let me disciple you," and it does not come from me, but for your own sake of well-being, you better not have them to decipher you. Somebody just walks around saying, "Well, I will just disciple you, I will disciple you." You are liable to get the guy with the garden hose, thinks he can fix the transmission. But in dealing with people, you are dealing in a situation that is not for a novice. You have to deal with them

based on principles. I am telling you, in dealing with people, nowhere will be that great verse, Jeremiah 17:9, where it talks about the heart being deceitful, wicked and above all things ever come out than that.

*Jeremiah 17:9*

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

When I deal with people, I am going to give you some principles, and some of you that have worked with me and you are working with me, you know you have heard this principle, so you can check out, take a nap here for about five minutes. Whenever you work with people, and this may be people at work or people in this church or however you work, I always, first and foremost, and I have taken all these out of the Bible, I have got about 300 of them, and I have got, but I have got them, I have named them based on my knowledge and my name. There is no biblical attribute to the name other than the fact that is how I remember them.

*The Solomon Principle*

*Every time I work with a person, no matter who they may be, rule number one that I follow, the principle number one that I follow is called the Solomon principle. You will find the Solomon principle in 1 Kings 3. Let me tell you how this thing works, basically, real quickly. Solomon is on the throne. Two women come in to see him. You are probably familiar with the story. They have got a baby. The one woman says, "Well, this is my baby." The other woman says, "No, last night she had a baby, but last night she rolled over on hers, and she killed hers, and then she snuck over and took my baby, and she is saying it is hers, and this is mine." The other woman says, "No, it is my baby." The Bible is clear to tell you that Solomon, he is not, he does not know these ladies, and the Bible is also really good at telling you that both of them are harlots, so in bottom line is you cannot trust either one of them. But obviously, one of them is telling the truth, and one of them is lying. Of course, Solomon is faced with a dilemma. Sometimes in dealing with people, you are going to be faced with the same issue, only not with babies. You are going to have a situation where a husband or wife is going to come in, or you are going to have a situation where two people are going to come in. One is going to say it was this way, the other is going to say it was this way. You do not know either one of them. Half of my week sometimes is spent with people who do not even go to this church or somebody else recommends them to me, and they come over and say, "Now I want me," and I do not know them from Adam, and they will sit down there and wonder what will tell me their side of the story, they do not tell me their side of the story. I have no idea who is telling the truth. You are going to find yourself in scenarios like that, and this principle working everything in your life.*

You know what Solomon did? This is where the great wisdom of Solomon comes in. Solomon did not know who was telling the truth. He did not know whose baby it was. So what he did is he called for a sword, and he said, "Well, I do not know how to solve this, but I do know how to solve it. Let us just cut this baby in half, right down the middle. You take the top half, you take the bottom half, and you will both be happy." The moment he did that, the sword and the threat of killing that baby, you know what it did? It produced the real mother. The one that was not the mother said, "Ah, go ahead and cut it in half." The one who really was the mother said, "Go

ahead and give it to her," meaning, "I would rather her have my baby and be alive than lose my baby and you kill it." When Solomon saw that, he recognized immediately who was lying, who was telling the truth, and he took the baby and gave it to the rightful mother. The Bible says all of Israel wondered at the wisdom of Solomon.

I have got to be honest with you, when I first read that story years ago, I thought that was pretty goofy. I thought to myself, "What do they both say?" "Well, I did not cut him up." But the wisdom of Solomon was the fact that he knew human nature, and he knew no human mother would ever, real mother would ever let that happen. On top of that, the great principle for you and me, when you are dealing with people and you do not know who is telling you the truth, the greatest key was he brought in a sword. Because the sword, Hebrews 4, is a picture of the Word of God. When I have two people to come in and I do not know who is telling the truth, and I cannot say what I do is what Solomon did. I put them under the accountability of the Word of God, the sword. In time, the sword will always prove out who is telling the truth and who is not. You know why? Because the bottom line is, the book is principles. When somebody does not do, when somebody tells me one thing but there is something other than the Bible says, then I know just like the mother that said, "Go ahead and cut it in half." That is called the Solomon principle. We are going to build into this thing.

Along with that, and this is why you have got to have the Solomon principle, because here is the bottom line. When you start dealing with people, you are getting into human nature. Human nature is the most divisive, the most ungodly. I do not care how well you try to pamper it, clean it up, or whatever you try to do with it. You and I, until Jesus comes back, will always have our old sin nature. That old sin nature will all be ready, ready to go to take over everything in your life when you give it the green light. That is just true of everything in this life. You have to know that.

#### *Symptoms vs. Problems Principle*

*One of the things I found out on a principle in human nature, and this is taught all the way through the Bible, is this is why people do not stay with it when they come in and they start to get the help that they need. It is a principle of human nature that most people want to treat their symptoms, but they really do not want to solve their problems. They are like you and I. I had strep throat one time for six years and 16 months. You know why? I went to the doctor, he says, "You got strep throat. Here is some antibiotics that will knock it out." Well, you know what I do? I do like you do. I took about half the pills and I started feeling better. The pills did not taste good. So I quit taking the pills. Then I got sick again. Then I went back to the doctor again. He gave me some more pills. I did the same thing. It was two or three times before the doctor finally said, "Look, we are going to do this the rest of your life unless you take the medicine all the way to the end." You know what I wanted to do? I wanted to do what most God's people want to do when they find herself in a situation. I wanted to treat the symptoms, but I did not want to solve the problem because the concept of solving the problem did not taste good. It was making all your food taste different. Water tastes like it was out of the toilet. Food tastes like it was bland. Everything, and I really do not know what it tastes like out of the toilet, but that is just as good as something. Everything was bland. Everything was there. The sweet stuff tasted salty. The salty*

*stuff tasted sweet. It was just, and I just said to myself, "You know what? I am feeling better. I am okay. I am okay." That is what happens with people. That is why you have got to have the Solomon principle because people will want to spend the time solving their, treating their symptoms instead of solving their problems.*

Let me just say this to you. That is where the Bible principles never fit in because the Bible was not designed. The Bible was never designed to treat your symptoms. The Bible was designed, ladies and gentlemen, to solve your problems. When you have somebody, saved or lost, who does not want to solve the problem but only treat the symptom, you are going to find that they will enter into you into a mode of deception. The biggest problem you have as a person who is going to work with people, and I know that maybe most of you will not all get there. But if you, the biggest issue you are going to have is people trying to deceive you. I do not mean that they are trying to do it on purpose. Sometimes they do. The majority of time, I do not think they do. I think they are so caught up and there is such a pattern of human nature that they do not even understand that once you understand how human nature works, a little book of Proverbs and a book of Ecclesiastes, then you begin to see how it really goes. The problem is you will get, you will get, you will get one good one. You will get four or five that go along really well and then you will get one that you are not expecting. This is why it is tough because it is hard to keep your guard up. It is like being a police officer. He works a 12-hour shift. He makes, he works traffic. He pulls over 28 cars in one night. Everything is mundane. Gives him a ticket, writes him out. Some of them thank him. Some of them do not thank him. Some try to, but it is a deal. Then he goes to the 29th one, almost ready to go home and he walks up and after 28 just absolutely mundane when the 29th one puts a gun in his face and kills him. You know why? Because he let his guard down. He had 28 good ones in a row that were nothing. But the one that finally got him was the one that he was not expected because the first 28 put him in a mode of passiveness. You cannot ever do that when you are dealing with people. I do not suggest you do it as a police officer, but you cannot ever do it as a working with people. You always have got to be on your guard and always have got to be looking for things because the principles, the principles.

There are two stories or two principles in the Bible that show you all the details of how you can be deceived. I want you to see these. I call these the deception 101 and 102. This is the way that it goes. I mean, I do not know. It would be a lot easier to me if when God's people get out of fellowship, I think most churches just have to have without a fellowship section. You come in on Sunday, you sit over here, everybody knows what you got. Everybody over here is out of fellowship. "Well, good to have you here today, even though you are not hitting on all eight cylinders. Good to have you here." In the Old Testament, Leviticus, when they got leprosy, leprosy is a type of sin. They had to walk around the camp saying, "I am clean, I am clean." I would not suggest that if you are out of fellowship. But maybe we get name tags. "Hi, I am Bob. Not with it today. Good to have you here." To me, that would simplify the whole process. But you know what? That is not going to happen. So you have got to revert back to the principles and five of those principles. Of course, this is some great material here that if you are ever going to get it.

*The Jacob Principle (Deception 101)*

*In the first case study, you could turn back here if you want or you can just listen and go back. I am not going to get into a heavy detail on this, but I am going to tell you the story that I am going to show you what you want to look for. These are principles we are talking about now, principles in dealing with people. Because if you ever get to that point in your life, you are going to have to deal with them. Deception is part of the game. Being just part of the system. It really is. The first one I called is found in Genesis 27, and this would be the Jacob principle. We all know about Jacob. The word Jacob means schemer, supplanter. Jacob is a guy, he is a picture of a Christian as a matter of fact, who manipulates everything all of his life. He is a picture of a lot of God's people who all of his life, he is always trying to give God the credit for it, but he is always behind the scenes working it out. If he is any picture of a child of God who is saved but he is living in the flesh and always in control of his own life like so many of God's people, it is Jacob. But within his life forms a pattern for you and me, and this is why now God allowed these stories to be in the Bible. Paul told you in 1 Corinthians that the things in the Old Testament were for our own examples and our own samples. That we might learn from them. God knew that I was going to have to work with people. God knew that you were going to work with people, the ministry was going to be people, and when you start dealing with people, deception comes in. So he wants to give me some principles because dealing with people can look like it is very complicated, but it is not if you just follow the basic principle. First one is the Solomon Principle. Second one is the symptoms versus the problem principle.*

Now this story here, we know what happened. This is where Jacob schemes and puts together a deception to steal the blessing from Isaac, or from his brother, you may have to get it from Isaac. When you start reading down through here, here is what you find out, and we do not have time to get into all this, but here is what you find out. You will find that there is always a plan behind a deception, always will be. You will find that many deceptions will go to great detail to fool you. Then you find in this particular story that where he learned deception. He learned it from his mother. Here is a great principle. Most children who wind up being deceptive were taught that by their parents. Because it is Rebekah here who hears what Isaac says and then gets Jacob, who is her favorite one, and says, "Here is what we are going to do." You know what that tells me? In this story, it is a picture of a real woman taking her real son and telling her how to scheme out of Isaac. In a practical, principle mode, you know what you got? You go that everybody that ever schemed in their life learned from somebody else how to do it, and it is an ongoing process. What you have in the story there is a very, very, very picture to show you how this thing all unfolds itself.

Now Isaac got deceived in this deal. The thing that we want to ask ourselves in studying these great principles is how did he and why did he? The answer in a nutshell, and then we will go back and look at it, is that he did not follow biblical principles to the end. Let me show you in this story what to look for. When you start to read this story, and the story again is somebody deceiving Isaac. Now Isaac is going to represent me and you. It is kind of like the Solomon principle. Solomon did not know the two women. They came in with an issue. Isaac is almost blind. So this principle is going to show you when you are in a scenario that you do not see clearly, how do you keep from being deceived? I mean if you have got a blind man on the street corner and he is selling pencils for a dollar a piece, and you walk up and say, "Well, I like to get

two pencils," and you put two pieces of paper in about the size of dollars instead of not real dollars, you can deceive him. Of course he may be deceiving you and he may say, "Hey, that is not paper. Give me some money." That happens too. You know these guys standing on the street corner always begging for money, whatever the case may be? Now this is going to sound cruel to somebody, but I drive downtown. I watched one of them one time. He is down there, and even though they all work their shifts, you know, they are their street corners like a shift. I walk one guy down there, no food, no nothing, need help, cannot, going to die tomorrow, maybe today, something like that. Then, you know, we were parked at a light and the shift changed, I guess, because his buddy came up and he gave the buddy his sign, and then he starts walking away, and next thing I know he reaches in and flips out a cell phone and starts calling somebody. Now I am not being cruel in this, but this is the principle. I would not do this, but I would like to do this. If I did it, just like some of you will not misunderstand me, most people do not misunderstand, but it is the true principle. I would like to wind down the window and I would say, "Hey, you know what? If you ever get saved and God ever gives you and starts taking care of you and meeting your needs, there is a great restaurant we are going to down here that is really got some good stuff to eat." Because the bottom line is, a child of God will never be on a street corner like that. Because my God shall supply all of your what? Need. See that thing? That is a principle. That is how people get shamed. You give them money. I saw a report a while back that they said they ever got to do that and make something like \$22,000 a year. "What am I doing here? I mean, give me a break. I got a bad back. I can say wounded in Vietnam War and also in Civil War.

Let me show you what to look for. These are principles. Isaac is not sure. Isaac is not sure. If you read this story, you will find out that Isaac is not sure on what is going on. He is thinking something is up. But the Bible says he cannot see because he is blind or almost blind. Let me give you a principle. Turn over to Hebrews 4 for this. Here is this sword we talked about. My answer to that is, "So what?" When you cannot see what is going on, go to the book that sees when you cannot see. That is your first principle. I am going to show you this. Keeping in mind, he is about to be deceived. In this deception, he is not sure. He is not buying into this. The deception is a good one. They got to the place where that Esau was a hairy man. So he got a goat skin or whatever. It was hairy and put on him. He is doing everything he can. But because Isaac cannot see him. But Isaac has some questions in his mind. He is not sure. He is not sure. Well, there will be times in your life and my life when it is just like that. Let me show you what Isaac should have done that he did not do. If you do not do this and do not follow this principle in dealing with people under the principle of deception, you are going to get deceived just like Isaac did.

*Hebrews 4:12-13*

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

*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. There it is. There is your Solomon principle. He put them under the sword. The sword is the type of the Word of God. The Word of God always produced the answer. Now watch out what the Word of God does for you. There are only two things I am looking for in the last two things. The rest of them we are not even going to go through. But the last two things are what I want you to see. The last two things that the Word of God does for you when you cannot do it yourself. The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharp than any two-edged sword. Increasing even the dividing of thunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints of the marrow. Here it comes. And as a discernor of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifesting in sight. You know what the Word of God does for you when you cannot do it for yourself? It will discern the situation and then it will manifest the truth of that situation. So that is where Isaac failed. Isaac is not sure what is going on. But I want you to see what he was not sure about. I want you to see in the deception what you always want to look for. This is what the Bible will discern for you. It will always manifest for you if you just follow the principle. You can use this with your children. You can use this with your spouse. You can use this with any situation in life. You do not have to be a bona fide Christian worker to be able to use these things.

Two crucial things here in Genesis 27, and they are found in verse 22. The first deception had to do with the hands. The second thing is the voice. He had put a skin on. It was hairy. So his hands were the hands of Esau. But his voice was the voice of Jacob. This is what Isaac is confused about. This is what he is not sure about. This is where he is at. He is saying, "Everybody is saying, 'This is Isaac.' Excuse me. 'This is Esau. He has come to see you. Esau is here. Esau wants the birthright blessing. He wants this. He wants that. He is oh, he is him.'" But when he starts to get into the scenario, you know what he says? He says, "Well, your hands are the hands of Esau. But the voice is the voice of Jacob." Now you know what you got there? You have got two principles you never want to lose in sight of Hebrews 4. That is this. The hands will always represent what you do. The voice will always represent what you say. Using the Solomon principle and the principle that I gave you, always when you are dealing with any situation, see if what they say matches up with what they do. You see how that thing works? Just see if what they say. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Whatever you have inside will come out with what you do. If Isaac would have just pressed the issue a little farther, if he would have just taken a little bit farther, asked a few more questions, and not been satisfied with feeling the hands.

There is a third thing in here. Three in your, where seven in the Bible is a number of perfection. So God always manifests as in seven. There are seven stewardships, and that is the perfect Christian life and all that. Three in your Bible is a number of completion. So we got the hands, and we got the voice. Now let us get the third one. Genesis 27:27. This is where he does not smell right. If you ever hunt coyotes, you guys will like to hunt. Coyotes will smell you out. They will smell you long before they see you. I used to hunt coyotes. That is a big coyote hunter. In my rough and ready days, I did a lot of things. I was a professional snapping turtle trapper. My wife can bear this out. I paid for Kelly's Burke. We still lived in Ohio. We only, I only did not make very much money, and Dr. Bill was whatever it was for my baby being born, and I did not have any money. So I relied on my trapping skills. There was a restaurant in town that

specialized in frog legs and turtle soup. They could not get turtle soup or frog legs in any abundance. I was an old time turtle trapper, taught by the old turtle trappers of the old turtle trapping days, and I knew how to trap turtles. Snapping turtles. I mean, you are talking about, you are not talking about your little Ben and Gopher in your pen. I am talking about snapping turtles that big around. I am talking about snapping turtles. Their heads are that big. I am talking about snapping turtles that ever bite you. They will not let go. I mean, you can be, I mean, they are, they are, they are very dangerous. But I was getting four bucks a pound for their meat. I would bring them home. This is a true story. I would go out one day, I would get maybe 20 or 30 snapping turtles. You want a fun ride home, get 20 or 30 mad snapping turtles in the car with you. I put them in burlap bags, and I would put them out in the old dog pen we used to have out there, and I would squirt them down with water, and I would wait till I got about 30 or 40 of them, and then we would butcher them. One day, one of them got out of the bag and got in the garage. My mother had just moved, and she had, and is not this true, Barb? This is true. Yeah. She must have had 200 trash bags, and a big snap, and it was a big one. It was a big snapping turtle. I mean, this could be a great movie, Night of the Living Snapping Turtle. I am not kidding you, man. It got loose in the garage. Barb had to go out in the garage and go to work. I parked my car out front. She is scared to death to go in the garage because if you got real quiet and you just listen, you could hear that snapping turtle moving through those trash bags. Oh, yeah. Then you hear the doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo, you know? Have you ever heard them hiss? Oh, have you ever seen them mad? You know what? You think they cannot, they do not let their necks out long. In fact, that is the best part of eating a snap turtle neck. I will tell you what, and I will tell you, you are not going to believe this. I would cut their heads off, and what I would do is they got a fastening on the shell, and that is where the meat is inside the shell, and I would take a hacksaw, and I would start to cut that after I had cut his head off, and their hands are as big as mine, the paw, the claws. I mean, you talk about Bigfoot, I found him, man, I found him. Honest to goodness, I would take my hacksaw, now his head was cut off, I would take my hacksaw, and I would start to cut that, and he would reach up around with his clink and grab that hacksaw, so I could not cut it. A little bit later on, I found to get a big old pair of pruning shears, you are sticking them, and just flam right out. But you know how you catch them? They have keen senses of smell. I had a great production. I would stop on the way home and work every piece of roadkill I would pick up. I would go hunting groundhogs, and I loved to hunt groundhogs back then. I would shoot them and bring them home. I would put them in the freezer, down in the, we had a big stand up for you, put them in the freezer and get them solid. Then I would take them out after they were frozen solid, take an axe and cut them in section. You do not want to cut them when they are not solid. You cut them in section. Then I would put them in trash bag, double line them, and throw them up on the roof of the garage for about three days in the hot sun. You know why? Because the smellier it is, the better the turtles like it. You throw that bag in that net, in that thing with that meat rancid, and I do not care if that turtle is in St. Louis, he is coming for that thing. He will smell it through the water and be there in a heartbeat. When I used to hunt coyotes, coyotes would, I would see them out there, they would not come any closer. They would not, they would smell me. So I found an old boy. The old boys taught me not only the Bible, they taught me about snapping turtles, they taught me about hunting coyotes. One old boy said, "Well you need some coyote urine." The master-owned smell, because they do

not smell the coyote. I am saying to him, "How do you get them to hold still long enough to get the coyote urine? Excuse me, can I get a specimen of the Bible? I mean, what?" No, you are laughing. This is a true story. So he sold me some coyote urine concentrate. He had a coyote farm, and I got 55 gallons of little jar, and all you had to do was mix it with water. What I would do, you are laughing, but what I would do, I would take a Q-tip, see? And I would mix me up a little coyote urine, and I would put it down there, and I would put it right down in my boot laces on both shoes. I could go wherever I wanted to go, and all he could smell, wherever I walked, I smashed my scent with some really bad coyote urine scent. Boy, did my luck change. Boom, boom, boom, boom. I had a kamayo coyote come up and think, "Why are you trying to beg for a coyote?" Boom, yeah, I am. Smell you before you see them? Have you ever taken your dog out in a cold morning? My little Daisy, my little blonde lamb, first thing she does, we go out there, she puts her nose up, takes a big sniff. She wants to see if any danger is there, because when you smell, when you are keen in smelling, then as an animal, or a turtle, or whatever, you can find what you want and find the danger around you by just sniffing the air. Every child of God needs to develop your spiritual sniffer. Forget the coyote urine, but get a spiritual sniffer. We need to sell that in a bookstore, Rose, we are going to get some bottles of that back there. Sniff the wind.

There are three things that Isaac should have saw in a heartbeat. One was the voice. The voice did not match the hand. Then the third thing that the Bible gives you was, he says, "It smells like one guy, but it still talks like the other." You know how important that is? It is because we already studied this on the Song of Solomon, about the smell that comes off of a Christian, that is a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. Of the Christian and his relationship with God, the smell of perfume, anise, cinnamon, all of those outlaws, all of those things that just come into a beautiful smell of the represent the relationship between you and God. Smells are very important in the Bible. In this particular story right here, the three things did not line up. One, the hand did not match who they said he was. Two, the voice did not match. When you do not have the hands and the voice, the thing is going to stink. How many times have we said, "Something rotten in Denmark?" "Boy, that stinks." How many times I have walked away from situation or circumstance or something I have worked with in a counseling scenario and I say to myself, "Well, what do you think, Bob?" I would say, "Well, you know what I think? I think it sounds like Jacob, but it smelled like he saw something rotten here. Something is not right." You know why? Because when the principles do not line up in your life, you cannot hide that. You can hide everything in your life, but your true relationship with God. If somebody knows what they are looking for and knows how that those three things have to line up and knows how to watch what you say and watch with your hand and then sniff the wind, you have not got a chance. That is what God gave you and me to keep us from being deceived because people will deceive you.

### *The Gibeon Principle (Deception 102)*

*That is one on one. Here is one or two. This is called the Gibeon principle. This will be over in Joshua 9. The next deception principle is found, like I said, in Joshua 9. These two main principles and the stories in your Bible lay out all you need to know of keeping from being deceived. Both these guys are deceived. Not only was Isaac deceived, but you are going to see here that Joshua got deceived. What you got in Joshua 9, Genesis 27 is basically Amorish. He is*

*an amateur. Oh, he is a diskeeper, but his deception is not very good. You are going to find the sections come in two or three different models. Jacob is a representation of the first model. A lot of work went into it, but it is not very good. He left too many loops, too many openings, too many things that were too easy to discern. You are going to find people like that. Those are the easy ones. But every once in a while, ladies and gentlemen, listen to me, listen to me. You are working with people. Listen to me. Every once in a while, you are going to find a Gibeonite. Gibeonite is the best of the best. Gibeonite looks so good, sounds so good, even masks the smell. Must have got a tire. You are in the same place I did. And even smells good. Because here is a story that shows you the extreme position. Somebody that you work with that seems so good, so right on the money, so absolutely incredibly there. But in reality, it is a deception. Now, I do not give these kind to you, but certainly later you may run into one.*

Here is the story. This is called the Gibeon principle. You are going to find in Joshua 9 that all the nations hear that as Israel is coming through, they are just kicking a fire at everybody and killing everybody. The Gibeonites are connected with these nations. What they do not want to happen is they do not want to get caught up and get killed like all the other nations. So they go into a grand deception. They made themselves look like they traveled for a thousand of miles for 20 years. This deception has got some work to it. They got old worn out shoes. They got ragtag clothes. They even got moldy bread that the Bible says was fresh from their ovens the day they left, but they let it mold and looked like it was stale so they could give the deception that they have been traveling for six months, a year. "Our clothes were out. My shoes are gone. Look at our bread. It is all moldy." When in actuality it was a sham and a deception. Oh, yeah. This one is a good one. They got a great story to go with it. All deceptions have a great story. You notice what Jacob did when Jacob got the deceiving? You know what he did? He brought God into it. Because when you bring God in it, it is why, why, how, you know, somebody was somebody that did not do something and does not want to take responsibility for it. He said, "I swear by God, I did not do that." "Oh, okay. Well, that is it. We swear by God that we are good to go. Everybody." He was not him. Okay. Bringing God into it in their mind brings credibility to it. So you find that is what Jacob did. This is the story the Gibeonites got. They go on and on and on about how great we have heard your God is and oh, how wonderful he is and how you are great people of God. "We started out to find you. Oh, and we, we, we had new shoes and new clothes and all kinds of food. And, and now look at us. We are ragtag group because we are really trying to find God." It was a deception.

How do you survive in some way? How do you survive in something like that? In dealing with people, sometimes you are going to find a Gibeonite. I mean, it all looks good, but they made two vital mistakes. This is what you, these are the principles. Here is what you want to look for. Now, the first red flag is very subtle, but boy, I will tell you what. If you know people, you know, I follow a basic rule in dealing with people. I give everybody the benefit of the doubt. I follow the basic principle that Isaac did not follow and over there in Thessalonians where it says, "Prove all things." But I will give you, I will, no matter what I may think in my mind, I know that I am not going to get hurt by it because as long as I do what is right, you are not going to hurt me or the church any way, shape or form. So I do not really care. I realize that my job is to give everybody an opportunity and let you prove yourself. Do not even know I may think in my mind,

this does not look right. I will reserve judgment on that, put that in the back of my mind and just dismiss it and say, "You know what, everybody needs to get a fair shot because I do not have to worry about it because they will, they will reveal who they really are in time." That is just, that is the way I do it. I, you know, I kind of expect the worst and pray for the best, and sometimes it works out. Sometimes it does not. But you never take anything for granted.

When you come down through this story in Joshua 9:8-12, here is your first red flag. Joshua asked them two direct questions. The first question he asked is, "Who are you?" That is what Isaac asked Jacob, a little bit later on when God and Jacob got together. That is what God asked Jacob. That is what Joshua asked them. Joshua was a type of Christ in your Bible. So that is the first thing Joshua asked these guys. "Who are you?" The second direct question he asked, "Where do you come from?" When you read down through after that, they never answer those two questions. They never answer those two questions. Instead, they go into a song and dance about God, how great he is, "Look at our old stuff. Boy, we just, we have been, we have been out there." They never answer the two direct questions. That is a paramount concept to understanding with people that when you start to work with them, one of the things you steal is they really do not want to solve the problem. They will not really answer the question that is the real issue in their life. They will start going off about how much they love God, how great God is, how this or that, how this or that, and then tell you the old sob story of where they come from and all the stuff that goes along with it. Of course, let me show you, they missed that one. I mean, this is a sham. It is a very convincing sham, but it is a sham. Never mind. It is a lot like Eve in Genesis 3, when she has Cain and she says, "I have got the man from the Lord." Then the next boy is born and she does not say anything. Cain certainly was not a man from the Lord. Out of your balance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The first mistake they made is they did not see the subtle red flags go up when he asked them two direct questions, but they would not answer him, but they always bring God into it. All of this or that and tell you a nice story, but they never answered the real issue.

Then here is a second problem in Joshua 9:14.

*Joshua 9:14*

*And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.*

They did not take it to the book. They went on what they saw instead of the principles in the Bible that if they would have said, "Lord, what do you think about these guys?" You know what God would have said? "They are a sham." But they went with what they saw. They bought the old story. They bought the shoes. They bought the bread. They bought the clothes. When they looked at the victuals, they are looking at each other and saying, "Well, this has got to be right." Somebody said, "Do not you think what they asked the Lord?" "Nah, do not bother him today." They got deceived. Bible principles will always discern the heart and will manifest the truth. When the old clothes were there, the old bread was there, the old shoes were there, and the old bags. Now let us leave their wives out of it. When the old clothes were there, when the bread was there, when the shoes were there, and even the bags they had had holes in it. Do not follow what

you see. Follow the basic principles. Ask the questions. Wait for the right answers. Always go to the book and follow the principles.

### *The Asa Principle*

*Here is another more common, and this will be the last one we will do today and we will get out here. Here is another more common basic issue that you are going to deal with in the principles that you use. When you start to deal with people, this goes with what I call the world of professional Christians. This deals with all the Bible babble psychologists and Christian counselors and all the junk that goes along with it. Let me give you a basic principle. The same book that fixed your soul before you got saved by saving you is the same book that will fix your sin problem after you are saved with your walk with God. You need to write that down and you need to remember that. That was our two great principles. The same book that fixed your sin problem before you got saved by saving you is the same book that will fix your sin problem after you are saved and keep you walking with God.*

I had a Christian psychologist one time and this is the standard position. He was a saved man and his position was this. This is the position of all of them. This is why you need to stay away from them. The position was this. The position was, "Well, I believe the Bible is true. I just believe that there is more truth outside the Bible." That was his position. That is a very dangerous position to be in because, ladies and gentlemen, there is no truth outside the Bible.

When you start getting into people's problems, you are going to see that they want to solve. You do not want to treat the symptoms, but they do not want to solve the problem. Then we are going to find another issue. This issue is going to be what I call the Asa principle. For this, we want to go back to 2 Chronicles 16. Let me tell you why very briefly why you are turning there. Why a person has problems because principles make it very easy and it will make it very easy. Everything so far we have taken has been very complex. We made it very basic.

Why does God, why do people have problems saved and lost? Here is the bottom line. If you are an unsaved man and you are an unsaved woman here today and you are depressed, or you have all kinds of issues, or you have all kinds of clutter in your life, or your life is just an absolute downhill slide and you are an absolute mess and you cannot get anything going in your life. Let me tell you bottom line very basically, very easily, very principled why you are the way you are. It is because you have not gotten saved. You have not put the only thing in your life that could satisfy you. What did you do? You went out and tried everything else in the world that somebody else told you would satisfy you. You went the bar route. You went the drinking route. You went the dope route. You went this route. You went that route. You went the things route. You got everything in your life that you thought because everybody told you that will really make you feel good. Now you have got all that clutter, all of that stuff. You have invested 20 some years of your life and it has failed you. You want to fix your problem? Get God in your life because he is the only one who can fix it and make you fulfilled in what you do. It is that simple.

Now, are you a saved person? Are you depressed? How in the world does a saved person get depressed? Show me one person in here who went through a lot worse things than you went through and I went through ever find a depressed passage in the New Testament? Have you ever

seen where Paul was going in to see his Christian therapist? Have you ever seen where Paul was going to see a Christian psychiatrist because of the stress that he was under? You know why God's people have problems? Almost like the same reason unsaved people have problems, but with a little different twist. You know why you and I have problems? Because after you do get saved, God has got a purpose for you and the Holy Spirit of God is living inside you. When you do not fulfill that purpose, you grieve the Holy Spirit of God to the point where it manifests that grieving in your life. I am going to show you in a few minutes in an incredible way.

Let me show you the Asa Principle. 2 Chronicles 16. Let us look down here at verse 11.

*2 Chronicles 16:11-13*

*And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.*

*And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.*

*And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.*

There, there is a guy who is the king of Israel. He has got a disease in his feet. Now, that will translate for you and me, our walk with God. That is a picture of a Christian who has a walk, has a problem with his walk with God, but he will not go to the Lord with it. He goes to the physician, Dr. Fine, Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine. He does not want to solve the problems because the Bible does not deal with symptoms. The Bible deals with fixing your problem. Verse 13, and Asa slept with his father and died. He died. He died.

I do not even know where to go with this. There is so much in here. He has a disease in his feet. Picture our walk with God. Psalms 119, every time you find feet in the Bible, it is going to be a reference to your walk.

*Psalms 119:105*

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

But instead of going to God, he goes to the doctor of psychology, doctor of psychiatry. He goes to, he goes to the, he goes to all the things that go along with it. Now, there are some great things in here. I love this. Look down here. This is why I love the Bible. And Asa in the 39th year of his reign. Let me ask you a question. How many books are the Bible in the Old Testament? Anybody know? 39. You know what that is telling me? That is telling me he had everything in the books he already had to fix his problem. He had everything he needed in the Old Testament to fix his problem. How many words in Old? How many words in Testament? 39. Somebody said one time, "Well, the Old, the New Testament is contained in the New Testament." That is true. What do you get when you multiply three times nine? 27. How many books in the New Testament? You got the right book. You got it. But you see, look at verse 3. His time is just like our time.

*2 Chronicles 15:3*

*Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.*

So he has been trained and taught not to go to the Lord. He goes to the physicians and he dies. Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen. The same book that fixed your sin problem before you got saved and saved you is the same book that will fix your sin problem after you get saved in your daily walk. We are going to hold up there. We will get into the rest of this next time, but you are beginning to see how these principles work. You learn biblical principles and the fastest way for you to learn them is by experiencing it with working with people. Seeing these things that I have talked to you about, it is one thing for me to read a story and give you a message and it becomes just like an academic of me in a science class talking about the nine planets revolving around the sun and you got a concept of it, but you never. When you get out on a rocket ship far enough away and saw all nine planets going around the sun, it would make a whole different perspective. It is one thing to give you the epidemics out of a book and show you the principles, but when you are working with people and you see these things every day working with them the way they are and how they play themselves out, that is how you use biblical principles.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus.