

## 2 Corinthians 6:11-18

Sunday 11/11/2012

Well, if you have your Bibles, I am excited today to get back to the book of 2 Corinthians. Last week, Jim Lake was here and did a great job and preached a great message. That was a great practical message for where we are all at in the Lord. Boy, that was a great, great, great message. I really enjoyed it.

But we are back again in 2 Corinthians chapter 6. You know now that this is a great chapter on our fellowship, our fellowship with the Lord. The most important thing you have to guard against as a child of God is that you keep your attitude of heart right with God, that you never lose that fellowship. And yet I say that, and that is probably the hardest thing for us to do, and we all certainly fail in that. But we are going to talk about today some things that will even help you better.

You remember we have come through now five different aspects of our fellowship. We made this a complete study. And we last week, we began, last time we were together, it was not last week, but the last time we were together, we began to look at the fifth aspect of our fellowship. And this is the fellowship of our separation. And in this one, we talk about what we are not to be in fellowship with as believers.

You know, the whole passage is built around one concept, and it is the concept of, in a sense, who we should not marry: unequally yoked. We have talked about that. That was how we looked at it from a doctrinal standpoint. That is exactly what this chapter in a doctrinal sense deals with. It talks about we as believers should not be yoked together in marriage with unbelievers.

And there were seven key words I built our first message around that we really examined.

1. The word yoked. We talked about how that in the Bible, marriage is likened to people, likened to oxen that are yoked together. Oxen in the Bible, as you saw from our first study, is a picture of saved people. Animals in the Bible were a very great study.
2. The second word we looked at was the word fellowship.
3. The third word was the word communion. Those two words go together. And that shows us that in marriage, we are to have fellowship not only with our husband and wife, but that fellowship carries on in our relationship with the Lord. The communion there is the intimacy that we have with the Lord that we share together in a husband and wife relationship. All of this is found in Ephesians 5:22-33, where it talks about Christ and the church and likens it to marriage. And it is a very great passage in there.
4. The fourth word was the word concord. We now know that the word concord means togetherness, something that connects two things, like a concourse, a concord.
5. Then the fifth word was Christ and Belial. And Christ is the Lord Jesus Christ. And Belial is the Old Testament name for the devil. And it shows you that there is no comparison, no connection between the two.
6. The sixth word was what part. And the part there has to do with ministry. And we talked about how that 1 Samuel 30:24, that a husband and wife, they get married, they work together as oxen, yoked together for the ministry. And there are times when the wife has to go and do

something, there are times the guy has to go do something and the wife stays home or vice versa. And in the process of that, we find that at the judgment seat of Christ, both part alike; they get the rewards the same.

7. And then the seventh word was what agreement. And that was a great verse in Amos 3:3, and we are going to use that verse today. That verse says, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" And of course, in a marriage, this is the whole doctrinal aspect of saved people marrying other saved people because of what is lacking when you marry an unsaved person, being a saved person.

You remember that I told you that there were two key words that set the stage for our study found in this passage, and we are going to read the passage here in a moment. The first word was the word fellowship. The second word was the word separate. "For what fellowship" and then He defined what that fellowship was, and then He came back and He says, "and be ye separate." We talked about the doctrine of sanctification. The word doctrine simply means to teach, giving you the teaching that you need about a specific subject. We talked about the doctrine of sanctification, how God at salvation has set us apart and separated us unto the Gospel.

Then I told you that there were two basic aspects of this passage that we are going to read here in a moment. There was a doctrinal aspect. That is what we looked at the last time we were together. We looked at the doctrinal aspect. And we looked at the aspect from a doctrinal standpoint, as I have already said, that it pretty much deals with the fact that I as a Christian should never marry an unsaved person because of the breakdown that happens between the spiritual side and the non-spiritual side. And the second aspect of that was, I told you, was a practical aspect or the inspirational aspect. We are going to look at that today. That is the aspect that shows you how it applies every day in your life.

You know, the Bible, the Bible is called in Philippians 4:3, the Bible is called the book of life. And we always think of that term in referring to our salvation, and that is certainly true. The Bible is the book that we all got our eternal life from, so in that sense, it certainly is the book of life. But doctrinally, there is even more to it in a practical sense as you look at it. In a practical sense, the Bible being the book of life is a book that shows you how to live your life on planet Earth.

You know, when God saved us, He could have taken us straight to Heaven. The moment you got saved, you could have been transported, the rapture could have happened in your own individual life, and we would all have been up in Heaven, but He did not do it that way. We did not do it that way. In a practical sense, the Bible, the book of life, is about how you and I are to live our lives and the things that we are to do on planet Earth after we get saved. Its truths never change. Its principles are unchanging and will make our life journey through this life on planet Earth much easier with them than it ever will without them. And that is why it is so absolutely important.

And today, I want to talk about you being separate in the second aspect of this thing, your sanctification in a practical way, in a practical format. This one, believe it or not, is much harder to do. It really is. It requires wisdom and understanding. It requires, when we talk about

perception and we talk about perspective and all those important things, it requires all of those key words that we talk about.

Because here is the difference, and this is where our problem is today. In the doctrinal aspect, like we talked about a couple of weeks ago, you just simply say no to marrying an unsaved person. You simply, you know, you totally separate yourself from the idea that an unsaved person, if you are a saved believer, would ever be a candidate to be your husband or be your wife. And you know, Genesis chapter 24 is a great story with great principles on that. But from a doctrinal standpoint, it is real easy, as they say. Just say no to drugs. Just say no to marrying somebody who is unsaved.

And I have heard all the arguments, you know. I am sure every pastor has. I have heard people who want to justify marrying an unsaved person. They say, "Well, you know, I will get him or her saved after we are married." "You know, he believes in God." How many times I have heard that? "She believes in God." "He or she wants me to go to church." "He or she said, we will both go after we have been saved." And I have heard them all. And you know as well as I do, they do not work. There is no clause found in the Bible anywhere for us to violate the biblical principle that to be unequally yoked. Never. My favorite saying, little Bob Jones Senior used to say, "It is never right to do wrong to get a chance to do right." You never do. Principles are there for a reason. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:27, we talked about this a couple of Thursday nights ago, it says, "Give no place to the devil." The devil can only take advantage of you and me. He can only have an advantage in our lives when we place ourselves outside the biblical principles. That is when he takes over.

But in a practical sense, it can be really hard to stay separate. I am just telling you. I mean, I know what the Bible says in a doctrinal sense when it talks about marriage. That is an easy one. You have got to apply this thing to everything in your life. I mean, you just do. You have to. In a practical sense, I think complete total separation from the world is really almost impossible. It is impossible to do that. I mean, in life by life circumstances. You find yourself in situations where you are yoked with unsaved people all the time. I mean, in this world, you have to go to work. You have to have a job. And you are going to work with unsaved people. They are going to be in the cubicle next to you. They are going to be on the line next to you. You are going to eat lunch with them. They are going to be in your life everywhere you go. You are going to buy things. You buy things from unsaved people. You go to a store to buy groceries. The guy that checks you out is unsaved. You ask the clerk to find something. They are probably unsaved. You have them in your life. We connect with unsaved people in all kinds of ways. If you have a service job, if you do hair, you do not just do Christian hair. I hope not. If you sell insurance, you just do not sell it to Christian people. If you sell cars, you just do not sell them to Christian people. We come into contact all of time.

Now, some of God's people are really goofy. And some of God's people try to get around this. I remember years ago when a bunch of Christians came out, they wanted to be totally separate from the world. They thought the idea for a godly life and living a godly life would just completely block out the world. And I remember they brought in a bunch of Christian phone books. And in these Christian phone books were only Christian businesses. It was very yellow

pages for Christians, you know, that you do business with other Christians and completely keep the world out of it. And they brought them in, and they were so proud of them. I remember they brought in a big stack of them. They passed out to our church, and they basically said, "These are Christian phone books." And they were really upset when I would not accept them. And I said, "No thanks." I said, "You put a lot of money and a lot of time in this, and I am not going to pass them out, nor am I going to use them. So I would not want you to waste all that with me. Just take them to give them to somebody else." They could not understand why me as a pastor and a Christian, having a church, would not want and just jump at the opportunity to get Christian phone books, yellow pages that only had Christian businesses that I could do business with Christians and stay away from the world.

I informed them that some of the biggest hosings I ever got, I got from Christians. Just because you are a Christian in a Christian phone book does not mean anything. I told them, I said, "You know, I said, the bottom line, that is not the answer. The answer is not to isolate myself from the world. The job of a Christian is to insulate myself from the world because I have got to win them to Christ and I have got to try to be a witness to them." You see, it gets a lot more complicated when you look at it this way.

I mean, I used to preach down at Joplin in a pastor down there when I was preaching at the Bible conference he used to go to. A pastor pulled me aside and he said, "I do not know what you are preaching on today, but I want you to preach on going to casinos to eat dinner in the restaurants there." And I said, "Well," I said, "You know, I am preaching on something. I do not know that that," I said, "Bottom line is this. I said, I do not get into these things." He said, "Well, I have got people in my church who think it is okay to go to if there is a restaurant in a casino someplace, you know, you know how it is. You have got the casino here and then you have got restaurants all around it, you know, and people in his church were going there and eating at the restaurants and going to the big buffets they have, you know, and he just thought that was godless because you should not be in a place like that.

Now, I wanted to tell him how many times I have eaten in a restaurant in a casino, but I thought, I will do that after I preach, you know, if he does not have me back, it will be all right. But I said to him, I said, "Look, pal," I said, "If I do that," I said, "Where are you going to draw the line?" Now I understand we are to be separate, but you realize if you make your people not eat at a restaurant that is connected with a casino, what do you do to go get gas in a gas station that sells beer, wine, and cigarettes? Now, I shop at Hy-Vee. I am a Hy-Vee shopper. Senior Citizen's Day is on Wednesday if you want to know. And I am a Hy-Vee shopper. At every Hy-Vee I have ever been in my life, they have got great place, great meat department, great fish, they have got great everything. But they, every one of them has got about the size of this room, a huge beer wine place. What do you do with that? Now you are going to tell me that it is wrong to go and eat at a restaurant in a casino, but it is okay to go to a grocery store to sell beer? Now his answer to me was, "Well, you know, when you support one, you support the whole thing." Well, it works at Hy-Vee too. See how complicated it gets? I mean, I do not know what to tell you. On the practical side of separation, I do not think, I really do not think you can totally, and bear with me now, totally be separated from the world because we are in this world and we bump up against it

all the time. We just do. It is tough. It is really hard. And it takes some, you know, it takes some, a plan to understand what you are up against here.

Now let me give you a great truth that I think will help you. And today is going to be, especially if you are a young Christian here today, this, I think today is really going to help you. My goal is to, is to help you. You know, I have two goals in life and that is all really I have. I really do as a pastor and as a Christian, I have two goals in life. My first goal is to try to get myself to the judgment seat of Christ in as good shape as I can get there. I know that is going to be tough, but I am going to try my best. My first goal is to get myself to the judgment seat of Christ in the best shape that I can. My second goal is to help you get there in as best shape you can. And that is really all I have in this and that is all I want. So a lot of things that I am going to say today, I think will help you.

But let me give you a great truth because we live in a world where you think that if we just separate ourselves from the world by not being there, and I understand that, that that is what we are supposed to do. And I understand all of that, but let me just tell you this by itself, standing alone in outward separation is no guarantee of spirituality. I know most of you, thank God, have never been connected with Christian schools. Some of you have. Thank God you survived it. But I remember when I first came to Kansas City years ago, there were two particular Christian schools and I was a youth pastor back then. And all the youth pastors got together once a month, had a lunch, and it was a great idea. We planned a big youth rally where we went and did an activity with all the kids. And then we went and somebody preached to them. We pooled every, all of our resources. We pooled all of our people. And it was a great idea.

There were two churches in Kansas City, and I am not going to tell you who it is because there is no reason to embarrass Tri-City and embarrass Opendoor Baptist Church over in Kansas. So do not ask me afterwards who it was. These churches would not be part of us. And the reason why they would not come be part of this is because we let the girls wear slacks. Because if you wore slacks, you went to hell. You could not be a saint to wear slacks. I am not the smartest guy in the world, but I asked a guy one time, I said, "On what basis do you do that?" And he said, "Well, on the Bible." He said, "The Bible says a woman should not wear that which pertains to a man in clothing." I said, "Okay." I said, "So you are saying they have to wear skirts or dresses." I am just trying to wrap my head around this. And I know I am not, I said, "But here is my problem. Every man in the Bible wore a short skirt." So if we are going to do this based on the Bible, if she has a skirt on, she is wearing from the Bible what a man's clothes was. He did not appreciate that. I do not know what to tell you. If you are going to tell me it is based on the Bible, then I show in the Bible where it is not based on the Bible. You have a problem with it. But I do not know what to tell you. People are weird sometimes.

And I am telling you, just saying, "I am separate. I am not going to be this. I am going to dress right. I am going to cut my hair right. I am going to smell right. I am going to do all these things right." That is no guarantee of real spirituality. There has to be a spiritual separation, in your heart, not just in your body. You know what I believe? I believe if a woman's or a man's heart is right with God and they love God with all their heart, mind, and soul, whatever you wear coming to church on Sunday morning will be just fine. I am with Jim Lake. Jim said, he told you last

week, "Does his church have a dress standard?" Yeah, everybody has got to wear something. He has been through that mess too.

I have people all the time. And you are going to learn when we get into the people ministry here coming after the first of the year, I am going to teach you a lot of techniques of how to help people. And one of the things that I do, and I have done it all my life, and it works. You get somebody coming into church, maybe they are just in here and they do not know anybody. They do not know anything about God. They do not know anything about what goes on around here. I will pick a really good couple, if they are a couple, or a really good single guy, gal, and I will maybe get two or three people and put them in their world and try to get them to help them figure out, get handle, answer questions, and bring them along. Now, I do that. I think that is a viable thing to do. And I have people all the time come up to me and say, "Well, I need you to put so and so with this person or put so and so with that person." And I am all for that, but let me tell you something. If you have been around in a church for three or four or five years and you are not doing anything and you are still now as dead as you were when you came in, I could put a thousand people with you and it is not going to change anything. My point being, there has to be a change in you. You have to say in your heart, "I want to change who I am." Just simply putting a lot of people in your life does not, it just makes your car crowded. When you go places, it does not change anything about your life. We have to have within our hearts the spiritual separation first inwardly and that is how the thing works.

Last week I gave you two great verses and we closed out with this last time we were together, verse 17 and 18. Verse 17 says, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." You know, for me, Christianity has always been real simple. I am not a complicated guy. I do not do well in complicated situations. I do not like to be around complicated people. I am just a basic simple guy who just has a reasonable intelligence, a little bit of common sense and I watch and listen to everything I see and hear. And you know, and I have learned over the years that my life as well as your life, you know as well as I do, it is about the choices we make. We are today, saved or lost by the choices we have made.

You know, if you have a wife and you have a husband, your spouse has helped you in your spiritual growth or hurt you in your spiritual growth, but it is all based on our choosing, our spouse. Your children today or in the future, and you young parents need to understand this, your children in the future will be nothing more than based on the choices they have watched you make in your life and in the choices you have allowed them to make in their life. It is just that simple. Life is choices. And for me, it is real simple. There are just two choices for me. There are really just two choices for you. But some of God's people, some of people want to make it complicated, nothing like a Bible to un-complicate things. Two choices I have. The world says, "Come on in." The Bible says, "Come on out." That is my choice. I either choose to go in the world or choose to come out of the world. And when you choose to come out of the world, putting people in your life will help you. When you choose to stay in the world one foot in, you could put 10,000 people in your life. But it is not going to change anything because at the end of the day, it has to be your choice and nobody else's.

Now that is a little recap and a little intro where we are going today. But I want to again begin to read now again our text that we read the first time and we will look at it from a practical side this time. And so we want to go to 2 Corinthians chapter 6 and we will pick it up in verse 11. If you do not have a Bible, look on with somebody that does. If you are bigger than they are, just take it from them.

*2 Corinthians 6:11-18*

*O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.*

*Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.*

*Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.*

*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

*And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

*And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

Now Father, help us today to come to Your Word and to straighten all this out and help us to understand, Lord, from a practical standpoint that this is not easy, but it is not as hard as people like to make it to be if we just get back to the Bible. So help these young Christians today, help the older Christians, help those who want to work with me in the people ministry of touching people's lives. Help them to learn these great principles because these are the tools that we will use every day because these are the tools that work and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen.

## I. Practical Application of Unequal Yoking

Now our verse says here, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Last time, doctrinally now, we are all set on that. But from a practical standpoint, there are some other things here that we need to look at. You know as a Christian man or woman, you have to make some personal standards in your life that you go by. You just have to. In all of our lives, there has to be a line we do not cross. Well maybe that line might be different for me than it is for you, but you have got to have a line. You have got to have some places that as a Christian, you simply will not go. You have got to have some things as a Christian you will not be part of. You have got to have some circumstances as a Christian you are going to just avoid. And yes, unfortunately, there will have to be people in your life that you will have to stay away from. Your fellowship with the Lord is number one, as I said earlier. And you have to know, you have to know this. If

the number one thing in your life is your fellowship with God, then you have got to know the number one thing the devil is going to come after to get you on your fellowship with the Lord. He is going to try to break that thing up. You have got to protect it.

Now last week, I gave you a great verse. Amos 3:3, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" And we saw how it worked in a doctrinal. Now we are going to see how it works in a practical because simply you cannot. And the quicker you learn this, the better off you are going to be.

## II. Business Relationships

Now the first thing I want to talk about is many times Christians get into business relationships or business circumstances with people who are unsaved. And many times I have seen Christians get into a business deal or even a business partner with an unsaved person. Most of the time it simply does not work. Not in every case, but in most cases it does not. And many times the reason why it does not is because simply two sets of values, two different sets of goals, two different business strategies. It all really comes down to those seven things that I gave you last week.

An unsaved person will view life and the business of the life and the business world from one angle. He will see it from the world, how much money he wants to make. There is nothing wrong with making money. But he is going to put his emphasis on that and there may be times when he will not do business the way maybe up and up that he should to get to make money. I mean it is just that simple. And as a Christian, will, or at least he should, view life from another angle and that would be the Word of God. And so we see how that the two at the very beginning are going to be headed for some problems. There can be no real biblical agreement on anything. There can be no real big biblical togetherness in the business or concord or fellowship. It is kind of hard when you have got an unsaved guy and you want to pray every morning for God to bless your business. It is tough when a guy says, "Well, I do not want any part of that." It is rough. It will not work yet.

And here is where it gets real complicated. Now I know what I just said about unsaved people, but I want to tell you the practical side can get hard to follow sometimes because in business, Christians can be just as big as crooks as unsaved people. So getting in business with somebody that says they are a Christian does not mean anything either. They do not mean Christians in business can be just as dishonest. They can be just as corrupt. Saying you are a Christian means nothing. So you see it is not always clear cut as the doctrinal. As a doctrinal you just say no to the idea of marrying an unsaved spouse. But man we have to live in this other. It is a fact and I know some of you have told me that have come from really large churches. It is the fact that many Christian independent businessmen, they join big churches for one reason, clientele. They work the crowd. They will go to a church of two, three thousand people and they sell insurance or they sell this or they have got some thing that they do, some business you know, Amway or whatever they do, nothing against Amway, but Avon or whatever, nothing against Avon. My mother sold it for years and years and years. But they will use the church as a base for their clientele. They will come up and introduce yourself and give you their business card. See that is

not what you are supposed to do. They do not care anything about your spirituality. They look at you as kaching, kaching, kaching, money in their pocket. But that is what happens. They work the congregation.

### III. The Importance of Wisdom and Character

But here again, this is where biblical principles become so valuable. Proverbs 4:7, great verse. If you do not already have it in your Bible, you want to get it. It says, "Wisdom is the principal thing." We talk a lot around here about biblical principles because biblical principles are the way that we do things in life as God's people. And Proverbs 4:7 says that wisdom is the principal thing. "Therefore with all thy getting, get wisdom and get understanding." Wisdom is what you want and understanding is what you get when you get biblical wisdom. And I talk about all the time, you know, I keep it for you, you know, that you learn to live a principled life. I have said it before. And we went to school, grade school. We had teachers and everything, but we had one guy who enforced everything and his law was the rule. And whatever he said it is what it was. The teacher could say something. He could override the teacher because there was one man who was in charge of everything and the final say, and he set the criteria, the structure for the way everything went. And you know who he was. He was the principal. And principles in your life do the exact same thing. They put an order to our life, a structure to our life, a direction to our life. So I know for you young Christians out there sometimes it can get complicated. But here again, this is where the Bible principles become so valuable.

You know, I am asked all the time. I am asked all the time by people. You know, there are people who look at a gal or a guy and because I am the pastor they will come to me and they will say, "Well, what do you think about this person? I am thinking about dating this person. What do you think about this?" You know, and I understand that. I think it is very smart of some people to, but I am asked all the time if people, certain people are real or not real. I mean, and sometimes, you know, you have got something going with God and God is really doing some of your life. I understand that. But here is the problem. But here is what always happens. Many people, if not most people, they try to read a person's heart. You cannot read anybody's heart. You just cannot. You may look at somebody and you may not like the way they are, the way they do this or they do that. And you may take by that that you have that window into their little soul where you can see down inside and because you do not like the external things or what they do or the way they do it, that you look down inside and then you can read their heart. You know you cannot. I cannot. I cannot read somebody's motive.

You know, I err a lot in the ministry and one of the things I err on is I always err on the side of giving the people benefit of the doubt and things. Probably too much. That is just the way I am. That is because I never got it growing up. That was a joke, but you bit it over the top of your head. That is okay. I give people the benefit of the doubt. I want to believe in people. I really do. Now I know I come off as a hard guy up here and I say some hard thing, but that is my job. But at the end of the day, deep down inside, I want to give everybody the benefit of the doubt. I do. And I am an easy guy. You know, I am smart on one side, but I am stupid on the other side because I will give people a chance to hose me. And many times they do. No. You see, but I do

not care about that. I have people at times. "That person really hosed you." Well, maybe so, but you missed the point. I did what was right. I laid myself out there the way I am supposed to. The fact that they hosed me, do not get the people in the right place. He did not hose me or she did not hose me. They hosed the Lord. See, it was not me. I am in the job to getting hosed. That is my job. I am getting job that people to take advantage of. That is our job. Our job is to lay it. Now we are not supposed to be stupid about it. I mean, I do not walk down the middle of town at night with dollar bills hanging out of my pocket saying, "Hey," that is not what I am talking about. You know, I mean, but you have got to understand. I give people the benefit of the doubt. And I know many people. I see it all the time. They try to read a person's motive. They try to read their heart. And then they make a judgment on them. And that is never good because I cannot read anybody's heart after. That is impossible. You just cannot. If I could read, if I can invent a heart reader meter, I would be the richest guy in the world.

But the good news is you do not have to read people's hearts. You do not have to read people's motives because in dealing with people in business or in your everyday life, I will tell you what you do want to read and you can read that will tell you everything you want to know. It just takes a little longer and it takes a little more perception on your part. But if you ever get this down, you will be quite valuable in the service of the Lord. It is just simple as that. You cannot read hearts or motives, but we can all certainly read character. And that is what you want to read. I preached to you a little while back, 2 Corinthians 3:2, where Paul talked to the church at Corinth and he says that you are, you, the people, are the epistle. You have an epistle written on your heart that is read of all men.

How many times have you heard your mother say it growing up or anybody say it? It is an old saying, "Never judge a book by its cover." And many times we are guilty of judging people by the cover we see. And that is not good because you and I cannot read somebody's heart. We just cannot. But you do not have to. Watch their character. Read the epistle. Read what is there. And you know, character. Everybody says, I hear it all the time, one of these quasi-spiritual things, character. Character is what you do when nobody else is around and nobody sees. Now that is cute. I like that. You have got to make a song out of that. Probably have. But that is not exactly the lowest common denominator in the Bible. In the Bible, God's character qualities in your life, whether anybody sees what you are doing or not. Godly character that we need to have in our life is something that we live by every day of our lives, whether somebody is watching or somebody is not. It is not just what you do when nobody sees. It is what you do when they do see. It is what you have got going on with God in your life, building those character. And Christian character qualities will always align itself with the qualities of Christ. And the absence of those character qualities that Christ had will always be the absence of Christian character in our life. That is what you read. That is what you look for.

You do not have to read somebody's heart. You do not have to try to read somebody's motive. Just skip back. You know what? I do not focus on the bad things in people's lives. You know why? Because we all have got bad things in our lives. Is anybody here perfect? Does everybody here ever do it right all the time? If there is not anybody here that if I followed you around or God forbid you followed me around that you would not find a list on me that I would find a list

on you, I would tell people all the time. If you really knew about me what I know, you would never come back and hear me preach again. But do not look so shocked if I really knew about you what you know, I would not preach to you anymore. I do not ever focus on the bad things and what the wrong things they do. Because we all do dumb things. We all do wrong things. And if all I ever do is go around and focus on that, I back up, step back. You know what I do? I look at all the Christian character qualities in your life in spite of the failures that we have. And at the end of the day, I just simply put two columns and I just add them up. You see, that is reading character. That is not reading hearts. That is reading character.

I had a friend of mine one time that worked at... You cannot fake. I mean, you can fake a lot of things. You can carry your Bible this morning and have the right Bible and your heart can be as black as the side of the bottomless pit. You can walk in here with your plastic smile. I am not saying you have a plastic smile, but you can put on a plastic smile, pretend everything is right and your mind could be in a gutter so far out that you will never get it back. You could do all of those things and you could fake all of those things. But I will tell you something. The one thing you cannot fake is Christian godly character. Cannot fake that. You just cannot. And the absence of Christian godly character in your life will always be an absence of Christian godly characteristics of Christ in your life.

I had a friend one time who worked for the Secret Service, I guess is what does counterfeit. I do not remember what it was. It has been a long time ago. And I remember asking him one time because it was a big run. They always liked to counterfeit hundred dollar bills. And you go to the store and you give them a hundred dollar bill. You know what they do? They will be holding up with a light or they will mark it with a special pen. They do 20s too. But if I am going to counterfeit it, so why am I going to mess with 20s? And you hold it up there, look at the light and they look for some little code in there. They mark it with a pencil. It will turn a different color if it is not real. And sometimes you actually and annually got a counterfeit hundred dollar bill or a 20 dollar bill. And I asked him one time, I said, "I do not know how you guys do it. How in the world do you keep up? Because they are constantly evolving ways to do really well. They get the right kind of paper. It is almost impossible." I said, "How in the world do you guys stay up? You just be in school 24-7 and never go bust any bad guys because all you are doing is keep up with what they are doing. And how do you keep up with all of those new technologies of counterfeiting?" And he said, "We do not do it that way." He said, "We do not ever study fakes. We just study what a real one looks like. And when you are absolutely 100% sure what a real hundred dollar bill looks like, you put a fake up there, it will show up every time." And that is the same thing with Christian character. That is why you do not have to read somebody's hearts or somebody's motives. Take a little while, take a little longer, but then you never judge a book by its cover. And we have got too many soothsayers in Baptist churches today. Too many witches of Endor who want to divine what somebody really is all about. All you have got to do is step back and read the epistle of their heart and in time it will show you exactly what they are like.

#### IV. Defining Christian Character

Now the defining Christian character, let us talk about that for a minute. I do not know if you know this or not. The defining book on Christian, godly character and man's character is the book of Proverbs. I am getting the real itch when I am done with 2 Corinthians to teach the book of Proverbs. I think it is the only book in the Bible I have never taught verse by verse. And with where we are at and what we are doing, every time I think about it, a little while back I just thought, yeah, it will be good. Now I am just getting this, I am just getting the angle on it. I need to do that. So I do not know if I will or not but I will probably decide by the end of this message. Anyway, the book of Proverbs is the number one book in the Bible on character and not just character my folks but how to read it.

Now look, if you are a young Christian here today, listen to what I am about to tell you. I am going to show you the keys because God wants to do something in your life and the devil wants to take somebody and put them in your life to keep you from doing what God wants you to do. It is just that simple. So listen to me today. You know, in business as in life, you want to stay away from a bad crowd, saved or lost. You want to hang out with a good crowd. The Bible, in the Bible, God simplified the process for us and thank God He has because in the Bible and the book of Proverbs you have two sets of character qualities and it is all you need. In the Bible and the book of Proverbs as in the book of Psalms really is all the way through the Bible. You have defined for you what the Bible calls a fool. Yet at the same time, the second character quality which starts in the book of Proverbs and runs all the way through the Bible is a wise man.

And you know when you go to the book of Proverbs, you will find that the book of Proverbs defines the character qualities of a fool. There are eight character qualities in the book of Proverbs that leaves you absolutely a hundred percent sure I am dealing with a fool. At the same time, there are nine character qualities in the book of Proverbs that tells you that you are dealing with a wise man. You learn these character qualities, you do not have to read anybody's heart. You have to come to me and say, "Bob, is this guy okay or is this guy okay?" Learn how to read character, learn what the character qualities are, put him in your own life first, back up and just look and see. It is not hard. In fact, it is absolutely no pun intended foolproof.

Now when a Christian who was contemplating going into business with a partner who was unsaved or saved, if he would follow this format, if you and I will begin to follow this format, you will never, never, never, never get messed up. Now someone who saved business, guys are fine. Some of them have better morals and some save people. Here is my model in dealing with people and I follow this all my life. I never form my opinion of people and what other people say. I do not think that is a good way to do things. I may listen to what you say, and there are some people who I respect your opinion very highly. There are other people that I just, okay, that is fine. But in either case, I never make my assessment of who you are based on what somebody else says. I hope that you do not make your assessment on me based on what other people say. I never try to judge you, motive or second guess you or read your heart. I make my evaluation on your character. I make my evaluation on watching you over a period of time. I will never let your value system of what a person is or is not become my value system. I will watch, I will read the character qualities. I will see how they develop, that person develops the character qualities of Christ in their life.

At the end of the day, I simply look for somebody who is willing to take a stand and have the steel to stand and not let other people influence them in their decision and take their relationship from Christ from them. I see it all the time. My whole life has been filled with people who come in, sit down in my office, tell me what they want to do for God, tell me they are excited about this, this is what I needed to do, God finally showed me what I needed to do and they get all pumped up about it, excited about it, they jump into it and then you know what? They hook up with some gal or some guy or some couple or some group and the next thing you know, whatever God was doing, He is no longer doing. You know why? Because you are susceptible. People draw you away. They pull you off and you are not smart enough to be able to withstand that.

## V. Guarding Your Spiritual Life

God's number one deal, I saw a sign this week and I really, boy I liked the sign. I was coming back from, I do not know if it was Sonia's thing out there or what it was, I forget where it was, but I was driving home, I was by myself when I saw it. It was a sign about some facility, some college or some tech school, I do not know what it was, but what caught me was the phrase and I thought it was designed to catch, but the phrase was great. The phrase said, "Leaders trained here." Now that caught my attention. You see, at the end of the day in this church, my job as pastor is simply to do one thing, it is to train men and women to be leaders. Now I love you all. I mean, and you are all worth a lot to me and you are all valuable. And personally, I think that most of you, I would say most of you, some of you I do not know, but most of you I do know. I would honestly tell you just by watching you, if you have been around for any length of time, I think most of you have the ability to be a great leader for God in your life. I just do not know if you are ever going to step over the line to make the break with what you have got to make break that God can develop it. I do not think there is a shortage of you, I mean, when I stand up there and say, "I train leaders," I am not saying though, because if you are a leader, you are great and all the rest of your bozos, I am not saying that. I am saying you are bozos because you have the ability to be a leader and will not be. That is the tragedy. That is the tragedy. I see it in many of you.

I told you this before, we are a unique church from the aspect that we do not get a lot of people just transiting through. We did not have a sign out front, still do not have one down by the road because I do not want to attract everybody that is mad at this guy down here leaving his church on the way out here and saw Austin says, "Well, let us come in and cause some problems here." I am not looking for that. I am looking for God to bring you here. In that essence, if God brought you here, then God must have something for you. So I automatically put your stock a little higher than Billy Bob running down the road with his wife, Susie Ann, trying to find another church because they just got kicked out of the last one. The tragedy is that God may have brought you here for that very reason and yet you will waste that opportunity. But my business is to train leaders.

Now this second aspect to do this great, in this great passage of not being unequally yoked is very important. And we are here, leaders are trained here. I am looking for men and women. I cultivate it. I see that leadership in anybody. My immediate response is to develop it, pull it out

of you, stretch it, make it work, give you what you need, give you all the time with me you need, develop that leadership spark in you and fan it into a flame. That is what I do. But I am going to tell you something and I will tell you this. Maybe you are saying this is the number one error you need to get on and hang on to to make sure that you do not lose what God has got for you. God is doing some tremendous things with some of you. I never get up and talk about it. The person sitting next to you probably does not even know it. Many times there are things that you and I have talked about that you are sharing with me that God is doing. Many times that is things that I just see that maybe you do not even see. I see God doing here exactly what God is supposed to do here and that is taking some of you young men and some of you young ladies and some of you couples and saving you and then getting you in, getting you into the book and then beginning to develop you.

I want to tell you something. That ought to be the number one thing you guard in your life because he is going to come after you. I always think you know that he will come after you by a drug dealer meeting you out in the parking lot or somebody taking a shot at you, you know, going down the freeway in a road rage thing. No, no, no, no. He will do it with you with the most unsuspecting person you ever thought of that it would never happen because you are young, you are good, you are on fire, but you are naive. You have to learn some things and I am just a boy to teach them to you. And I would say that after you get saved, the number one area in your life that you need to get a handle on is who you hang out with and socialize with. That verse says, "Come out from among them and be separate." Unsaved people will kill you spiritually.

Almost every person who I have ever seen that come to this church and get saved and they have got some worldly things in their life, if they do not make the break, you know what I did when I got saved? I remember, I told you what happened that Sunday morning when Tommy Thomas died and how God spoke to me. Well, that Sunday night I went back to church and I went forward that night. I did not go forward that Sunday morning. Maybe it was a couple of weeks later, I do not know, but I remember going forward and I knew that it was over. It was on a Sunday night and I knew it was over and I went down there and I gave my life to God. I did not even know what I was doing. I did not even know what I was going forward for. I was already saved. I already in my heart had committed. I just felt like I just needed to do it. I do not even know why. And they asked me what I came forward for. I remember, I said, "I do not know. I am just here because I want to give my life to God." And the guy said, so he picked that up on it and did it and worked through me with it.

The next day I went back to work at the Hoover Company and I had a Bible in my pocket and I had tracts in my pocket and I went up there with all the guys around that time clock and I simply said this. I said, "Guys," I said, "I want you to know something. No personal offense and I love you all. But last week I listened to your dirty jokes. Last week I told some of myself, last week I was with you on all the things that we did. I have got to tell you something. I do not know what happened but I got saved this last week and last night I committed my heart to God and I showed up today with a Bible and tracts in my life." You know why I did that? Because I know if I did not do that, I would get sucked back in. I wanted to make such a big hole in that thing that I could never go back. I wanted to blow a hole so big in that thing and shoot my mouth off so

much in front of everybody that there is no way I was ever going to let them pull me back in. You have to make the break. And if you do not make the break, some old boyfriend will pull you back into the world, some old cool people are going to be in. You want to get rid of drugs and keep your drug guys number in your phone and he will text you and you will go right back into it again. Got to make the break. Got to make the break. You have got to make the break. You have to recognize that you have been called out, sanctified, shut apart, shut apart. That to a degree I understand. It is always going to be there somewhere. I mean old things are passed away, all things become new, the Bible says.

But here is what you need to do. Here is what you need to do. If you just got saved and you are just getting plugged into the Bible or you want to get plugged into the Bible, here is what you do. In any church, any church, you find some friends who can be, in the Bible sense, in agreement with you, like-minded with you, in communion with you, togetherness with you, have the same goals, have the same struggles. People who love God, love the book, love the work of God and are committed to have that fellowship that Paul talks about within this chapter. That is who you begin to develop your friendship relationships with. It is just that simple. Sounds good, does it? Okay, we are done. Out of here. Sounds easy, does it? Not really. And this is where Christian character and courage have to come in.

But along with unsaved people, there are some of God's people who will kill you spiritually. Unfortunately, in all churches, every church, if you have saved, you will have saved, born again, blood-washed men and women who will do one thing and they will destroy and take from you everything that God does or wants to do with you. Remember, "How can two walk together except they will be?" You actually think the devil will miss that? You think the devil, if you have got the front door locked, "Well, I am going to fix this. I am locking that front door to the world." Yeah, but you let the back door open and that is how he will come in. And if you run back and lock the back door, he will come in the window. And if you lock all the windows, he will come down the chimney. And do not think about building the fire and the fireplace will keep him out. He is used to places with fire. He is going to get you. He is going to get you. I wish it was not true. But when you get saved and you want to be and do all that God wants you to do, the devil is going to put those people right in there in the same church you are in who is going to drag you down and hurt you any way they can. The devil will never miss that opportunity.

I remember the night I went down and I gave my life to God, the man that met with me and led me through. His name is Marshall Bennett. He was a deacon, long dead now. When I got on fire for God and I got right with God and I got into the ministry, you know who tried to sandbag me in the ministry and keep me from doing what I was doing? It was Marshall Bennett. That night I got on my knees and asked God to use me and give my life to him. When I got up, I thought everybody in that church was angels. I thought the choir was the heavenly voices of cherubim. I thought if you would have told me that some of those deacons and some of those deacons wives and some of those people were negative and bitter and cutting people down behind their backs, I would have fought tooth and nail. That was when I was young and stupid. No better now. No better now. You better learn it too.

## VI. Rules for Spiritual Protection

Now I want to give you something here. Let me give you a couple of rules to follow to make sure this does not happen. Five to be example, we will move through here very quickly. Now if you are a young Christian today, you want to get this down. But I am going to give you five things that you want to look for.

8. Be a character reader. Here is how you do it. A. Learn what the character qualities of Christ are for yourself. Put them or begin to, but put them in your own life first. B. Now the next part is real easy. Once you learn the character qualities of Christ and once you begin to put them in your own life, do not get yoked with people who do not have or want those same character qualities. Wow, that was simple. That is all you do. You find out what they are, put them in your life first, make them work, let me develop them for you and then when you pick friends, associates or whatever you are going to yoke yourself with, look for those same character qualities that you want to have in your life and see if they are in their character qualities of their life. If they are not, it is a no brainer. It is a no brainer. Use the character qualities out of Proverbs for a wise man. Look for them. Look for, there are nine of them. In Proverbs 11:30, the Bible says a wise man will win souls. Now, somebody came to me the other week and was bummed out because they never wanted anybody to Christ. Been in the church three or four years, had not wanted anybody to Christ and I appreciate that. I really do. But it was a young Christian and they did not really understand the concept of the whole thing. They did not call for winning people to Christ and he talked about all the people that we had saved and he said, "Well," he said, "You win people to Christ all the time." And I reminded him of the people who were saved here in the last couple of weeks. I never won any of them to Christ. Bob, Danny, John, some of you guys, you are the ones that won him to Christ. I did not win him to Christ. "Well," he said, "But you preached." Well, so what? I may have preached, but I only preached after somebody else did all the work to get him here. In other words, what I am saying, winning people to Christ is the team concept. That is what it is. You want to have people in your life who are burdened to get people saved. Now I will say something and I do not mean to be mean about this, but I am going to say it, make my point and I understand it. Do you want to hear, you want to see people saved? Amen. This is a setup so you better just be mute and dumb if you want a little insight. You want to see people saved? Amen. I am telling you, do not say anything. You want to really, are you excited about people getting saved? No. All right. We had, oh here it comes. I gave you five times to keep your mouth shut. Now I am going to hit you right between the eyeballs. One more time with complete silence and you will exonerate yourself. Do you really want to see people saved? Amen. Okay. Here it comes. Last three, four weeks, had nine people saved. Tell me who they are. Who are they? Do you even know? You want people saved? Nine people get saved and that is all they are restored. Do you want to shake their hand and say congratulations, welcome to the family of God? Do you even know who they are to pray for? See what I am talking about? Told you to shut up. Now I understand that and I do not mean to be mean about that, but this is what I am talking about. We want people to be saved, but when they get saved, that is all the farther we want with it. That is not what you want. I tell you, those nine people saved, when I was given the invitation, if you all were praying, you all got nine stars

in your crown on top of everything else. It was just like you opened up the Bible and wanted yourself. You know why? Because the Bible says that he is saved by the stuff and the other one goes down to the battle, you are what? You are part of the like. Tell me you were thinking about the ball game. You were thinking about this. You were thinking about that. You are thinking about you have got to get home to do this. And you missed the whole concept. I am telling you, wise man wins souls. It does not always mean you open up your Bible and win him to Christ. The second thing in Proverbs 3:5, a wise man inherits glory. That is looking at the millennium in the judgment seat. Proverbs 10:8 says he receives commandment. That is what do you do with what you hear. Do you do anything with it? The fourth one is hearken to counsel. That is applying the principles Proverbs 12:15. The fifth one is he guards his tongue. The sixth one is he seeks knowledge. The seventh one is that he dispenses knowledge. Look for people who take it in and then go out and do something with what they take in. Do not hang out with people that just take it and take it and take it and do nothing with it. He says a wise man seeks knowledge and he dispenses knowledge. You cannot have one without the other. Eight says he fears and departs from evil. Proverbs 14:16. Then Proverbs 1:5 says he will hear instruction. I had a gal years ago. She was kind of a weird little gal. I liked her and she was a godly little woman. A little too erratic. But she guarded her relationship with God better than anybody ever saw. People come up to her. This is how she was. Somebody come up and say, "Would you like to be friends?" She said, "I do not know, let me see your Bible." She flipped through there. There was no notes in her Bible. She said, "No, thank you." Now that is extreme. But you know what she was doing? She did not want anybody in her life that did not love that book as much as she did. And with that not extreme. You want people in your life, listen, you want people in your life who are going to make you better, not make you worse. You want people in your life who are going to edify you.

9. Follow a Simmons principle I gave you in our prayer groups. Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." You want to have people in your life that make you better. You want to have people in your life that sharpen your countenance. You want to have people in your life who are going to help you be better. You do not want to hang out with people on a social level or a social scale that do not edify you and make you better because of what the two of you have got going with God. The two of you should sharpen each other's countenance. My advice to you, stay away from negative people. Just hang out with people that will make you better. I gave you a couple of weeks ago, I gave you the seven classes in God's school. The one class I did not have time to do that never should be in God's school is a drama class. Boy, there are drama queens and drama kings in every church. They are. They are. Everything to them is negative. There could be a thousand people saved that morning in church and all they see is the negative side of things. There will be some of God's people, no matter where you try to go in a conversation, they are going to have to tell you about the negativity of life. You want to be around people who are trying to solve and fix their problems, not throwing gasoline on them to inflame the problems. We give you a great verse. This is another one where I want to do Proverbs. Can you imagine 1,100 verses that say things just like the one I am going to give you that is a flashlight in life? What a great principle of character. Proverbs 11:13, "A talebearer revealeth

secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." You know what? You want to hook up with people that are of a faithful spirit. That is who you want. Now I know when dealing with people and dealing with circumstances, a certain amount of stuff has got to be talked about and you have got to deal with. I understand that, but you know what I am talking about.

10. Do not jump into a social relationship too quickly. "Prove all things," the Bible says. "Hold fast to that which is good," 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Now I understand our goal is to help the weak. People become strong. But you have to understand that they have to want that for themselves. I suggest that when you come into any church, not just church, before you just jump into everything get a feel for who is doing what and who is doing nothing. Look around you, see what is going on. I will give you this. This is probably the greatest piece of advice you will ever get. Right now, if you just got saved or you just got into the church or somebody brought you or somebody ... Let me give you this. This is the greatest piece of advice you will ever get. Right now in the newness of your Christian life, where you have got to look out there and say, "Oh, why do I do this? Boy, Bob, the message today, I mean, I want to do what is right. I do not want anybody to rule it. I do not know anything." Here is the way you start. The person that brought you to Christ will usually, in 99.999999% of the time, be the best friend you ever had. They cared enough about you and your soul to get you where they needed to get you that God could do what He did. Then somebody else is going to come in who never cared about your soul and try to take that from you. Be smarter than the problem. That is just a good general piece of advice. The two men that brought me to Christ, it was not even Malchabacham. The two men he taught me afterward, but the two men that brought me to Christ will always to this day be the two best friends in my mind and my heart, even though I have never seen them for many, many, many years, will be in my mind the two best friends I ever had and the men that I trusted. You know why? Because they, without any other things, any other connections, any other thing, no nothing involved. They just loved my soul and wanted me to be with God and brought me there. You are safe with people like that. You are always safe with people who care about your soul more than they do about what movie you are going to go see.
11. Find out the goals within any church. Find out what they are and then watch and see who is building those goals in their lives. Remember, a church should be a training facility to get you to the next level and to get you involved in ministry. Leaders trained here. The bottom line of your character qualities of Christ and the bottom line of Christianity is simply ministry. And nothing defines a man's or a woman's Christian character. Nothing. Absolutely nothing defines it better than ministry. God saved you to serve. In time, you will need to see that. Remember the great Bible principles. 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Not manners of the Jeep with the wrong fork, but manners in the sense of what manner of man you are.
12. In time, you want to learn the biblical structure found in the Bible of the New Testament church. Without a doubt, ladies and gentlemen, this is the most important thing you will ever learn. This thing will cause you less heartache and give you more understanding than any other thing I probably ever told you about churches, ministry, and people. And certainly when you get into the counseling side of the people ministry, it is this whole sermon will be

an absolute tool in your toolbox. But this concept I am about to give you is the greatest thing I ever told you about you understanding how to keep your head above water in any church. And the model is based on the New Testament, Old Testament nation of Israel. You are going to find when you study Israel and how they worked and what they did, you can break it, take them down and break them down into three sections. And unbelievably, you can take any church and break it down in the same three sections. This thing is 100% incredible. I have taught this a hundred and 200 times to young pastors that are going out and telling it, you learn this, it will save you a lot of heartache and give you insight into your ministry and your people that you will never have and probably take you 40 years to figure out and by then it will be too late. Now the center point of the nation of Israel was their relationship with God. And their relationship with God was built around the tabernacle. And within that tabernacle, as you saw in our thing back there, were seven pieces of furniture. The main piece of furniture was what was called the Ark. And this is what Harrison Ford was after in the first Raiders of the Lost Ark. So you are all familiar with it. The Ark of the Covenant. That Ark of the Covenant represented Jesus Christ in their life. It was in the Holy of Holies where it represents where God is at. That Ark could not be touched by anybody without being killed. When they carried it, they had to put poles through it and carry it on their shoulders. You know why they put poles through it and carry it on their shoulders? Because it is a picture of bearing Christ's ministry. They did not put it on a cart and draw it with oxen. They tried that one time and a guy got killed, did not he? No, no. They have to put, they stave through those little holes and then they put it on their shoulder and they carry it wherever they go. You know why? Because it is a picture of you and I carrying the burden of the ministry of Christ on our shoulders. There were three things in that Ark. The first thing was the Ten Commandments that represents the nation of Israel. The second thing was Aaron's rod that budded, which is a picture of the priesthood because Aaron was a priest, a picture of the church. And the third thing was a little pot of manna, which is the type of the Word of God in Exodus 16. When that Ark was carried, everybody got behind it and followed it. They followed wherever the Ark went, just like you and I follow wherever Christ goes. That Ark was the center of everything that they did. When they camped, they put up the tabernacle. They put the Ark in the Holy of Holies. They laid all of the furniture out the way by God's specified it. And then you know what happened? There were three families that worked with that Ark, the tabernacle, and all the furniture and all the things of putting it together. Three families. In fact, when you add them up, they are in Numbers chapter 4. When you add them up, there were over two or three million probably people in a nation of Israel, two or three million Jews at that particular time. But when you add them all up in Numbers chapter 4, there are 8,580 members of this family. And there were three families. They were the Kohathites. They were the Gershonites. And they were the Merarites. These three families, along with Moses and Aaron and the priests, did everything in that tabernacle and that Ark. Their families, over 8,000 of them, were dedicated to the ministry of the Ark, which is a type of Christ. Their whole lives and the lives of their families centered around the Ark and everything that they did. Now watch how this thing works. Watch how this thing works. The second group. After when they set up camp at night, that tabernacle was right in the middle. And the Kohathites, the Gershonites, the Merarites were all around that thing

and they ministered. They put it up. They took it down. They took everything. They did everything that they were supposed to do. That was their life. Now all the tribes circled around that tabernacle and that Ark. And the second group of people, after the Kor family, that really, these are the people that really did the work in and around the tabernacle. And then you had a second group that with a tribe that circled up around it, put a distance away. And these will be the 12 tribes. So you have the Kor family and then you had the 12 tribes, all but then there was a third group. And that third group was farther out yet. That third group were the people who came out with a nation of Israel who were not Jews. Some of them were half and half. Some of them had married Jewish women or men, but they were Egyptian. And some of them just came out because they wanted a breath of fresh air from what was in Egypt. The Bible calls this group the mixed multitude. The Bible calls the mixed multitude. Their camps are called the outer camp. They camped, listen to me now, they camped as far as they could from the Ark, yet still claimed to be part of the rest of Israel. Now to this day, to this day, that is where the standard joke comes in that all the backsliders sit in the back row of the church. One company accepted, none of you were backsliders. But you know there is an element of truth to that, not here maybe. You back there because you want to write notes. But I know when I was back row Bob before I got right was gone, there was no way I was going to sit up front with them crazy Baptists spitting on me. When they all get the invitation, people start coming forward. I wanted to be close to the exit. So there was an element of truth to it, even though that is not true. Yeah, you guys back here are really in trouble. They are way back in the outer camp. But you understand that is where the joke comes from. Not true here, but that is where the joke comes from. That time of eternity we always talk about the standard preacher joke, the people that sit on the back row, back row Christians. And this is where it comes from. The spiritual application is so clear and simple to understand. The three families, the Cahuathites, the Marianites, those three families, they are the ones who do the work. They are the closest to the ark. Them and their families are the ones. It is like most of you have fireplaces and you line fireplaces with bricks. You know what I am talking about. You get a nice fire going on a cold night and walk over to that thing and you put your hand down on the bricks that are maybe the first three or four levels of bricks closer to the fire. It is warm. It is hot. The farther up you go, the farther the bricks are from the fire, the colder they get. And you have a tribe of families that their center was around what they did with the ark, where the action was, where God was, where Christ was, and everything they did. You have to study sometimes what each family was responsible for. It is an incredible study. And you want to remember that it was not just the Bible that takes the time to tell you that it is not just them, but it is their families. You want to make the ministry ready for your families, your little kids right now. But those three families were the core. Now, the second group. After when they set up camp at night, that tabernacle was right in the middle. And the Cohoathites, the Gershomites, the Merrimanites were all around that thing and they ministered. They put it up. They took it down. They took everything. They did everything that they were supposed to do. That was their life. Now all the tribes circled around that tabernacle and that Ark. And the second group of people, after the Kor family, that really, these are the people that really did the work in and around the tabernacle. And then you had a second group that with a tribe that circled up around it, put a distance away. And these will be the 12 tribes. So you have the Kor

family and then you had the 12 tribes, all but then there was a third group. And that third group was farther out yet. That third group were the people who came out with a nation of Israel who were not Jews. Some of them were half and half. Some of them had married Jewish women or men, but they were Egyptian. And some of them just came out because they wanted a breath of fresh air from what was in Egypt. The Bible calls this group the mixed multitude. The Bible calls the mixed multitude. Their camps are called the outer camp. They camped, listen to me now, they camped as far as they could from the Ark, yet still claimed to be part of the rest of Israel. Now to this day, to this day, that is where the standard joke comes in that all the backsliders sit in the back row of the church. One company accepted, none of you were backsliders. But you know there is an element of truth to that, not here maybe. You back there because you want to write notes. But I know when I was back row Bob before I got right was gone, there was no way I was going to sit up front with them crazy Baptists spitting on me. When they all get the invitation, people start coming forward. I wanted to be close to the exit. So there was an element of truth to it, even though that is not true. Yeah, you guys back here are really in trouble. They are way back in the outer camp. But you understand that is where the joke comes from. Not true here, but that is where the joke comes from. That time of eternity we always talk about the standard preacher joke, the people that sit on the back row, back row Christians. And this is where it comes from. The spiritual application is so clear and simple to understand. The three families, the Cahuathites, the Marianites, those three families, they are the ones who do the work. They are the closest to the ark. Them and their families are the ones. It is like most of you have fireplaces and you line fireplaces with bricks. You know what I am talking about. You get a nice fire going on a cold night and walk over to that thing and you put your hand down on the bricks that are maybe the first three or four levels of bricks closer to the fire. It is warm. It is hot. The farther up you go, the farther the bricks are from the fire, the colder they get. And you have a tribe of families that their center was around what they did with the ark, where the action was, where God was, where Christ was, and everything they did. You have to study sometimes what each family was responsible for. It is an incredible study. And you want to remember that it was not just the Bible that takes the time to tell you that it is not just them, but it is their families. You want to make the ministry ready for your families, your little kids right now. But those three families were the core. Then you have the second level, spiritually speaking. These are the people in training. These are the people who want to get where they need to be. Many of you right now do not set the world on fire, but you know what? With what you do, what you help, what you bring in with restart and all those things. Hey, you are in that mid-level there where these families were that you really made the thing happen. You are moving through a process. You are getting where you need to go. You are going through the biblical process at one level at a time. Oh, some faster than others, but that is okay. That is okay. Our church is loaded with people just like this. This group here is the future of the church. You can determine a church's healthiness or spiritual healthiness based on this crowd right here, because this is where the leaders are trained. Then you have that third group farther out, the farthest out, the mixed multitude, the other camp. In any church, in any spiritual scenario, these are the ones you want to avoid. The mixed multitude were always the ones who hurt Israel and caused them to stumble. They went with Israel, but were never really part of Israel.

Whenever Israel had an issue that caused them to doubt God and to move backward, we call it backsliding. Instead of forward, they were at the cause of it. Look at Numbers 11 very quickly here, and I will read this and it will show you here. It is incredible. Numbers 11:1-6

And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes. You see how, whatever they do, the children of Israel fall into it? "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic, but now our soul was dried away, and there was nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." Now look at this. This is what the mixed multitude did to Israel, the outer camp who purposely camped as far as they could from where the action was with that ark, that ark being a type of Christ, and the ministry of the core families. Now the first thing I want you to see is this. If you do not have this marked in your Bible, mark it in. It is simply verse 1, that when the people complained, it displeased the Lord. When you complain about things, it does not please God. Complaining never helps anything. It never does. There is always a process to fix something that is wrong, but complaining is not that process. I want you to mark that in your Bible, but I also want you to see that the source of Israel's complaining was this mixed multitude, the uttermost. Verse 1 says that they are the uttermost. They are as far as they could get from the action, the ark, and the tabernacle, and Moses, and the families, and the priesthood. Verse 4 says they are the mixed multitude. They are mixed with Egypt. Egypt is the type of the world in your Bible. Verse 4 says they crying about, "Give us flesh to eat." That is a picture of the old nature. What they want is their old nature satisfied. They are in the flesh. They want the flesh. Look at verse 5. Verse 4 says, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish. We did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." Now, this is what they do. They always look back at the world and forget what the world did to them. You did not eat what they said? "We remember the fish, which we did eat freely." You were in bondage. You were a slave. They killed your grandfather. They put you under severe bondage for 430 years, but now because you are not plugged in, and now because you want the flesh, you are in the flesh. You are not happy with the things of God in the ministry. Now you want to look back and think how good the world really looked, and your cry is, "Give us flesh to eat." Forget. "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, the melons, and the leeks, the onions, and the garlic." Well, I can tell you right now, you eat all those things, and all that gives you is gas. Maybe that is why some of God's people are so full of it. I do not

know. Now, the last thing, look at verse 6. There is their attitude toward the book, the Word of God, typified by the manna. "Now our soul is dried away. Really? There is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." I am going to tell you something. Never hang out with people who do not love that book as much or more than you do. That is the second good piece of advice I have given you today. Do never hang out with people who do not love that book as much or more than you do. If they love it as much, you have got a great thing. If they love it more, you can learn something, but if they love it less, you are in trouble. Now in any church, I do not care, any church, that is the crowd you want to avoid. Amos 3:3 says, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" You cannot. You cannot.

## VII. Church Structure and Ministry Philosophy

Now, I put a little formula together over the years, and this is how I ... This is my formula is how it works for me. I think in any church, you want to have a 40% core class, you want to have a 50% middle class, and you want to have a 10% outer camp class. I mean, that is just the way it works. That is a good formula to have. Over the years, I have kind of walked that thing, and I think to myself, you know that is what you want. You want your core people at 40%, your midline people who are training and processing at 50%, and you want to keep that 10% to a minimum.

Now, in ministry, I have a job to do, and in your life, you have a job to do. It is real simple in this whole matter. I do this with my church, you ought to do this with your life. It is a basic little three-point plan.

13. Keep the church motivated. That is my job. My job is to keep you motivated. My job is also to keep you edified. My job is to keep you focused on the central aspect of this church, and that is Christ the ark. That is my job. That ought to be your individual job in your life and your family.
14. To teach the character qualities of Christ to people and help them develop them in their own personal life. That is my job. My job is to give you whatever time with me you need, whatever book you want to go through, whatever you want to try to accomplish. My job is to train leaders and to find men and women who have, if you have the propensity to be able to find your way home and lead your dog out and bring him back in, I am interested in your life.
15. Getting each of you in time to the place where you give back to God based on His giving to you, the ministry. Those are the goals that I have. Those that will be your goals in your life. You accomplish this in a practical way by applying 2 Corinthians 6:11-18 in the principles I gave you today.

As a leader, building leaders, you stay on task in three fundamental areas. I call this the philosophy of ministry.

16. In the end, you build and keep and keep getting that core family as solid and large as possible. You keep driving and building and teaching on everything that you do to keep that core family as large and as solid as possible. You cannot build up without building out. Anything that goes up has to have the base to support it. And the base will always be the core

leadership in any organization. Whatever you do, you cannot build up without building out.

Churches today want to build up and never build out and that is why they never go anywhere.

17. Second thing, keep the middle class, that next circle of people, keep that next circle of people moving toward the core group and training them, ministering to them, encouraging them, giving them whatever they need, letting them have whatever time they need with you. All the time you can stand, all the time that you need. You give everybody the same choice to get where you need to get in life and help you get there. And the church is filled with people like that. Church is filled with people who are good people, who love God. And yeah, I am right here right now, you are never going to set the world on fire, but come on, you love God, you love the book, you are committed to what God wants you to do, you are just in the process to get there. My job is to help you get there.
18. Then the third, keep the outer camp and the mixed multitude as small and as uncomfortable as possible.

Those three things are the job of a pastor. Like I said over the years, I look at a 40%, 50%, 10%. And I have given that formula to many, many young men. Now you have the doctrinal aspect of separation in two formats. You have the Bible concept that talks about in a doctrinal form, specifically marrying, not unsaved, not marrying unsaved people. And now you have the practical. And that practical is this. Hey, staying separate from the world is tough. It is not as easy as the other. There are a lot of things out there that you look at, a lot of circumstances, a lot of people, a lot of areas that you can get involved in that are going to hurt you. You have to have some kind of absolute standard that you go by that keeps you from getting into the places.

Remember now, God wants to build everything in your life that gets you to do everything that He needs you to do. The devil wants to take that and everything away from you in doing that. And he will have, and it does not just happen in the world. It happens in every church in this country, in this planet. That is the way the devil does. Remember, the devil's main sphere is not in the bars. It is not in the gambling halls. It is not all the wild places that we think about in life. The devil's main sphere is religion. He loved the uppermost seats in the synagogue, and he loved spiritual wickedness at high places. Be aware of that.

Some of you, God is doing a tremendous work. Some of you have come out of the world. You have got into the Bible. God has opened up the windows for you. He has opened up Heaven for you. He has given you everything. And if you do not know, the devil does not know that, you are naive. You need to protect what God has given you. You need to protect. You need to guard it. You need to protect it, and you need to develop it. Next January, many of you will learn how to use these principles in dealing with people. These are the tools in your toolbox that when you sit down with somebody, you will not give it into the former fashion that I gave it to you today. But in working with somebody and helping them understand and laying things out where they are at in their life, you will walk them through this process. You have to have been able to go through it yourself. It is just that simple. It is just that simple. These principles are invaluable. They are invaluable.

I want to leave you with one last verse, and then we are going to be done today. It is a great principle out of Proverbs chapter 4 again. Want to have a good life? You want to have a good,

healthy life? That ought to be the goal of everybody that is a saved person. Look at Proverbs chapter 4 verse 20. When you are dealing with people, when you are dealing with yourself, when you are facing all these things that I am talking about today, you are simply dealing with the issues of life. The issues of life are the issues that you and I have to deal with in life every day. The issues in life are the issues that you as a young Christian have to look at to protect yourself, develop yourself. Look what he says.

*Proverbs 4:20-23*

*My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.*

*Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.*

*For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*

*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

You see that thing? My son, here is what you want to mark in this passage. "My son, attend to my words," mark it in yellow. "Incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart." Mark it. "For they are life unto those that find them and health to their flesh." Verse 23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Mark that verse. The issues of life come out of your heart, and it is based on what you do with the principles of the Word of God. You want to have a good life? You want to have a healthy life? You want to have all the things that God has for you? Then you keep, you keep with all diligence your heart with the principles of God's Word.

When we are finished here this morning, I will give you a few minutes to get your kids out of the nursery whenever. I will call you back up. I need to have a meeting with all the people who are prayer group leaders, and you are all welcome to come if you are in a prayer group. It really is all about all of you, but you know, I do need the leaders, but you are all welcome to come. I pray. Father, we do thank You and pray.