

I. Introduction: Ministry Principles and the "Big Picture"

Thank you, John. John was one of the original Harmonicats. You guys are laughing. Who knows who the Harmonicats were? Let me see a hand. One person back there, Joanne. That makes you about 75 years old if you remember the Harmonicats. Your parents had the album, but that's an easy excuse out. You don't look 75 anyhow; 65 maybe, but not 75. No, I'm just kidding.

Well, it's going to be a long day today, and it's going to be a hard day today, but I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. It's going to be a fun time in everything we've got to do today, and I'm looking forward to the Bible today. Again, today I'm going to give you probably one of the greatest compounding principles that you're ever going to get for ministry. We're fast approaching what we're going to start in January in our people ministry of taking some of you and really helping you build into the principles. If you notice, the last couple of weeks, it's been some really, I mean, the whole book of 2 Corinthians has been good, but the last couple of weeks you're getting some absolutely what I call fundamental principles that you've got to keep in the back of your mind.

We've been looking at helping people fix what's broken in their lives, and there's never going to be a shortage of people with problems in their life. We live in a very problematic society, and it's only going to get worse. The biblical principles are the only answer to all of it, and it's what we do. Last week we dealt with a very basic, fundamental concept, and it's probably one of the single things you're going to use all of the time in everything that you try to do with people. You're going to find that some situations are very easy to work with, some are kind of middle of the road, and others are very traumatic and very hard. I told you last week that hard situations, drastic situations, always require drastic solutions. You've got to meet it with equal force.

I gave you two great principles:

1. Real biblical love, based on the Bible, isn't always this nicey-nicey thing where you always just give in to somebody and you always love them. I know we're to love everybody, but you've got to understand how that works within the principles. Real biblical love will always require a biblical approach to any issue or problem. In other words, you've got to use the principles to meet the problem face to face, head on, however you want to explain it.
2. True biblical love will always meet the issue with equal force. Whatever you deal with, you've got to deal with it with the principles that match up to the problem. You just have to do that.

I think that's the number one failure that people have when they try to help people or deal with people. We live in a society, and I've said this many, many times, where there's no real accountability or responsibility; nothing is anybody's fault anymore. That just simply will not work when it comes to solving problems.

Today I want to give you, I think, for me anyhow, in my own humble opinion, the greatest single piece of this puzzle in understanding how to deal with people and their issues. For some of you, this will answer a lot of questions. It'll put a lot of things into perspective for you. As I said earlier, in January and February, about 30 or 40 of you are going to begin a journey. You're going to go inside the Bible and look at issues from the inside out. You're going to see the cause and the effect in a way unlike you've ever imagined or ever seen it before. I want to take you behind the veil, so to speak. I want to take you to a place where you can really see how this thing not only starts, but how it breaks down in all of the process and give you all the tools that you need.

I likened it last week to being a mechanic or being an electrician or being a plumber, that you have to be able to use the tools and have the tools and know how to use them. In dealing with people in the ministry, the number one thing that you've got to focus on, and it's true of the Bible, too. You've heard me say it all the time that when it comes to the Bible, you never study the Bible from a Christian standpoint. You've heard me say it many, many times, and people look at that and they say, "Well, wow, how else would you look at it?" Well, you'd look at it from God's standpoint. Christianity is just a small part of what God is doing throughout the Bible. When you look at the Bible from a Christian standpoint, then you only see one part of it, and you start to read things for a Christian in the places that there were no Christians. You've got to step back and look at the Bible from the big picture. You've got to see the Bible from what God is doing, not from what man is doing, not from what Christianity is doing. You've got to be able to step back and see the whole Bible in a panoramic view and understand the big picture of what God is doing.

It's the same way with people and people's problems. The key to understanding how to work with people is not looking at the person and their problem. The real key to that is to understand the big picture behind the problem. It's never what it appears to be. It's never what they tell you it is. It's always a bigger picture that when you start to peel back the layers, then you begin to see and understand. To me, that is probably the greatest single fundamental thing that you have to learn about your own life and about the life of why people have problems. It's true of why we have problems in churches. It's true of why we have problems in our country. It's the big picture. One of the things I want to do today, and just a small element of this, is I want to bring the big picture into a little clearer focus for you.

II. The Prevailing Spirit of Deception in the Laodicean Age

We know in the book of Revelation, and the book of Revelation is a tremendous book, but we know from our past studies that Revelation 1, 2, and 3 really were told and shown how the church age breaks down into seven periods of church history, approximately 200 or so years for each period. If you were or are a student of church history, you'll also know that each period of the history of the church was faced with a different issue that they had to deal with and they had to fight against. The issues that they had in the early Ephesus church are not the same issues that we have. When you go into Smyrna or Pergamos, or you go into Thyatira or Sardis, their issues were not the same issues that we face. I really believe that that's why God broke the period down so you could see it. So where we're at in 2012, we would understand that the issues that we are

facing today are nowhere near the same issues that they faced in the church at Ephesus back in 200 AD, or Pergamos in 325, or Thyatira in 500. They're totally and completely different. We'll call it the prevailing spirit of the world at that particular point in time.

Years ago, John Busquette brought an article in. He goes, "Every time I say something, I can't remember." He goes on and tries to find it. He's the greatest researcher I've ever met in my life. I wish I had his skills. But I told him, years ago, I can't even remember the guy's name. I can't even remember the book. But years ago, I read a book that an old English pastor who lived there in the 1800s, he made an interesting statement. I never forgot the statement. Can't remember the book, but I remember the statement. He said, "The job of every Christian, no matter what age or period of time he lives in, the fundamental job of every Christian is to find out what the prevailing spirit of that age is that is against God and what God is trying to do. Then, with all of his power, all of his might, all of the wisdom that God gives him, his single fundamental job is that with everything that God gives him, to go against that prevailing spirit."

In his day and age, when he wrote that book, he talked about the prevailing spirit of his time, and this was the 1800s. He recognized what his spirit of the age was, and he talked about the infidelity and the apostasy that the church was going into. That's the one right before we're in today. I want to tell you, it was an incredible statement. My intent today is not to teach you church history, but we know from the Bible and laying it out that we live in the last church period, and that church period is called Laodicea. Laodicea means "rights of the people" or "justice of the people." The greatest book in the New Testament that lines up to the church of Laodicea is the book of Colossians.

I don't know if you understand how all this works, but Colossians is the only book in the Bible outside the book of Revelation where the word Laodicea is found, and it's found five times in the book of Colossians. Colossae was a city that was up here. Eleven miles south of Colossae was the city of Laodicea. It's always been interesting to me to see the proximity of how close Colossae was to Laodicea. It's like when you drive down 40 Highway, you could get three different tickets. You could get a ticket from Blue Springs Cops if you're in Blue Springs. You could get one from the Independence Police Department if you drive on a little farther. Then if you went on a little bit farther, just past where we used to meet our church, you'd get a ticket from Kansas City. But you don't even know when you're moving in and moving out of that particular city. That's the way it is. That's why he took the book of Colossians and he used that as an illustration of Laodicea. It was so close that you could walk over the border of Colossae to Laodicea and not know you crossed over.

In Christianity today, when you understand what the fundamental issue is and the prevailing spirit that we're up against, you will see and understand how easy it is for us as Christians to cross the line into Laodicea and never even know you made the boundary check. It's incredible when you look at it and you understand it. I think the book of Colossians in every way, shape, or form. Again, my purpose today is not to teach you the book of Colossians. I just want to kind of lay a foundation. But I think it's an incredible book in that sense. In chapter 1, he completely redefines who Christ is. You know why he does that in chapter 1? I'll tell you why, because the church of Laodicea has lost the definitions of who Christ is. Then in chapter 2 and in chapter 3,

what he does in those two chapters, amazingly, he shows you what the issues were of the day, and lo and behold, they are the exact same issues that we face today. Then what he does in chapter 3 and 4, at the end of 3 and into 4, he talks about my response to it. He tells me how as a 20th century, 21st century Christian, I am to maintain that attitude of going against a spirit that is the prevailing spirit of this age. Today it's an incredible thing.

The spirit of this age today, it's not apostasy as it was in 1800. It's not infidelity as it was there, departing from the Word of God. No, the spirit of the age today is one of total deception. The spirit that prevails in our church age is one of total deception.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

III. The Consequences of Deception: America and the Church

That's what the devil has accomplished in our time. I'm not trying to teach you church history today, but the Laodicean church starts about 1890. It comes up through the 20th century, right on into the 21st century, and right up to the rapture of the church, and it ends with the tribulation period or the beginning of the tribulation period. That's the way that it is, and that's what the devil has accomplished. He's always been a deceiver. Don't misunderstand me; he always has. That's his main tactic, but a total deception of the church would have never worked in the other six church periods. The reason why it would have never worked is because back in those six, they still had the Word of God, and there can be no total, complete deception for any church as long as they have the Bible. When they lose the Bible, he totally takes over and totally deceives. That is why today in the church age we live in, the prevailing spirit of this age, once the Bible was taken out of our hands, and it has been, it's one of total deception. Without that book, we are totally at his mercy to be deceived.

In relationship to the terrible tragedy in Connecticut, I saw in the Kansas City Star, in the paper there, one of the deals talking about it simply asked the question, "America asked why?" Obviously, they're asking, "Why did that happen?" The first thing I heard after it all took place, somebody came up and said, "Why would God let this happen?" Mike Huckabee, he's a hero of mine. I like Mike Huckabee. He's a straight shooter, and he was on Fox News, and he made a tremendous statement. They probably won't have him back on again, but he took a real stand for the Word of God and the Bible. He said, "You know what? When you took prayer out of schools, the devil brought guns into school." He says, "If we would not have kicked God out on the front side, we probably wouldn't be asking why God did it on the backside." He said, "God didn't do it." He basically gave you a point-by-point thing like I gave you Thursday night. It was incredible.

Do you see, that's where we're at. America will never figure it out that when you dump the Bible, when you dump God, what do you think's going to happen? When you get rid of God, you get rid of principles. We now have a culture where we have American culture that wants nothing to do with God, nothing to do with religion. They'll spend millions of dollars to keep a nativity scene off of public property or the Ten Commandments out of a courthouse. What do you think's going to happen when you inject that mindset into a culture? America has to ask why. You've been deceived. You have been deceived. The only thing that kept any country down through history was the preserving power of a book that God gave man to save his soul. We've been deceived. Without that book, we're totally at his mercy. A while back I preached you a message, and it was "Be not deceived, be not disarmed, be not discouraged." In our lives today, in America today, we've been deceived.

Can we only want to answer the question of why God's people and church are so dysfunctional today? That's the word. We have dysfunctional pastors, we have dysfunctional churches, we have dysfunctional parents, we have dysfunctional Christians, and we have dysfunctional families. That's the byword today. It's the talking point. Absolutely. That's exactly what's wrong. The only answer to it, the only answer why God's people can go to church on Sunday, carry their Bibles, and yet be so dysfunctional in every aspect of their life, the only answer is you've been deceived.

The Bible is, I tell you all the time, the Bible is the standard. If you don't have the Bible as the standard, then you have no standard. It has to be the standard. The Bible standard says churches are supposed to be one way. You'll find that in Acts 11 and 12, but they're not. The Bible says that pastors are supposed to be a certain way. You'll find the way that they should be in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and 5, even. They're called the pastoral epistles, but they're not. The Bible says that God's people are supposed to be a certain way, but they're not. I gave you a great example last week about how you deceive yourself in thinking you're in fellowship with God, or "I'm in fellowship with God" when I'm nowhere near in fellowship with God. We live in a day and age where the spirit that prevails is one of deception, that in everything that we see, it's really not real. It's really not true.

You know why a guy goes out there and kills people in this little school or this school or this place or this movie theater? There is no safe place on this planet today. We walk into churches and they shoot you. You go to a movie and they shoot you. You send your little kids to school and somebody comes in and shoots you. Somebody better figure out there's only one place of safety, and that's between the pages of this holy book. We've lost it. We've been deceived. I bet you some of you came today because you thought you were going to get a Christmas message. I told my wife, "They missed it by a week."

I've made this statement before, and I believe it with all of my heart. I'm not making it just off my cuff, or I'm just not making it because it's a good talking point, or just because it's a good thing to say that stirs people up a little bit. That's not at all. What I'm about to tell you, I've told you many times, and honestly, I believe this with all of my being, with every fiber of my moral heart, everything, I believe this so desperately. I wish I didn't believe it, but I believe it. I've told you before, we live in an age with a spirit that prevails as one of deception. I personally believe that most of the people who claim to be saved have really never been born again. It's almost

impossible to go to a church today and to get saved. That sounds terrible. That ought to be the one place you can go. But in most churches, they're more concerned in getting your money than they are God getting your soul.

People say, "Oh, Billy Graham's a great man." I love Billy Graham. I appreciate all that he's done in his life. But I want to tell you something. In this day and age, and for a long time, or the last 20 years, you would be hard pressed to get saved at a Billy Graham crusade. He preaches a watered-down message that doesn't offend anybody. Then at the invitation, people flock down, and what do they get? They don't get somebody sitting down with an open Bible, working them through it. They don't get somebody asking all the right questions you've got to ask before you win somebody to Christ. They get a little card with a little prayer. When you read that prayer to God, you're saved. I want to tell you something, if that is salvation, then he wasted a lot of time writing this book. When somebody wants to get saved, the greatest model of that is Acts 8 with the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip. Philip asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The classic answer was, "How can I, except some man should guide me?"

I know churches in this city. I know churches across this country. When they give the invitation, the pastor gets up and he says, "Who wants to be saved?" And he has them raise their hand. Then he says, while they're in the seat, "Repeat this prayer after me." Then he says, "Praise God, you're saved." You're out of your mind. In the day and age that we live in, with the screwed-up mindset that people think that baptism saves them, the Holy Spirit of God and the Holy Ghost saves them, or some stupid aspect saves them, you're kidding me to think that you think the devil's going to let that happen. We've been deceived. We've been deceived. The spirit of our age is one of deception.

Let me be clear. I want to be very clear about this. I'm not in a position to say to any individual or about any individual that he's saved or she's lost or vice versa. That's not my job. Though I must confess to you, and I'll be very honest with you, there are some of you here sitting here this morning that I am worried about. I would never come to you and say a word. Maybe I ought to, but I want to tell you there's some of you sitting here this morning that as your pastor, I'm worried about. But I know that's not my job. But I also know that I don't have to say you're saved or you're lost if you really know the Bible and just follow the Bible principles. Because I've told you many, many times, people always define who they really are. So you can say whatever you want to say. You can make whatever claim you want to claim about your salvation, but your life will be what you really are. By that you will define yourself. It's just that simple.

One of my greatest favorite verses in the Bible, it's an impacting verse.

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

That's a telling verse. That verse says that if you really love God, it shows. It doesn't show by what you say; it shows by how you live your life. That's powerful. But you see, we're living in a world where these messages that I'm preaching are not popular because nobody wants to be told, "You've been deceived."

Hey, sweetheart, when you met Mr. Bozo and he told you how wonderful he was, and he told you how, and he was so charismatic, and he was so everything, and he was good looking, and he was the dreamboat. I mean, he was your love boat captain. He was everything that you could ever want. Then after a while you found out he was the biggest jerk on planet earth, and that he had lied to you. He had told you it was not true. He had a whole history in his life of just terrible things. Do you like being deceived that way? That's why some women never wake up. That's why some of them will put up with it year after year after year after year. You know why? You can tell them, you can show them what kind of Bozo this is. He can have a track record going back with all kinds of problems, emotional instability, and because it isn't a fact that you love him, you don't even know what love is. It's the fact that you just can't come to terms that you've been deceived. We live in a world and Christian world where the thing that we fight against is the spirit of deception.

My Bible says some very clear statements on who's saved and who's not.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

The question you ask is, "Where's the fruit?"

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The question you ask is, "Have they?" We have a study here. I preached it a couple of times, and people are teaching it right now: the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. Have they? I told you last week and the last couple of weeks as we've been coming through this that your fellowship with God ought to be the number one thing in your life above all else. Is it? Last week we talked about a sorrow unto repentance and sorrowing after a godly manner in your life. Is there? You see, we can say whatever we want, and people do. We can argue the point all day long. At the end of the day, it isn't about what you say or what you don't say. It's the evidence that that book produces that when a man or a woman is truly saved, there's something different. When it's not, this is my own personal opinion, living 45 plus years seeing it from one end to the other, we've been deceived.

These principles are absolute. They're not optional, and nobody lives above them. This is the hard side of Christianity today. Nobody wants to take a look and see what it really is. We like being deceived. Deceived is not confrontational. Deceived means that I can always make excuses for the situation. We like being deceived. Deception is something that you get comfortable with. When you don't have a Bible, it's something that you fall into and that you believe.

When you see people who claim to be saved and yet they have no change in their life, they have no fruit in their life, 5, 10, 15, 20 years, they don't do anything for God. They live like the world. They have nothing to do with God in this church. They never have any victory in their life. They really don't care to. There's no chastisement in their life, like we talked about last week. They flip in, they flip out. Nothing with God is of any importance to them. They drop God on Sunday morning for a football game. They'd go anywhere, do anything first over what God wants them to do. You've been deceived. I love you, but you've deceived yourself.

I've heard all the excuses. I've heard parents tell me, "Well, they had a bad experience in church." Think I haven't? "Well, there's too many phony Christians in churches." You want to see my list? Thirty of you here today. So what? What in life does not have its goofy people? What in life doesn't have its phony? How come you'll go to the Chiefs game when they're the worst team on the planet, but you won't come to church because there's phony Christians, but you'll go watch a phony quarterback, a phony running back, a phony coach, and everybody else that's phony about it? I'm going to give you the answer: you've been deceived. You've been deceived. Many parents will never accept the truth of their situation. It's always somebody else's fault right up to the lake of fire. Excuse after excuse instead of dealing with the problem biblically and the situation with equal force.

IV. Understanding Godly and Worldly Sorrow

I want to read the passage here and take heart. That was just my introduction. Let's look at verse 8 and come on down through here. I want to give you some more tools for your toolbox. I'm telling you, this will be the single greatest thing. If you're going to work with people or you want to figure out the big picture, this is it. Understanding the prevailing spirit in our age and then putting these things into play.

Let's pick it up in 2 Corinthians 7:8. We talked about this last week, but we'll put it all together to make it have some continuity.

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Now, Lord, help us today. Help us to speak from the book to the heart and leave everything else out of it and help us just to get the clear principles of the Word of God and Spirit of God, do your work today and have me do mine, you do yours, and at the end of the day it will be a good day because these people will have what God wants them to have. In Jesus' name, for the sake of the ask it, amen.

I want to help you understand two vital concepts in understanding people and their issues in this big picture. I want to show you why many people never make it. I want to show you why when you start to deal with people, get involved with people, you're going to see this all the time, and it's a simple difference between a godly sorrow, verse 10, a godly sorrow, and a worldly sorrow. When understanding these two great concepts, you'll get a lot of answers of why people are the

way they are. You'll come maybe hopefully to the conclusion where you won't be under the cloud of deception anymore.

Verse 10 says:

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Now look at verse 11. He says in verse 11, that sorrowing after a godly sorrow "wrought" some things in you. The word "wrought" is an old English word. It means it "works in you." It brings about something in you. It produces something in you. That's what the old English word means.

V. The Six Evidences of Godly Sorrow and Their Contrast with Worldly Sorrow

If you'll come down through here, you'll see that a godly sorrow unto repentance produces six things in our life. If you don't see these six things, hey, leave your emotions out of it. I know he's your little baby boy and he's 45. I know he's your little sweetheart girl and she's 106. Leave emotions out of it. Get to the book. Quit being deceived. If you don't, the book, the book, the one that you believe this Christ is coming back, the one you believe the rapture, the one you believe everything in except when it smacks you in the face, you've been deceived.

Now the first thing he talks about here, he says:

3. A clearing of yourselves. That's getting everything clear between you and God. That's what it does. That's the first thing it does. It leads you to repentance, getting clear and clean to yourself to God.
4. Indignation. That's not indignation toward who hurt you. That's not indignation towards somebody you don't like. That's not indignation of somebody you blame for your problems. That indignation is about you and your sin against God. That's the problem. You don't hate your sin. You drink your beer and laugh. You smoke your dope and think it's funny. There's no indignation in your life about sin. You've been deceived. You've been deceived. You've been deceived.
5. What fear. That would be the fear of God. There's no fear of God. We do what we want to do. God ain't looking. There's no fear of God.
6. Vehement desire. That's to do right. When you sin against God, you come to the place in your life where you hate it so much, you've broken that fellowship, you've hurt God, you've wronged God, you've trampled His Word. It just tears you apart inside. It rips you daily, and it's a vehement desire to do right unless you've been deceived.
7. Zeal. That's a zeal to live for God. You can't tell me that God's people have a desire to live for God today because I can tell by the way they live their life. They define themselves differently. They have a desire to live their life with God, but the way they want to live it unto themselves, and that'll never work.
8. What revenge. Oh, we're big on revenge, aren't we? We're always big on revenge. "Oh, get that guy." "Well, I'd like to do this to that person," or "all this or that." That's not the revenge

he's talking about. He's talking about in the context of 2 Corinthians 10:6 where the Bible says that when you sin against God, you take revenge on your disobedience.

If you don't see these six things in somebody's life, I know he's your sweet baby boy. I understand that. I know she's the coddling little one. I understand all that. Put that aside. When you don't see those things in your life, my God, man, get back to the book. We've been deceived. Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle. Oh, it's got a little season in it. These principles are absolute. That's just the way they work.

VI. Biblical Illustrations: Judas and Peter

In the Bible, there are two great examples of this. These two sorrows are perfectly illustrated by the lives of two men in the New Testament, and brother, you've got to see this. The two men are Judas and Simon Peter. Both of these men sinned against God. Both these men denied the Lord. Both these men sold Him out, just like we do. Now I want you to notice the similarities here. Watch this. They both betray the Lord. Yet they're both sorry they did it. They both confess that they did it. They both repent that they did it. They both make restitution that they did it. Hey, if you'd set these two guys up side by side and look at that, you'd think they're both saved. If you took those two guys and put them side by side and you looked at the stories in their lives, you'd think they're both saved. I mean, come on, man. They're both apostles. They're both disciples, and they both went to the same church. They both had ministries. They both healed sick people, gave eyesight back to the blind. They both were baptized. They both walked with God three and a half years. They both had a responsibility in His ministry. Yet one winds up a suicide. The other winds up at the feet of Jesus. One winds up in a bottle in this pit. The other winds up in heaven. Now, how do you explain that? One's called the son of God. The other one's called the son of perdition. How do you explain that? It's easy. One of them got deceived. There's a picture of what you have to deal with today. One had godly sorrow. The other one had worldly sorrow.

I'm telling you, as sure as I'm talking to you today, some of God's people have been deceived the exact same way. I'll tell you again, I never look at a man or a woman and say to anybody, "That person's saved or lost." I've got more sense than that. But I don't have to. As I said, I just let that person define who they really are, and they always do. Hey, when you read the stories, you put it all together, I've got news for you. Judas and Peter defined exactly who they were. When you put all the facts together, all the material together, get all the verses together, there's nothing left undone. Those two men define who they are. If you think sitting here this morning as a child of God, me and you both, we don't define ourselves of who we are, you're out of your mind. You have been deceived. You've been deceived.

When Judas got busted, he's sorry. He is. Just like many, many people I've dealt with that you're going to deal with when their world falls apart and they get into deep trouble and self-in-wrongs, they're sorry. They're sorry. They're sorry. Sorrow of the world. When Peter got busted, he sorrowed after a godly sorrow. You see, we all define who we are. The Bible says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." "If any man loved God, the same is known of him." Hey, you know the crazy thing about all this? Judas is involved up to his eyeballs, and he's lost. Boy, if you're not, that doesn't say a whole lot about where you're at. No, I'm telling you, I'm not pointing my

finger at anybody. I'm just telling you, let the book point the fingers. I'm going to tell you right now, there's something wrong. Somebody's been deceived.

You see the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? Because there's no accountability, because there's no responsibility like we talked about last week. There's no Bible. People get deceived, and they actually say, as Judas said, "Gee, I'm saved. I went to church Sunday. It was the time of my life. I went forward. I've been in church all my life. Well, I went to church camp where I got saved. I confessed. I repented. I got baptized. I did all the right things." So did Judas. What was your point? Yet the key element is missing. Here's a man who went to church, was in ministry, did all the right things, confessed, repented, and everything. He winds up in a lake of fire. We've been deceived.

VII. The Nature and Consequences of Worldly Sorrow

I'm sorry to be the one that breaks your deception and your nice little world you live in. It would be much easier if we were all what I met in my office, and you could have laid down on a couch. We could have talked about your favorite color, your puppy, all the nice things in life. I've got a nice warm fuzzy feeling going before I drop the bomb. But I'm sorry. The bomb just needs to be dropped. We're up against the spirit in this age of deception. That's why there's no relationship in most people, no fellowship. The tragedy is nobody even cares. Nobody cares. You're more upset about your boyfriend or your girlfriend broke up with you. You're more upset about something broke in your car. You're more upset about you can't do this or you can't do that. You're more upset that you didn't win the lottery. You're more upset that you didn't get a raise at work. You're more upset about all of those things than the very fact that you have no fellowship with God. There's something wrong, brother. We are deceived ourselves or have deceived ourselves.

Now I'm going to show you the difference. Here's the sorrow of the world. Oh, I've heard it. I'm just quoting back or throwing up back what I've heard for the last 40 years in my little office, the upper room. "Oh, Bob, I made a mess out of things. Oh, Bob, I've ruined my life. Oh, Bob, my life's a mess. My family's a mess. Oh, I've just done some really dumb things. Oh, I've just doomed my marriage and my family. I can't do anything anymore. Bob, I wish I was dead. I'm sorry for what I did. I wish I would never have done it. I was so stupid." Many times when people come down through that line and they lay out that whole thing and they go on it, many, many, many, many times, the end result is that they go out and blow their brains out. See, that's worldly sorrow.

We had a young girl who came to this church for a long time, a perfect example. Everybody probably helped her, worked with her, helped her. She came to a point in her life where she had a lot of issues in her past. She came to the point where, and I always kind of worried about this one, because I just never really saw anything. But you know what, what are you going to do? I watched her go and go and go. She got to a point, and then something else came into her life, and boy, she dropped God and this church and everything and lied like a bad habit. A couple of weeks ago, she sent a text to somebody in this church, and the text said something like this, and I'm paraphrasing, but it says something like this: "My life is still miserable. Nothing's happened. I've done nothing, gotten any better. I've got all kinds of financial problems. I got this. I got a bad

marriage. I got all this stuff. But you know what? I just really don't miss all that I had at church." Now, I understand exactly where that person's coming from. When you get your life in a mess and you don't miss the things of God, you've deceived yourself. I don't know what to tell you.

Sometimes the suicide is much slower. I've seen this all the time. Sometimes it takes 30 years through drugs and alcohol. But as the verse says, it always winds up the same way. You're sorry. You're sorry you got into the jam. You're sorry you got caught. But it all winds up the same place. It says death. Death. You see, your sorrow is all about you. Your sorrow is all about your problem, your discomfort. It isn't about, "Oh God, I let You down." It isn't about, "Oh God, I grieved the Holy Spirit." It isn't, "Oh God, I made some young Christian stumble." It isn't about, "Oh dear God, I was so stupid. I did something like that, and everybody saw it. Everybody knows it. And now I've lost my testimony." It isn't about that. All it is is you're sorry you got caught. Worldly sorrow. You've deceived yourself. You've deceived yourself.

VIII. The Nature and Fruits of Godly Sorrow

Now, godly sorrow, that's different. You want a good example of godly sorrow? Psalm 51. Don't turn to it. Just write it down. David's godly sorrow unto repentance. But godly sorrow is different. Godly sorrow is, "Oh dear Lord, I've never been any good. I'm rotten right now. I'm never going to be any good at all. At my very best, I'm worthless. I'm not worth shooting. I'd blow my brains out, but I don't have any brains to blow out. I'm sorry. I know better. After what You've done for me and what You've given me and how You saved me, for me to throw it away on something that's so worthless, on a beer, on cigarettes, on dope, on this, on that. I don't know why You've put up with me. God, I should be in the bottomless pit with the fire screaming my lungs out today. God, unless You do something for me, I'll never be anything. God, I hurt You. My sin was against You. I hurt the work of God, the church I go to, the ministry, the other people that looked at me, all the kids, all the adults, everybody. Lord, You died for me and You gave it all up for me, and I think about nothing but myself. Oh God, I'm so miserable. I am grieved that I grieved the Holy Spirit of God. I took what You gave me and I threw it away. And God, I'm sorry. Lord, I'll do, I'll do, I'll get into that book. Lord, I'll do it. Whatever You want me to do. Whatever the preacher says. Lord, if he makes me stand on my head on Sunday morning in a corner, that's what I'll do. Lord, I'll not miss another Sunday. I'll not miss another Thursday. I will not show up late again. I will not walk in after the music starts. God, I'll dump whoever, whatever, wherever I go, I'll get rid of anything to keep what I've got with You." Godly sorrow, worldly sorrow. See the difference?

When a man simply sees that his sins are terrible, and today, I've seen God's people do something that was absolutely stupid and laugh about it. Think it was funny. Well, that picture's getting a little more into focus for you today. When a man sees a sin against God, when he becomes God-conscious, and that sweet fellowship that he had with God is gone, it brings a heavy, unbearable burden on him from the grieving the Holy Spirit of God that's living inside him. When that Holy Spirit of God is not grieved, it's real easy, kids. He ain't inside you. One man who represents, in my humble opinion, 99% of God's people, sorrows for what he did after a worldly sorrow. The other man, 1% of God's people, sorrows over to God because he knows what he did to God. In

this old world today, you'll find person after person, just like Judas, they've been deceived. Not one evidence in their life that substantiates their claim to be saved, not one, not in their attitude, not in their actions. Oh, their mommy and daddy, they always justify them. Those friends will justify them, but they're their friends, and usually the mom and daddy are in the same boat they're in.

IX. The Deceived Condition: Unsaved and Unchastised

Listen, the greatest proof that a man is not saved, I said it again, the greatest proof that a man or woman is not saved, not saved, not saved, the greatest proof that a man or woman is not saved, even though they say they are, is the fact that he or she lives that way with the world and the filth of this old world, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 years. After that period of time so far from God claiming to be saved, if you truly are, then you'll be in an insane asylum, or you'll be dead, or you'll be in a wheelchair because:

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

You've deceived yourself. You actually believe a Christian can actually get saved, take what God's got for him, and just live your life any way you want to. You actually believe that. That is the prevailing spirit of deception. You think you can do what you want to do, however you want to do it, and just thumb your nose at God and live your life the way you want to live it. That's the deception of the world that we live in.

All right, now show me you're wishing you went to First Baptist. They had a Christmas pageant today. You could have seen Mary and Joseph and the three wise guys all there together. Hey, I've had people that have called me over my 40 years. Boy, the faces all go into one blur. I've had people call me. The track record is about once every year, every two years. I usually get a call. That's why I shut my phone off now at night when I go to bed. I used to leave it on. What a fool I was. I'll get a call about one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning. They're all weeping and crying. They got drunk. Something didn't go right. They got into drugs. Something didn't go right. They get that twinge of sorrow. It had nothing to do with God. But they know who I am when they've been to church in and out. Mom and daddy come to church many times over the years. I'll get a phone call at two o'clock in the morning, and they're whining and crying. I mean, some of them, they're crying so hard, you can't even hear what they're saying. But they all say the same thing. They all say, "Oh, Bob, I'm sorry. My life's a mess."

I just listen. After about the third or fourth time, I know it didn't go anywhere. You say, "Well, you've got to help." Oh, I help them. But I'm under no illusion. It always goes the same way. You tell them, "Well, come on back to church next Sunday. Let's pick it up where we left off. Come on, I'll help you. I'll put some people in your life." "Oh, Bob, thank you. Oh, thank you. Oh, yeah. I need to get right with God. Oh, I'm not right." You know what happens? They come back to church, and three or four or five weeks later, they get feeling better. They move past that sorrow because it was worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow brings you to real repentance and puts those six things in your life, and they're right back out again. You say, "What do you say to that?" Talk to you next year. That's the way it works. That Bible really puts it into a pretty good perspective.

You know the Bible says over there, and I don't mean to be crude this morning, but I probably already have been, so a little cruder won't probably hurt. But the Bible says in 2 Peter 2:22:

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

I don't know if you know it or not, but in the Bible, an unsaved man is likened to a dog, and an unsaved woman is likened to a sow or a pig. That says exactly what I'm talking about. Somebody gets right for a while, and then they go right back to their vomit for the man. That's why you ever analyze it and ask yourself, you know, the worst thing in the world for a drunk is to get drunk so much you just go home and throw your insides out. I mean, you just vomit up your insides every day. I mean, you say, "Worst, it's got to be the worst feeling in the world." And yet, you know what? You think at one time that would be enough, it's not. They're right back out into it again. Why is that? Because that's what 2 Peter 2:22 says. I've seen women do the exact same thing. I've seen them get from one mess to another mess, and they come in and they get right for a while. They want to do right, but you know what? Because they've deceived themselves, and there's no real change in them. They're a sow, and the unsaved man's a dog. They're right back to the pig pen. Then people stand around and say, "I wonder what happened to her." Mom and dad say, "Oh, I wonder what happened to him." 2 Peter 2:22 is what happened to him.

2 Peter 2:22. The Bible says:

As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

That's an unsaved woman. Can I translate that in English for you? Take a pig, dress it up, clean it up, perfume it up, put jewelry all over it. Step back and look at that pig and say, "That is one beautiful looking pig." Doesn't change. You know, the number one characteristic, the Bible is perfect. You know what the number one characteristic of a dog is? Yes. I don't mean to be gross, but guess what it is. How many of you got a dog? You're going to tell me you don't know. What's the number one characteristic of a dog? Don't tell me he pees on your furniture. That's not what I'm talking about. I've known kids that do that. What's the number one thing a dog does? Daring the observer of dogs. It eats his own vomit. Now for me, it's good because I don't have to clean it up. Just wait. Barb said, "He threw up on the floor." Just be quiet. But yeah, I'm with you, honey. It's gross. But that's what an unsaved person does. That's why they keep going back to drugs after drugs after drugs, alcohol after alcohol after alcohol. Hey, come on. Can I just ask the question? Don't you understand why some people do make it and some people don't? Why do some people have the power to break those things in their life and other people don't? Why does this guy have the power of God to do it and this person don't? The answer is they don't have the power of God to do it. That's why they've been deceived. Oh, they're sorry. They want their wife back. They want their kids back. They want this back. They want that back. They want their job back. They want everything back. But it isn't about that. It's about them and God, and you don't see the six things change in their life that brings them back to repentance. I don't know what to tell you. I had a mistletoe message that was wonderful this morning. And God says, "Scrap it. You get your mistletoe in your own time."

But I hear them all the time, "Well, Brother Bob, I'm saved." "Well, Bob, she's saved." "Bob, he's saved." Well, if that's true, then the devil's saved. There has to be a point in our lives when we come back to reality in this world of ultra deception. Whether we like it or not, whether it's popular or not, whether we have to make hard line decisions or not, let me tell you something. You would do greater service if you faced those kids, faced those people, and drilled the hard line and laid it out where it was, and then held it accountable to that. But oh, no. If you don't hold them accountable now, you'll hold them accountable with the Great White Throne Judgment. But a person is truly saved and gets out of fellowship. That cessation is the breaking point. The breaking of fellowship will always lead to a godly sorrow.

X. The Imperative of Fellowship and Accountability

I'm going to tell you something. That's where your parents ought to work with your children, all you young people. You ought to work to the point with your children:

9. That nobody has more influence in their life than you do.
10. You ought to build a relationship with them, a fellowship with them through those five stages I've told you of child training.

You ought to build that relationship with them that wherever they go in life, not when they're five, six, seven, eight, when they're 18, 19, 20, 21, that being out of fellowship with their mom and dad is the thing that they can't sleep at night about. That they can't rest till they pick up that phone and say, "Dad, I'm sorry, Mom, I'm sorry. I can't stand it. I can't go a day. I can't go to work tomorrow without knowing that we ain't right where it needs to be." That's the sign that you've done what you need to do with your kids because that is what exactly God wants us to have with Him. You should not be able to go through one day without being in fellowship with Him. It should drive you nuts. It ought to make you the most miserable person on this planet. Well, it has. It ought to make you the most, it ought to just drive you crazy that in your heart, in your mind, you say, "I cannot stand one more hour being estranged from my heavenly Father." You transfer that into your earthly family and get that relationship the way that it is.

I don't care. Kids are going to be kids, and they're going to do some dumb things, and they're going to do some wrong things. But you better have that line and bring them back because when they get to 18, 19, 16 or 17, and they start to tell you what they think life's all about, and you don't have that edge where they look at you and respect you, who you are and your opinion, and understand that, that you know what, "I'm not going to push it because I'm not going to break what I have with my father or my mom or that family. I'm going to keep it no matter what it is." If it breaks for a while, and it might break for a while, but you know what, it'll always be the thing that reels them back in. You say, "Why is that?" Because that's the thing that always reels it back in with me and God. I can't stay away from Him. Oh, I'm wicked. I'm rotten. I'm a boor. You had to run me over with a truck, God, and then back up and run me over a couple more times. But I can't go a day without Him. I can't go a day without Him. That's what it has to be.

The great illustration of this in closing, and I'm going to be done at 12, I'm in good shape. The great illustration of this is the nation of Israel. If you would talk to a Jew today and you get into a

conversation about him and God, he'd tell you this. He'd tell you he's exactly where he's supposed to be with God. If you'd go into his house for a while right now while you're putting up your Christmas trees and having Christmas, he's celebrating Hanukkah. He's religious. He's probably in a temple more than most of God's people are in church. When they call a feast, he's there. He goes to church on Saturday. I'd like to see us have church. You know why God had church on Sunday instead of Saturday? Because he knows when you're partying on Saturday night, you ain't coming to church. They go on Saturday. They reverence God. They reverence Moses. They revere the prophets. They revere their Old Testament. Why? You see those people? They still wear their hair. They go to Orthodox ones. They wear their hair to be a stench to this world. You go to New York City or Chicago or some of those, probably Kansas City, and go down where the Orthodox Jews live. You can tell in a moment, "Oh, he's a Jew." His hair is down to here. He wears a little hat on his head. You go over to Jerusalem. You know where you're at all day long? You're out there partying. You know where he's at? He was over there on that Wailing Wall going like this with his Bible. You know what he's doing? He's praying for that Messiah. You know what that Wailing Wall is? That's back there in Lamentations. He knows what it is. He's over there praying for that Messiah. I wonder how many of you prayed for the Lord to come back this week. But you know the difference? He's dying and going to the lake of fire, sure as a bullet. You know what his problem is? You know what Israel's problem is? He's been deceived.

So don't tell me. Don't tell me. You have so many of God's people who claim to be saved, and yet they're so indifferent, so dysfunctional when it comes to God, the church, and the ministry. They'd do anything on this planet before they'd serve God. They fail in their life in everything they do. They're the most miserable people in the world. They have no power over sin. They have no purpose in their life. Been deceived. Be not deceived. Be not disarmed. And be not discouraged. No, no. Real repentance brings something in you. A godly repentance "wrought" something within you. It brings. It produces. It produces:

- A clearing of yourself to God.
- Indignation against what you did against God.
- Fear that you'll not do it again because of a holy God.
- A vehement desire to stay away from sin and the people that are like that.
- Zeal to be everything God wants you to be.
- It also teaches you that the greatest enemy you've got, the greatest enemy you've got, the greatest enemy you have and I have is myself.

I take revenge on myself when I go against God. I don't laugh about it. I don't smile about it. I don't bump my wife or bump this person over here and say, "Oh, that was funny." I stand on this pulpit and preach the Word of God. I watch some of you laugh at some of the things I say. I watch some of you think it's funny. You know what? I think you're funny. At the judgment seat of Christ, if you even make it there, you've been deceived. Those are the things you have to learn because you're going to work with people, and people are going to be problematic. You have to be able to understand. It doesn't mean you stand back and say, "Well, that person's unsaved because I don't see anything in their life." I'm not. It's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about realizing the big picture. The spirit of the age that you and I are living in is one of

deception. Churches have been deceived. Pastors have been deceived. Christians have been deceived. This whole world has been deceived. All you've got to do is turn the news on and listen to the world talk about why this happened and what's this and what's going on here. You know they have been blind, been deceived. If anybody ought to have the truth, it ought to be us. But you know what? We fall for the same deception. We've got the book. You know why? Because that book is nothing to your life. It doesn't mean anything to you. Your relationship with God doesn't mean anything to you. It's all a deception. Every head bowed and every eye closed.