

## 2 Corinthians 7

Sunday 12/9/2012

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn back to the book of 2 Corinthians chapter 7. Today is going to be a very key lesson for many of you in dealing with people. A lot of what we are going to talk about today is really a glimpse of what I am going to try to show you and teach you when we get into the people ministry here after the first of the year.

This material is invaluable. It is some of the best practical material that you are ever going to find anywhere in the Bible for your life and my life. Especially in our church, we have a lot of young families, a couple with young kids, and the material today that is found in this passage and all the ramifications of it, I think are invaluable.

There is a real attack today on the family. The family is fractured in this country; it is broken, it is busted. If anybody should be the model for what a family should be, it ought to be Christianity. Unfortunately, in most cases, Christian families are just as bad off and as broken as the unsaved ones.

Last week we saw another real practical side to the ministry. We saw it through Paul's own life, which was incredible. I told you last week I always enjoy learning from Paul. We saw how he faced all the indifference of God's people that was in the church at Corinth. You remember that we have had many, many lessons on this, and we have come, I really enjoyed not only 2 Corinthians, but 1 Corinthians. I think that for anybody who really wants to learn those two books, there is so much material there.

You remember from our previous studies that we saw how this church had gotten away from the Bible. Two basic aspects to them had kind of fallen by the wayside. They had become a very carnal church, and Paul talked about it being filled with spiritual babies. They were arguing and fighting and frustrating each other and disputing with each other over everything. It is incredible.

At the same time, they had gotten away from the Bible doctrinally. They were way off base on just about every important issue or subject that you are going to find that the church needs to have to be effective; they had it messed up someplace. He writes them in 1 Corinthians a very open letter, a very honest letter, and a very hard letter. I showed you when we came through it that he does not spare anything from them. Chapter by chapter, he flat just lays it on the line to them. He writes them, as I said, a very hard book. Chapter by chapter, he confronts what they are doing wrong.

To put the whole story together, it does not really tell you where or when, but at some point, the church responded to Paul. We are going to talk about this today. They worked it out. What happened is what always happens when people follow the biblical process: they got the problem solved for the most part. We find that the church repented of its mishandling of just about everything, and they basically got back to the Bible, most of them.

This is where the book of 2 Corinthians comes in. In Paul's first letter, 1 Corinthians, he chews them out. In 2 Corinthians, once they repent and come back and want to do what is right, he then

writes chapter by chapter, showing them how to get back online with ministry. He begins to teach them how to be right in the ministry that God has called them to do. It is invaluable for us today. It really is. I have told you many, many times the great contrast between the two books. You are going to find that in Christianity today, not only do churches come in these two categories, but most Christians do.

Many, many churches fall into the category of 1 Corinthians: worldly, doctrinally impure, with every issue going as you can, getting nothing done for the Lord. Then you find some that get it together and do the job that God has called them to do. But you are going to find, as in any church, not everybody embraced Paul in a favorable way with what he said and what he told them. There was an element of indifference that still existed in this church that we see as he starts to come through 2 Corinthians. Not everybody was happy with Paul.

## I. Principles for Dealing with People

One of the things you learn by that is you can have the best intentions and try to help people the best you can, but at the end of the day, not everybody is going to be happy with you. You are going to find in dealing with people that when they first come to you, they want to fix their problems. They will talk about how bad they are, how sorry they are, how they want to get out of what they are in, and all of those things. They will carry that thought right up to the point where they have to face the real hard decisions of what they have to change in their life. Then you are going to see where once it was their problem, now it is your problem. Just as this church got mad at Paul because he tried to help them, one of the things you want to learn in dealing with people is that people will get upset with you when you try to help them. It is just the way that it goes.

We saw last week how biblically he dealt with it, which I think is a great example for us. In verse 2, it was a great concept. He said, "I have not defrauded any man. I have not wronged any man, and I have not corrupted any man." He simply says, "I have just given you the Word of God and preached you the truth." He demanded some things of them. He said in verse 4, "with great boldness of speech," and he commanded them to receive him and what he was saying. We talked about all this last week. It set a really good example for us and what we need to do.

We saw also, and I think this is very important, the motive behind him dealing with them: he loved them. He cared about them. He is frustrated with them because even though many of them have done well, there are still some that know better, that are not doing what they need to do. He is burdened over their wasted life and their not reaching their full potential.

I do not think a real guy in the ministry or a gal in the ministry, I know there is nothing you can do about it, and I know that there is nothing you cannot do for people that they have to do themselves. But there is never a time, I mean there are times you have to let it go, and you have to let people go, and they have to go do their own thing. But there is never a time if you truly love the ministry and love people, there is never a time you do not want to see people do right. That is where Paul is at. He wants these people to do right even though he knows that probably most of them are not going to do what they need to do.

In all of that last week, I showed you how to keep it very simple when dealing with people. These are where the principles come into your life that you can really use them. People will frustrate you beyond belief, much like they did in Corinth with Paul, especially when it is really good people. You expect idiots and people who are not worth anything; you expect them to wind up being worthless. But you do not expect good people to do it. I do not want anybody to do it, but in the world, it is not a perfect world by any stretch of the imagination. There are going to be people who grow up worthless, who stay worthless, who are ever going to do anything for God.

Then you have people that have really good potential, people that you see great things they could do. I used the example much like a parent last week. A parent sees things in their kids. A school teacher sees things in their students, but they just can never reach that person to get it done. That can be very, very, very frustrating, especially as I said, when they are good people. In dealing with people, that is always something you have to be careful of.

I gave you a great principle last week, and it is something that I hope that you took to heart and you are going to use it. It works in every aspect of your life. That was the great principle that in life you never focus on what you do not have; you focus on what you do have. That will work in so many areas of your life. If you are not careful, you will get to the point where you get so close to it that you can actually in ministry lose your perspective. It is especially true when you deal with your own family. Every family has issues. I have never met a family that did not have a problem. My family back in Ohio, we pretty much worked through all our issues and get along fine now, but we had our issues just like every family does.

What happens many, many times is families get really, really to the point where it is hard to hold them accountable. What happens is you start cutting the principles to fit the problem instead of holding the problem accountable to the principles. I will say that again: you start cutting the principles to fit the problem instead of holding the problem accountable to the principle. That is never good.

Another great principle I gave you is the fact that you never want somebody to do right more than they want to do right. That will kill you every time because once you want somebody to do right so bad, if you do not keep it in perspective, that person who does not want to do what is right, you will start making exceptions for them, cutting the corners for them, and it will never work. When you have to start making excuses for people, you are headed in the wrong direction. The principles of the Word of God are what we always should use.

I always do two things when I am dealing with people that are frustrating people.

1. I always leave the door open. I have had people that came to church and had problems, did not want to do what was right, and went back to the world. I always leave that door open because I know that sometimes the first go-around was not for them to get what they need to get. Sometimes they have to get lower than they were when they came before. As O'Mell used to say, sometimes you have to get so low in life that all you can look is up. Maybe they have not hit bottom yet. So you never close the door. No matter how frustrating they are, how much they take advantage of you, or what they do not do right, you realize that that is what people do. You always leave the door open.

2. You also leave the ball in their court. You do not chase people. Courtney was telling me last night, I asked her if her sister had found a church in Chicago. She had to go to school there in Chicago. She said she tried out about 30 churches and she could not find anything. She said the ones that believe the Bible were all screwed up someplace else; she just could not find one. She told me, "You tell us all the time, and we know, I know most people do not believe you, that there are not any good churches out there." She said she is in Chicago with how many millions of people, she has been to 30 churches, and she cannot find anything that does the Word of God the way it is supposed to.

I was talking to her about it. When I asked her, she is coming home here this next week, and it was really good to find out that she is going to be back with us. But she said, "I just could not find anything that was out there that would give me what I was looking for." That is the way it is in most cases. You find a situation where you get into those things, and you always have to leave the ball in their court. You always have to say, "Hey, look, maybe you get out there and you find something, or you cannot find something, and then it comes back and God brings you back to where you need to get the things done." It is a thing where that is exactly what you find. Not that her daughter is not doing what is right with the Lord; she is, but it is a thing where she just, you cannot find it out there. You have to stand on the book. You do not run after people.

She was telling me that when she went to these churches, they had a visitor card that you filled out, and you were supposed to drop it in the offering plate. She did not fill it out. She is smart enough to know that that is a deal where when you fill it out, put your name on it, drop it in your offering plate, then they will come visit you. She did not want anybody coming to visit her. I do not know why pastors think, and it has been this way forever for us that have been around for a long time. We have been in other churches where you had one designated night that that was visitation. You got these stacks of cards, and you went out and you tried to ask people why they would not come to church. I know they visit one time, and then you come by and try to invite them back.

In the day and age that we live in, going to somebody's house when it is dark and knocking on the door is a good way to get yourself shot. I look at it this way: if you liked what you heard today, then you will come back. If you are looking for truth, you will come back. If you are not, me coming over is not going to fix it. I was telling her I have been in guys' houses where I would knock on the door and go in, and I would sit down, and I would say, "Wow," and he is watching television. He has worked all day. He does not want to be bothered with some goofy preacher here, and I am sitting to him and saying, "We really like to have you come back." I even had one guy walk over and turn the TV up. I thought to myself, "How stupid this is, how stupid this is." You do not chase people. You try to help people, but at the end of the day, it is our choice whether we do what is right or not. So you will always do two things: you leave the door open, but you always leave the ball in their court.

## II. The Comfort of Co-Laborers

We saw last week we ended with this, and I thought this was a great thing, the coming of Titus. I talked about how that you focus on not what you do not have, but what you do have. We showed

you how that that is the people that God puts in your life, your fellow soldiers. The real comfort in ministry is the people that God brings to you who stand with you and have the same heart, the same goal, the same mind, your co-laborers. It is really the key to a successful ministry.

I never judge a man's ministry by what people say about him. I know there are, I have heard people all my life talk about other pastors, and they say, "Well, I do not like him because he did this, he did this, he did this, and did that." I know that that is all relative to your situation. I know also that you could find as many people out there that say bad things about me as you do about some guy over here. So I never judge a man's ministry by what people say about him. I never judge a person by what other people say about him. I always judge them by what they build. When you have a ministry where somebody is building people and people are getting turned out and people are growing in the Word of God, then there is something going on there. You get a church where nobody is growing, nothing is happening; this speaks for itself.

I told you last week, I do not define people because people always define themselves. Ministries always define themselves. You can find something negative about anything in life. This guy won \$600 million in a lottery last week. It is hard to find something negative about that, but I will tell you something negative about it: I did not win it. You can find negative in anything, you see. So that is just what you have to deal with. You are looking for people, and the real comfort is men like Titus that all have the mind of Christ. That is what we really focus on. That is what God really gives us.

### III. The Ministry as a Master Mechanic

Today, yet another great concept for us to learn that continues on with what we really saw or read last week. That is why I took a little time to give you a little cohesiveness to it all. In the next passage, we are going to read the next couple of verses, yet another set of principles that will help develop you now, and you can put in your toolbox for using them later.

I always get excited at Christmas time because Sears always has really good deals. I have never bought one because I am smarter than that, but I love these thousand-piece Craftsman mechanic tool sets. You can spend up to \$200, and you get a table with wheels on it. It has little drawers in it. It has a big chest that sits on it that opens up. It has drawers in it and a thousand tools. You could fix any car. You could change any spark plugs. You could change out a muffler. You could take the engine apart, and you could do whatever you want to do. Nothing is more impressive to me to look at and to see, "Wow, there is a complete set of Craftsman mechanic tools on a cart with a chest with drawers with every tool you could ever want for \$299." To me, that is, I love those things at Christmas.

You know why I will never buy one? I could not do anything with those tools. It is nice to look at, but you take those same tools and you give them to a mechanic. You give them to somebody that knows what they are doing, man, they can fix anything. We have got in churches with people. Once they get saved, my job is to give you the tools to do the ministry. My job is to make you a master mechanic with people. My job is to, this morning and every time we meet, and certainly when we get into our little sessions when we get into the first of the year, my job is to

give you the tools that you need. My job is to take the Word of God, break it down, which like I am going to do on New Year's Eve, break it down, cut it up, give you the pieces, show you how to use the tools, and then let God bring you up and train you up that you become a master mechanic.

Cars break down, people break down. Tires wear out, people wear out. Spark plugs get fouled, people get fouled. There is no real difference to the mechanic that opens up the hood and looks in there and sees it immediately. I open up the hood and say, "There is the problem. What is it? There is your engine. That is the problem. It is not working right." They see things. I want to teach you how to see things when it comes to people's lives. Then I want to give you the tools that you can be a master craftsman when it comes to fixing what breaks in people's lives. That is what we should do. That is our job. That is why messages like today, messages like last week, as we are coming through this book and talking about the principles, that is what it helps you to do.

## IV. Sorrowing to Repentance

Let us read today, 2 Corinthians chapter 7, verses 8 and 9.

*2 Corinthians 7:8-9*

*For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceived 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.*

Father, we thank You and praise You now for the Lord Jesus. Pray Your blessings upon us today as we come to Your Word, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Last week we saw Paul confront and demand that they receive him in what he says with very boldly. He held them accountable because he loved them, and he wanted the best for them. Today we will see how this style of biblical ministry is always the best way to go. We are going to make some applications today. We are going to take what Paul did, and we are going to see how we can use it. This will work in a church because in a church you train people, and as you train people, like I talked about earlier, part of the training is giving them the tools. But you have got to get people to the point where they want to do with the tools what they are supposed to do.

I can do a lot of things. I can. God has given me the ability with the Bible that I thank Him for every day. I can do a lot of things with the Bible. But I will tell you one thing I have never learned: I can take a man or a woman, I can teach them the Bible and give them the tools to make them be a great craftsman. But I have never figured out and probably never will how to get that same young man and young lady to want to do it. I cannot go across that line. If they do not have the desire to do it, I cannot. I have no tools in my toolbox that makes you want to serve God. None at all. And you do not either. That is where you have got to be careful because if you are not careful and you realize there is a line you have got to draw, then you keep stepping over that

line all the time, and that really just, we will see it in a few minutes here, makes the situation worse.

Today we will see how this style of biblical ministry is always the best way to go. It works with people in a church, training people for you young families. It also works within your family and training up your children. There is not a lot of difference between pastoring a church and you husbands pastoring your family. In fact, your family is your first church. It is your first ministry, and there is no difference between the two. We have lost that concept someplace, but that is the way it is, and you will see that today.

He says in 2 Corinthians 7:8, "For though I made you sorry with a letter." That letter, by the way, if you do not have this noted already, that letter would be 1 Corinthians. He says, "Though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent." He is simply saying, "Hey, I am sorry I had to drop the hammer on you so drastically the way I did because it hurt me more than it did you because I love you so much, and I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, and I hate to really clobber you because I really love you. I am sorry that I had to do it." But then he says, and this is very important, "But I am not sorry that I did it because God used it to bring you back, and in that I am glad."

You see, in every hard line you have to take, at everything that you have to hold the line biblically, it is the biblical process, and it has to be, as we look at this, our focus today. You want to learn two things out of this, and these are invaluable if you are going to work with people, or if you are a father you are going to raise up your children, or someday you are going to work with me in ministry here. It is invaluable.

➤ Two things:

- 2.) Real biblical love will always require a biblical approach, not just an easy one. Hard issues will demand hard solutions. Real biblical love will always require a biblical approach. We have gotten to the idea today that nice, warm, syrupy, nicey-nicey is the biblical approach to things. It is courage to do the right thing when the right thing to do is a hard thing. This is where pastors, ministers, parents, husband and wife, they break down because they cannot, like my friend Morgan, make the radical maneuver. They cannot force themselves to make the courageous choice because it is such a hard choice. You see it in the world all the time if you are paying attention. Last week, or I guess it was the week before last, a little over a week, tragedy, terrible tragedy with that Chiefs player that killed his girlfriend and then wound up killing himself. It is a terrible thing. But it was not, I think he did that on what, Friday or Saturday? Saturday. By Monday, the first thing you read in the editorial column, "Well, if there were no guns, those two people would be alive." To that, I also would say this: if they had been at the Thursday night Bible study, they probably still would have been alive. What was your point? But that is the way the world does it. Now, if you are going to take that approach, I am not sure of the statistics, but I think it is somewhere around last year, 25,000 people were killed by drunk drivers. Why is not the editorial about to bring back prohibition? Probably one of them beer-drinking Christians. There are a lot of them around today. You see, "no guns" is the easy approach. It glosses over the real issues.

What we want today in dealing with problems, whether it is in the newspaper with something somebody did or some terrible tragedy or tragedy in people's lives, maybe our own children, maybe our family, or maybe the person you are working with, the instinctive thing to do is to find the easy approach, to sidestep all the layers that in this particular case led up to this terrible tragedy. By Wednesday, it was helmet trauma. So football was the problem. Then as the week went on, it became drinking was the problem, but he had a drinking problem. Then it came to develop that he had an anger problem. Then it talked about, "Well, he had marital issues." Then it was found out that he was out partying the night before and drinking and all that stuff. You see the real dirty, nasty, hard way to deal with this is, "Hey, what about our own personal accountability and responsibility?" It is about choosing a lifestyle that puts those kinds of issues in your life and you not being able to handle them. I mean, come on. He had a live-in girlfriend. He had an illegitimate child outside of wedlock. He had fame and money and the status, God-like status. What do I always tell you? If it starts wrong, it ends wrong. You can take it to the bank almost every time. That is the world's way of dealing with it. "Oh, it is somebody else's fault. It is the guns. It is the football. It is the booze. It is the anger." It is anybody but you taking personal responsibility and accountability. You think I would not like to shoot people at times? I do not. Not that I will talk about. Principle: real biblical love will always meet the situation on an equal force basis. Sometimes you have to really drop the hammer. I deal with issues probably 30, 40 a week. I can meter them out on a scale of one to 10. When I have a number one or a number two or number three issue, which is basically nothing, I deal with it on a one or two level. If I have a 10, 15, or 20, that is a major issue, I will deal with it on a 10, 20, 30, whatever the issue is. You have got to be able to scale it out, but you have got to be able to realize that you have to have courage to do the right thing, even when it is the hard thing. Paul and how he deals with this issue in this church now, we are talking about, and how he dealt with it in 1 Corinthians with the whole church. What it does, it brings them to a personal accountability that we do not always like, but what we certainly always need. He is sorry to have to do it this way, but he is not sorry because it is what they needed. Most of them repented and got right because real biblically based love will always be based on truth. Sometimes that truth is hard to take, but you never shy away from it. You cannot as a pastor, you cannot as a minister, and you certainly cannot to you young parents as a mom or a dad or parents. So remember, you cannot run away from your responsibility to hold the line with truth. That is, if when that goes, it is all gone. I have seen parents, listen to you young people out now who have little kids. I have seen parents do the exact same thing all through my 40 some years in the ministry. You make the exact same mistake. I have been in counseling situations with parents where they had kids that were incorrigible, kids that were in their teens or kids that they had grown up in their 20s and their 30s, and they could not do anything with them. I have seen parents lose their kids simply because they cannot hold, or maybe that is not a good choice, will not hold them accountable biblically. As a child, their son or their daughter gets headed down the wrong road, wrong path. Now, all kids have issues. You are not going to raise a perfect child. All kids go through and go through that process through problems. They all do, every one of them. It is the parents' job to meet that on the one to one, five to five, 10 to 10, 20 to 20, like I talked about. You meet the problem with equal force. As a child, their son and daughter heads down the

wrong road. The parents do not like it. I never met a parent that was proud of their kid being a drunk. I never met a parent that was saying, "Oh, you have got to see my son and my daughter. Yeah, they fornicate with everybody. I am really proud of them." I never saw that. They even get mad. They get upset. But the problem is they will never meet the situation with equal force. They do not have the courage, I am going to say it again. I have said it three times. I am going to say it throughout this. They do not have the courage to do the right thing even when it is the hard thing. So by the time the kid gets to be 16, 17, 18, or 19, or in some cases, 20, 30, 40, whatever, they have completely lost any influence in that child's life. At this stage, it requires to get them back if you want them back. In some cases, maybe you do not. But if you want them back, it requires a drastic maneuver many times. Many times I have had it sat in my office, not at home or back. It goes through the years. They have said to me, "Well, you know, I heard what you said, Bob. You know, I am not, I think what you are saying is right. But what we are faced with this issue, what I do not want to be too hard on them, because if I am too hard on them, I am afraid I will lose them." Now, this is where a parent gets a disease. It is called, I love the way they abbreviate every day, it is called PEB: Parental Emotional Blindness. PEB. "Well, Bob, I just cannot handle that hard route because I am afraid I will lose them." Ma'am, I have some terrible news for you. You have already lost them. Them living in your home is not having control of them. A guy told me one time he had a problem with his child, and he took this little boy for a ride. They were going someplace. Like all little kids, the kid wants to stand up while his dad is driving. See next to it. Dad said, "Son, you need to sit down. Buckle up." "No, I cannot see if I sit down. I want to stand up and look out the window." He said, "No, you do not understand. If I have an accident and I hit somebody or somebody hits us, you are going to go through the window, and you are going to be killed or you are going to be terribly hurt. You need to sit down and put the seatbelt on the buckle. You cannot stand up in the car." "Why? I want to stand up. I am not going to sit down." "You saw, and I love you to death. Now, sit down, put the thing on." The kid would not do it. Finally, dad pulled over. The kid was whining. Dad whacked the kid, put him in a seatbelt, started driving. The kid looked over and says, "I may be sitting in your car, but I am standing in my mind. You got a problem with that?" You do not really have him. You have him in your car. You do not really have him. No, no, no. You have got a severe case of PEB. You already lost them. At this point, your only chance is to put a biblical process in their life to get them back. Sometimes it is really hard to do. Many times by that time, your parenting skills have been so inept through the years. They are gone now. Because you would not use boldness of speech, like Paul said, you will not demand some things of them and hold them and suffer the consequences of that accountability, responsibility, all because you did not want to lose them. Now you have lost them anyhow. Listen, God's plan for parenting, God's plan for parenting and training up your children and holding them accountable by the book through the principles will be much better than your plan. A lot better than Dr. Seuss. A lot better than any child psychologist. The training up a child concept is found in the Word of God, and it contains the whole program. I love this time of year, not only because the tools are on sale that I can lust after, but all my favorite movies come on. I love Boys Town with Spencer Tracy. I can see I am speaking on deaf ears here. Some of you young ones just looked up at me like I was talking from, "I love to go to Venus in the

morning." All right, I am going to ask how many have ever seen Boys Town with Father Flanagan? Well, some of you are educated beyond belief. I love that. The rest of you need to make your trip to Blockbuster this afternoon if you can even rent it. Father Flanagan was a Roman Catholic priest back in the Depression era in America, and he had a burden for wayward boys, and he started a place called Boys Town, and it is still today. I think it is in Nebraska. It is still thriving today, and they made a couple of movies about it. Spencer Tracy played Father Flanagan, and Mickey Rooney played a hard-nosed kid that Father Flanagan had to reach, and at the end of the movie, it is a heart jerker. I mean, it is like Lassie Come Home. It will make you cry. It is a great movie, and whenever I feel like crying, I cannot force myself to cry. I used to watch this movie. It makes me cry all the time. It is like when you cannot throw up, you stick your finger down your throat. There is always a way to get you to do what you need to do. I love this movie. The classic line in Father Flanagan's life, and I do not agree with Father Flanagan on 99.9999999 things that he does. He is dead now, but I did agree with this one thing he said. It was a classic line of the whole movie. Anybody want to raise your hand, tell me what it is? Do not yell at us. Anybody know what his classic line in life was? Huh? Anybody know? He built everything he did with the kids, and he got a lot of opposition, and his premise was, "There is no such thing as a bad boy." He built his whole concept on that. Now that is the only thing I really agree with him on in life. I do not really think there is anything as a bad kid either. I think the problem is bad parenting because I know when those kids get born, they are innocent. They are pure, and their purity and their innocence of growing up and doing right is not dependent on them, dependent on mom and dad. It is a great movie, but just as God's program of training up kids is better than ours, just as Paul's biblical style of ministry will always be better than man's style of ministry by the book. He says in 2 Corinthians 7:9, this is another great truth: "Now I rejoice in that ye were made sorry, but ye sorrowed to repentance, that ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing." Now that is a great principle. It really is. You know, sometimes in dealing with people, you have to lose everything to gain anything. You know that? The Bible says it itself that he that loses his life shall find it. The great principle is taught, if you want to keep it, you have got to give it away. It is a hard concept for a society. It really is. Sometimes we have to lose everything. I have seen Christians, couples have to lose everything because they mismanaged everything they had. It had to take them down to the foundation and lose everything to get their attention, to get them back where they needed to be. It is a hard concept for a society that thinks the answer is giving everybody more, and that is the way we look at it today. We think that just giving people more is going to solve their problems, and it never has solved anybody's problems, and it certainly will not solve your problem with your children, or it will not solve the problems in a church with a pastor. Sometimes in dealing with people, they have to lose everything to gain anything. Sometimes we have to lose it all to fully grasp what we really had and what we lost. It is just a true concept of life. I think the classic shining example that is found in Luke chapter 15 verse 11. Probably one of the greatest stories that we will use, and I will show you all the ins and outs of it after the first of the year, the story of the prodigal son. Now I know that in a doctrinal aspect, the prodigal son is the nation of Israel. I know that, and yet if we talk about that for a second, you know what that is such a great picture of? Because for Israel to get all

that God has for them in the millennium, you know what they have to do? They have to lose everything that they ever had, and they have, and it is not over yet with the tribulation period. You see, when he talks about that prodigal son in the first go-around, it is a picture of Israel, and Israel had to lose what they had with God, and they got so miserable when they get into the tribulation period, they are going to be absolutely beside themselves, and that is exactly what God is going to use to get them back. Now the second picture there in an inspirational application is you and me, and sometimes we have to lose everything to get back what God has for us. You see this kid here in this story, he had to go live with the pigs. On one weekend he was eating sirloin steak, prime rib, the servants were doing everything, and then about six months later, he is in a pig pen, and he is eating pig food, pig slop. He had to lose everything he had to appreciate what he had when he lived in his father's house, but he had to learn it the hard way. He went from sirloin steak to pig slop, man, that is radical. I am going to tell you, I guarantee you it was the hardest thing for his father to let that boy go. When that boy came in and said, "Dad, I want my inheritance. You are not telling me what to do anymore. You are not telling me I cannot drink booze. You are not telling me I cannot smoke dope. I am not listening to you. You are not going to tell me who I can hang out with. I am going to do my own thing. Give me my inheritance, and I am gone." The father never tried to stop him. Not one place in this story did the father ever try to stop him. When he went on his way, the father never followed him, and he had the money to put 10 private eyes on him to make sure that he did not get hurt. Never did. When he was out there, and all his friends were gone, and he lost everything, and he got nothing to eat, and he is living in a pig pen, he did not look up and see his father in a helicopter dropping him bread. In other words, sometimes you have got to lose it all to appreciate what you had. If the father would have went after him and bailed him out and begged him to come back and chased him down and stuck food to people to give it to his son, the boy would have never learned his lesson. There is a biblical process, and then there is man's process. This boy had to learn the hard way. My favorite part of this story is in Luke 15:17 where he is out there, and he has lost everything. As long as the money was jingling in his pocket, he had all the friends he could. But when the money was gone, the nice party clothes were gone. He could not buy a round of beer for people. He could not do all the things that he did. Nobody wanted him to do with him. That is the way the world will always treat you, but that is a good thing. So now he is down in a pig pen. His buddies now are "oink oink" and "orinker." He is living in mud. He is eating the same slop the pigs are eating. The Bible says in Luke 15:17, "And when he came to himself." I want to tell you something. That boy would have never made that statement if daddy would have bailed him out all the way down the line. That boy would have never got to where he was that he came to himself and said, "My father's hired servants live better than me. I will arise and go back to my father." That never would have happened if daddy would have padded the road. Daddy took the hard stand, but daddy is waiting at the gate for him. You know why? Because daddy knows something most parents do not know today, and you better learn it. Daddy was waiting for him. Daddy let him go. Never bailed him out. Never went after him. Never made one excuse for him and let him find the hard route and held the line and said, "Out the door, son, you are going to live right here. This is God's house, or you are on your own." The boy said, "I am gone." But dad knew the hard line would always bring him back. You know why?

How I know that? Because dad is waiting for him. When he starts coming back, dad is waiting for him down the gate. Dad knew the biblical principles, and God's process was the right process. I see the same thing with people that would get, I mean, people get in tremendous financial problems today. Our aspect is to give them everything. When your kid gets in trouble, give them everything. When they get this, give them everything. Barter a deal with them. I have seen people get into tremendous, horrendous financial situations. It is always a tough thing. It really is. You know, I have people all the time, they will say, "Well, why do not you help this situation, or why do not you do this?" Of course, they never know, I mean, we do not broadcast what we do. We are not a church that does something and says, "Look what we did." You do it because it is the right thing to do. But there are times that you do not do it also. I have seen people that lose their houses. I have seen people that have great debt. Yet at the same time, in many, many cases, if not most of the cases, I know there are exceptions to it. In many cases, people put themselves in those situations. Somebody said, "Well, we have got to help so and so. We have got to do this. We have got to do that." I am not against helping people. I help them all the time. That is what our church is for. We try to do what we can do to help people. But I want to also tell you, in most people's lives, having more money will not solve the problem. Do you know why? Because it is not how much money you have that makes it good or you are bad. It is the fact that you did not do what is right with what you had in the first place. Adding more to it is not going to solve your problem. There has to be some kind of accountability, responsibility in physical spending. There has to be some kind of operational process. Boy, I just thought of a novel word: stewardship. You see it in our country. We are approaching probably January 1 of a fiscal cliff. We are now at 16 trillion dollars national debt, and it is growing. There is no way on this planet you are going to ever balance that budget, and by the next year or by the end of the term of this president, it is going to be over 20 trillion dollars, more than that probably. We are going to head for a crash. Nobody in this country believes in us anymore. The banks or the people who do all the credit stuff, they downgrade us, and then the lawmakers cascade them. It could not be us. Now the government has one distinct advantage over you and me that we do not have: he can just print more money. You try that, and you will be in jail. But that does not solve the problem either, does it? It just inflates what you already have, and what you have is more worthless because that is not the answer. The answer is, oh, two terrible dirty words: accountability and responsibility. The church, any church, should never subsidize people who are not going to do right with what God gives them, and I am all for helping people. You may not like what I am about to say. I do not really care. Fortunately, by the providence of God, both doors are open back there today, so you can get out quick. I am not paying for your mistakes. I will help you through it. I will sit down with you, help you get to this, do that, do that. I will try to make your kids do not suffer. I will try to do whatever I can do, but at the end of the day, just fixing your problem will not solve anything if you are not willing to change. You cannot solve problems with the same thinking that caused those problems. When he came to himself, he said, "Man, this sucks. I do not like this at all. This is terrible, man. Six months ago, a year ago, I was, I had a fine Persian robe that I wore, and my servants, all I had to do is clap my hands, and now when I clap my hands, I go in both ears, and I am eating this slop down through here." "You know what, I do not like this." He never

would have got there if he had looked up when he was so hungry and looked up when he was starting to bend and started to break, and he just saw daddy and his helicopter parents. Never would have got there. Never would have got there. You see, sometimes we have to lose it all to get it back. Let me ask you a question. I do not mean to insult your intelligence. Let us take this thing and broaden it a little bit. When you got saved and you developed the relationship with God. Now the end result of that relationship, we have talked about it a lot lately, was fellowship. Fellowship based on His Word. Somebody, Amy asked a question at Thursday night Bible study, and I told you 1 John chapter 1 verse 7. Walking in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. When you and I get to that point that we have fellowship now, and then you and I choose not to do right, and we get away from God, what does God do? Anybody. What does God do? Let me back up. When you build a relationship with God and you have fellowship with Him, and then you turn to go to the world and you go into sin, whatever it may, what does God do with you? He what? He breaks that fellowship. He breaks that fellowship. He breaks off that fellowship. 1 John 1:5-7

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Now you are a child of God, and you are out of fellowship. You know what He does? He breaks that fellowship. Now I know, and this is hard to speak to 21st-century Christians. This is why I wish I lived in the 17th century because God's people do not get it. When He breaks fellowship over sin, He breaks fellowship. You may pretend you still have a relationship. You may pretend you still do by going to church. You may talk nice and nice, but as far as you and God are concerned, it is broken. There are no blessings. There are no promises. Anything now you get, you are going to get out of some other book that somebody wrote about God. You are not going to get anything from God, and you are going to wind up losing your joy. You are going to wind up being miserable. Why? Why does God do that? Why does God break that fellowship to make you absolutely miserable and will not fellowship with you till you come back to Him? That is why He does it. He drops the hammer in your life and my life, and we have all had the hammer dropped. He does those things not to hurt you. He does those things to bring you back. That is what Paul is talking about here. Look at it. Look what he is saying. He breaks that fellowship for one reason. He does not kind of break it. He breaks it. If you are saved today, the key here is this: if you really truly have a relationship with God, if you are truly saved, that is the big question, that God's fellowship with you should be the number one thing in your life. When that is gone, when it is broken, it ought to smite you to your heart. It ought to bring you to your knees. Oh, you might blow it off for two or three weeks. You may kid yourself into thinking that it is still okay while you are guzzling the booze or you are smoking the dope. You may fool yourself that it is all right, but if you are really truly saved and you really have that relationship and it means anything to you, it is going to bring you sorrow unto repentance in a godly manner. There will be no joy. There will be no happiness. Nothing will work right for you. You are miserable. Why? Because the greatest single

relationship that you ever had, you have lost, and sometimes you have to lose it to understand what you lost. See how easy that is? You have to lose that fellowship if you are saved to realize what you had. The prodigal son, and you will sorrow unto repentance after a godly manner. Yet you find God's people all the time claim they are saved. Claim they are a child of God. This is what bothers me, and we are not going to get into it today. We will talk about it next week. We are carrying you on with this path. But you see it all the time. They claim to be a child of God. Let me just say this: you claiming to be a child of God does not make you a child of God anymore than me going out and buying a thousand-tool set of Craftsman tools makes me an auto mechanic. It means nothing. What proves that you and I are a child of God is when we step out of line and God drops the hammer, it brings us to our knees to a godly repentance. If it is not there, and you continue on, and you get worse, and you laugh at it, and you do not listen to anybody, probably where you are at. You say, "Well, I know my girl is saved. I know my son is saved." That is PEB. Look at the principles. God's program always works. When you enact a biblical process, no matter how hard it is, you have got to have courage to do the right thing even if it is a hard thing. I know what I am talking about. Look at 2 Corinthians 7:8: "For though I made you sorry with a letter." That would be 1 Corinthians. "That same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season." You see, Paul is saying, "Hey guys, as hard as it was for me to do the right 1 Corinthians and drop the hammer on you, I am glad I did it because that is what ultimately God used to bring you back, and for that I am glad and I rejoice." I like that last part there, "for a season." You know, time out of fellowship with God can be a rough time. I am speaking from experience. We all have been there. Nowhere in the Bible was what Paul is saying here, especially about this thing that for a season, short time, is it better laid out in Hebrews chapter 12. You might want to look at this, or you will use this a lot. Hebrews 12:6-11

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

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

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Now here it comes. Here is what Paul was making reference to when he simply said, "for a season." "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." There are no truer words that were spoken. But you see, when you have a relationship with God that is real, and you are truly God's child, then there is no woman, there is no man, there is no drug, there is no booze, there is no nothing on this planet that you are going to love more than that if you are God's child. He says, "Now no chastening for the present should be joyous, but grievous," and it will be. Nevertheless, afterward, after you come to yourself, after you realize what you lost, after you realize what you had with God, and you really

totally understand you lost it, and you quit this pretending, you quit pretending, "Oh, I am right with God, look at me." No, you are not, and you know you are not. "But afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Afterwards, God says it, two key words here by the way. Now this is your model, young parents, for your children. We do not have time to get into it today. We have got the book back there, *How to Train Up Your Child*, that has it all in here. But two key words here. Two key words here, and God has pulled the rug out from all of us at one time in our life or the other. Two key words: chastening and scourgeth. Find out what those two words mean in the Bible connected to your children, to yourself as God's child. He says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," one, "and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "Every son." Somebody said, "Well, I do not whip my child." Yes, I shows. Wait till you get about 18 or 19. Then he says in Hebrews 12:8, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." What he is saying here is that if you are a trace a person and you get out of fellowship with God, you do not get it right like we talked about Thursday night, there is going to come chastisement in your life. You are not going to continue on and go on in your life of sin. You are not going to continue to fornicate and going on in your world and doing what you want to do. You are not going to drink your way into heaven and smoke your way into hell. You are not going to do that. Well, you may smoke your way into hell, but yeah, it is not going to happen. He says, "If there is no chastisement in your life, whereof all are partakers, then you are a bastard." You know what a bastard is? It is an illegitimate child. Hebrews 12:10 says, "For they verily," well, he says up here first, Hebrews 12:9, "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh," there is your mom and dad, "which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" "For they," your mom and dad, "verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit." Now when it says chastise after our own pleasure, his our own pleasure, that does not mean they took pleasure in whipping. Yeah, that is pleasure like found in Proverbs 10:1, that an obedient son, an obedient daughter is pleasing to their father and their mother. It is a blessing to them. That is the way it is talking about. You have got to put the Bible together. But he says, "But God does it for our profit." The profit God has for us is that we be partakers of His holiness. God saved us for a purpose. He has something He wants us to do, and when He deals with us through chastisement, sometimes He drops the hammer. He meets it on a one-one, one-ten, one-five scale, too. When He drops the hammer, sometimes God does have the courage to make the hard choice when it is the right choice, but all for the point of bringing us back. You see, the only way God got us back when we got out of fellowship with God and we broke that fellowship, even though we pretend we are right and we go on and we just keep our lifestyle just keeps going downhill, the only way God got us back was to do whatever it took to get our attitude by breaking that fellowship and take from us all that was good so we would have sorrow unto repentance. They did it because He loved us. That is how Paul did it to the church at Corinth. That is how God does it in your life and my life, and that is how you have to do it in ministry. You do it with your family, and you have to do it with your church. God's biblical process of responsibility and accountability of who we are and to whom much is given, much is required, and it brings us and makes us sorry after a godly manner, sorrow unto repentance.

## V. The Church's Role in Restoration

The job of the church, I have told you many, many times, is the restoration, bringing people back. That is not always an easy process. Sometimes you have to take a hard line stand. There is a great example of this. We will close with this. There is a great example of this found in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. We talked about it when we came through that, remember that story down around verse 5, one, two, three, and four? There was a man there in that church that fell into sin with his father's wife. This man not only committed this terrible, grievous sin, but then he would not repent of it. It is a picture today of God's people getting into some terrible sin and then not wanting to do what is right. I mean, it is one thing if you get into sin and you want to repent. It is something else if you get into it and you do not want to repent. That was the case of this man in 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

You know what they did? They broke off complete fellowship with him. Now why did they do that? They did that under Paul's direction, by the way.

*1 Corinthians 5:1-5*

*It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.*

*And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

*For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,*

*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Now why did they do that? Because there comes a time in people's lives when you have to make the radical decision. You have to make the hard line stand. There are certain things that you have to stand against that if you do not in your family, it is going to destroy your family. There are certain things in the church if you do not take a stand against, it is going to destroy your church. Not everybody may like it, but if one person is saved going down that same road, I do not give a flip who likes it, especially if it is biblical.

They broke off fellowship with him. No birthdays, no Christmas, no special days. They did not fall into the stupidity of many of God's people today who have that terrible disease that parents get, "Well, we are breaking fellowship with you. We are not having anything to do with you. You are in sin, and this is absolutely wrong, and we are done with you. We are having Christmas dinner at six o'clock, so you can come on over." How stupid is that? No, there are no birthdays, no Christmas, no special days. "Well, I am breaking fellowship with you so you will get right." The fact that you hold the line and have no fellowship or relationship is exactly what God does to

you and me that brings us back. In the book of 2 Corinthians, because they did that, guess what? This guy repents. He never would have repented if they would not have held the line and dropped the hammer. The PEB is spreading.

Radical, deep-seated problems will always require radical solutions. There will never be an easy way out of them. The longer you permit it to go, the more you shortcut the circuit, the more you do not hold them accountable, the more you fudge halfway, the more you do not take the hard line, and when you do not follow the biblical process, all you do is cut short the book and enable them in what they are doing because nobody will stand up for it. Is there not anybody on this planet? Is there not anybody in Christianity today, I am not talking about preachers, I am talking about moms and dads, is there not anybody on planet Earth that will not stand up in their family for what this book says? No, there is not. We all want the easy route. We all want the path of least resistance. We do not want confrontation. So instead of having one confrontation and dealing with it, we live a life of consternation because we do not do what the book says.

Radical issues demand radical choices. Sometimes when he took that plane off and he lost that engine, if he had rammed them, sent those throttles forward, rammed that rudder to the left, put that nose in the ground, and picked up enough speed and had the courage to lift it off, he would be alive today. It is the book. I should have saved this for Christmas. True biblical love will always meet the issue with equal force through biblical principles. Real biblical love will always require a biblical approach in any problem of accountability and responsibility, and in most cases, it is not going to be pleasant, and it is not going to be easy, but it is right.

I deal with people. I have couples come over for marital counseling all the time, and they will sit down, and they will start telling me their issues, and going through it, and I have heard it a thousand times. I just kind of act interested until I get it out because I know, we know where I am going with it. Almost without exception, they will either she or he or sometimes both of them after they laid out their heartthrob, and their ache and their agony, and who did this, and all the stuff, and everybody, it is her fault or his fault and everybody else's fault. When they are all done, they all look at me and they say, "Well, look, we dumped a lot on you, but you know, is there anything we can do?" I always answer them the same way. I say, "You know what, I appreciate your honesty, and you guys have been really forthright with me, and I want to help you anyway I can, and I will tell you what, I will, if you are committed, I will commit to help you. But you know what, the real question is not, 'Is there anything to do?' because there is always something that can be done. The real question is, 'Will you do what you have to do? Will you change in your life what has to change? Will you get out of your life what needs to leave? Will you break off and get out whatever needs to go that this thing can get fixed?'" If the answer is no, "I will not," or "I want to fix my problem, but I want to keep some of this," it is never going to work. There is never a question, "Is there anything we can do?" The question is, "Will you do what you need to do?" In most cases, the answer is no.

Edmund Burke was a British, somewhat of a writer, an author, more thought he was a philosopher, and I do not think he was a saved man, but he said something one time that I have never forgotten that I have looked at in people's lives. I have looked at in family's lives. I have looked at in churches. I have looked at in my own life, and there has been times when I hesitated

to drop the hammer, and I had to repent later, and it was this little phrase that always comes back and sticks in my mind. You know what he said? He said, "Evil triumphs when good men do nothing." Evil triumphs in churches when leaders and pastors will not hold a line. Evil triumphs in families when mom and dad will not hold the line. We would not make too many of these, Scott. I do not think we are going to sell a lot of them today.

Today you have got some great tools, some great tools to work with in dealing with people and with issues, but they have to start in our own life first. I look at what I do on Sunday morning, and I mean, you may look at it totally different. You may not even catch what I am doing, maybe not even want to catch what I am doing, but what I look at is I have built people, and I want you to, I harp on biblical principles. I have made many of you who are going to be part of the, or all of you who are going to be part of the people ministry write down and put in your Bible principles. I force you to do that. You know why? Because in dealing with people and working in the ministry or dealing with your family, you have to build your library of principles. You know, it is like being a lawyer, and you have got a case coming to trial. You will go to the law library, and you will probably pick out eight or nine different books that go along with the issues you have got to try to present or what you have got to try to defend or what you are going to try to do. You will find case law. You will find what state law, what federal laws are. You will get all the material laid out in front of you, and then you will prepare your defense or whatever you are going to do based on what you know, based on the fact, but based on what case law says, and through the law book that you have got, and you form yourself up from that. Is that hard to understand?

I saw you guys do it, Baba. You fixed that bathroom down there the other night, and where is Dagle? He is mad. Left. Well, he must have, just like normal, he left his Bible behind. But anyway, these guys head up my pretty much, it just developed into all the construction stuff down there that we want to do, and Kevin works with him. I never even thought about this, Baba, do I and Dagle, it is, boy, you lost a lot of weight. It is hard to even see where you are at today. I never even thought about it till this morning. I went up to check on Dagle, and I could not find him. Then I do not know where it was, but I went down to Baba, and Baba is down there doing this stuff, and I looked out in the hallway. Baba was fixing the toilet, painting the walls, scraping it first, taking the stool off, taking this thing off, and putting another thing on it, and bolting it back down, and painting everything, right? Dagle was upstairs painting one room, doing another. I watched when I watched Baba out there. I walked out the hallway. Never even thought about it, Baba, till this morning. I walked out there, and I thought, "Wow, he had a job to do this bathroom." He backed his truck up, brought every tool that he needed to do the job to get it done. When you looked out in the hallway, there was this, there was that, and when you looked there, you saw a menagerie of tools that were all conducive to the job he had to do.

Now if I just said to Baba, "Baba, they have got a leak on the roof," he would not have taken his toilet seal to the roof, at least I hope he would not. He went back to his truck, probably got another set of tools that fixed the roof, and he went to the roof. Dagle, I went up there, he had all his paint brushes, he had his rollers, he had his little cut-in things, he had everything he needed. If I had said to Dagle, "We need to go down and do this," he would have taken those back to his

truck. He would have got everything else that he needed, and he would have set that thing up for another job.

My point is this: whatever job God gives you to do, whatever job God calls you to do in this church, whatever job God has for you to do, it will take a different set of tools for every job you do. My job is to get you the tools and teach you how to use them. Your job is to take the tools and do the job. Now what is hard with that? That is what we do. That is exactly what we do. You lay out the scenario of people's problems, the counseling scenario with your toolbox of tools, biblical principles that when this problem is different from this problem that is different from this problem and different from this problem, you open up your box. Baba did not say, "Well, I am going to fix this toilet. I need a 30-foot ladder." He took exactly what he needed to do the job because all the tools. Now he could have had a 30-foot ladder. He did not need that tool in that job, but he has all the tools. You need to have all the tools, and you have the ability to use the different tools in different scenarios. Master craftsman. The toilet broke. The roof leaks. The paint peels. So you take the tools to fix whatever needs to be fixed. In that same token, people break. People get into problems. People have issues. People make mistakes. People do dumb things. People get into bad marriages. People get into bad relationships. You have got to have the tools for every specific job. Sometimes in all that, folks, if you really want to man up and be in the ministry, I tell you something, you better get a hold of, you better find someplace within you the courage to do the right thing when it is the hard thing because that is all that will work: the biblical process.

Let us pray. Father,