

## 2 Corinthians 2:17

Sunday 4/1/2012

Like Donnie, I always enjoy when you sing; that was great. I think you are better than Bubba. Nobody is better than my Bubba.

Today, I am going to give you your next set of principles. As we go through these today, I think it will really help you put everything even in better focus. I think yesterday the ladies now have a really better understanding of how they are going to do what they do. Next week we will get the guys online.

As you know, we have been coming through the book of 2 Corinthians. We are in the process, in the next year or so, of opening up a ministry where we take people and really train them and perfect them in the ability to take the Word of God and to deal with issues in people's lives. I said it yesterday to the ladies that not everybody in this church will follow through and do the counseling side of it. But yet, if you are any kind of Christian at all, you are going to find that it will be hard for you to stay out of it simply because if people know you are a Christian, they are going to be naturally drawn to you. I think most of you understand that.

Most of you, and I said this also yesterday, I get several phone calls a week from people where somebody at work comes to you and they have an issue in their life, they have something they are struggling with. They come to you and you call me, which I am glad you do. We talk it through and I show you how to handle it and give you the verses that you need. But the real goal in all of our lives, kids, is to get to the point where we know how to handle those things ourselves. That is my goal here. So you will use this material, even if you never say to yourself, "I want to be part of that ministry that is going to really focus on that aspect of people coming in with issues." You will use this material if you will learn it the rest of your life, just in your natural process as a Christian.

Even more than that, you may be sitting here this morning and maybe a visitor, or maybe you are someone who has been coming and checking out the church. These principles will help you in everything you do in life. This is what you need to be working on now for the next four or five weeks as we move through chapter three. We are going to finish up that last half of chapter one and then all of chapter two as far as the principles that I have given you.

### I. The Devil's Corruption of God's Word

I want to start today with 2 Corinthians 2:17. It is the last verse in chapter two.

*2 Corinthians 2:17*

*For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

It is very clear from this passage that the devil's corruption of the Word of God was already at work in Paul's day. Paul makes several references to it and other things that he says. We have talked about it before, every time a religious movie comes out. I remember when *The Passion of*

the Christ came out a number of years ago, which really graphically displayed Christ's crucifixion. The crucifixion was based on the Gospels. There are four accounts of the crucifixion in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Right after it happened, there was a big news media blitz and everything. It talked about all the other gospels that were out there.

In the movie, as in the Bible, Judas is portrayed as somebody who betrays Christ. But then somebody found the Gospel According to Judas, which proved that Judas really got a bad rap, that he was somebody that everybody would want for their father. So we begin to see that. I told you many times, I think the last count, there were over eighty other gospels out there. There are books of the Bible. You can buy a book out there called *The Lost Books of the Bible*. You hear a lot about the Book of Enoch and things like that.

Paul knew that when the true Word of God was going to come out, the devil was going to corrupt it by one of the ways that he did it, which was by putting out a lot of books of the Bible that had nothing to do with the Bible. They were not inspired by God. The beauty of your Bible and the preservation of your Bible is simply that the early Christians knew what was really of God and what was not. It is the unique way God has put the Bible together that most people never really see. So it was the church, the early Christians, that knew who Paul was. They knew that Paul was the only one that was given authority by God to write to the churches, and so they did not accept all these other things that were written.

We see that in Paul's day, as I said, the devil did not waste any time to begin to corrupt the Word of God. There are many reasons why he wants to corrupt the Word of God. We have talked about it and getting rid of the book. We have talked about it many, many times in many different ways. But most of all, we now know that the Bible is what really reveals how the devil operates. When you lose your mystique, when you lose your secrecy, when you lose your cloak that hides what you do, then you are really not a threat anymore.

People are afraid to go out in their backyards at night when it is really dark, because you never know what is lurking in the darkness. But if, before you go out in the yard, you flip on your light switch and you have four million candle-power searchlights illuminating your backyard, there is no fear in going into it. The Christian life is a lot like that. The Bible says that this world is darkness. We walk in darkness many times, even as Christians, not because we are not saved, but because we allow the darkness of this world to scare us. The Word of God is your light that shines in a dark place. It is like illuminating your backyard so you do not have to be afraid of what may or may not be in the dark.

This is what the devil wanted to get rid of. The devil wanted to keep us in the dark, even after we were saved from the darkness and now a Christian. But in our walk, every day in the things that we do, he wants to make us afraid. The way he makes us afraid is because of the unknown. The unknown frightens everybody. People are afraid of the future in America. They look at America with all its problems, and gas high and food high and all of the things. People are afraid. Do you know why? Because they are not sure what is going to happen in the future. Those are legitimate things. The devil in your life and my life, he wants to keep us in fear. The Bible says perfect love casts out fear. The Bible says that you and I are not to live in fear because the Bible is the light

that shines in a dark place that shows us every pitfall that the devil has for us. No matter what is in your personal life, down through history. The Bible has talked about it last week when we talked about it a couple of weeks ago when God said, "I will not conceal his parts, his power, and his comely proportion." That is what the devil wants to get rid of. He wants to get rid of the Bible. He wants to corrupt the Bible because the Bible is the one that lays everything out.

## II. The Bible as the Foundation for Life

For you and for me, let us look at it from another aspect for a moment. The reason why the devil wants to get rid of the Bible is because the Bible is the platform by which we need to live our lives. The Bible is a book of principles, God's principles. The Bible is a book of things that are laid out exactly the way God wants us to understand how we are to live our lives. It forms the structure for our lives that needs to be how we conduct our life so that we have the best it has for us.

Hebrews 4:11-12 is a great passage there that talks about the seven things the Bible does for you when you accept the Word of God into your life. Every one of those things are something that we have talked about it before. But those things are very important in your life and my life to help give us structure in what we do. The Bible is the light that lights our path, but the way that it is lighted is through the principles that God illuminates in our life to show us what we should do and what we should not do.

At the same time, I have taught before and gave you before how that when it comes to losing the Word of God, there are seven things that a Christian loses when he loses the Word of God. They are pretty important things. But this is what the devil wanted to do. He wanted to take the structure out of your life and my life. He wants Christianity, and most of Christianity is, to stay in confusion. He wanted people not to be able to see the light that God had for them and follow the thing through.

The right structure in life is simply based on the right biblical principles in life. When you lose the principles, when you lose your Bible, when the Bible gets corrupted, then it is a thing where everything else falls apart. It is like in counseling, in dealing with people and problems, you can only have one authority. It never works to deal with people when you are trying to tell them what the Bible says and somebody else is trying to give them their homespun theology. What they ought to do never works that way. We have to choose at some point in our life as Christians that there is only going to be one final authority in our life. That final authority for you and for me in a practical sense has to be the principles of the Word of God. We either live our life by them or we do not. We learn them. We adapt them. We adjust to them. We put them into our world and we live by them or we simply run by another standard that is outside the Word of God.

That is why this verse is so important. That is why Christianity today is very confusing. This is why many of God's people are powerless today and they should not be. It is why Christian families get divorces. It is why Christian husbands and wives break up and have marital issues. It is why Christians have kids that go into the world and do all the things that unsaved kids do. It is why everything breaks down in Christians' lives today when it should not. Christianity today

there is not a whole lot of difference from the world other than the fact that a lot of people are truly saved and go into heaven. But if you do not apply the principles in your life, your life is going to get just as messed up as any unsaved person's life. This is where we are at today. So this is why these principles are so important.

### III. Principles for Effective Christian Living and Ministry

As we start these today, I want you to know that if you are someone who is really considering going to get into this ministry with me and help me at this particular level, then you know what you need to do. I am going to help you with that today. You ladies have a little better handle on it than the guys, but the guys will get up to speed next week. If you are someone here today that you know that is not where you are at right now, but you are smart enough to recognize that where you work, because people know you are a Christian and they search you out, then you simply need to learn these principles for that. This will give you the things that you need to help people where they are at.

If you are somebody here today that maybe you have just gotten saved, maybe you are a young Christian, maybe you look at me and you say, "Well, I am not ready for really either one of those." That is good, too. Then you can take from these today and begin to glean all of this material because it will help you in your own life. I have said it many, many times, you cannot help other people in their world until you first take the principles and apply them in your own life. They have to work for you first. That is so key in everything that we do.

Now, let us begin to look at these and get these down and we will learn from these today as we put it together. John will have a transcript for you of this that will help you here next week. Some of you have asked him and asked me about having them emailed to you. I do not have a problem with that, but let me explain what I have to do when I want to do this. We print off a lot of things for people and give you a lot of material. Most people do not even think about it, but it costs us a tremendous amount. It costs us like \$300 every time we have got to put toner in the printer. So we have got to recoup something back. I am not even more concerned about that. It is John's time. John puts an enormous amount of time in transcribing this. If you think that that is not hard, that is easy, try it yourself sometime. He just does not do it in one thing. He is my ace in the hole. He does it in every book that I have got back there. John has basically taken the things that I have done and put them into that form. We supply him what he needs to get that done. So I do not care if you want them emailed to you. That is fine. Or you can have them in print. Some people are still in the Stone Age would rather have it in print than on their computer. But either way, it is going to cost you \$3 just to cover the stuff that costs us. So there will be a list back there at the bookstore. If you want an email to you, you pay your \$3 and give him your email address if John does not already have it. We will mail them to you. That is not an issue. That is how you want them. Personally, I like mine where I can look at them. I am not much of a "put it on a computer" deal. I like to have it where I can take it with me and have it to flip through it, whatever I want to do. Many of you are that way. He will have those out here probably next week for you. I think that is absolutely valuable because there is no way, at least for you folks who want to seriously consider doing this, because there is just no way you are going to be able

to get everything the way I am saying it. I am not intending you to. So it is just a lot of material. But he will have that for you next week and we will go there.

Now, I want you to use this in two formats, first of all. I want you to use it in your own life first. Then I want you to use it with people. Because the way I am going to give you this material today, one of the aspects of in your own life or people you deal with at work or people you are going to work with me with in ministry. When people have issues, you do them no favor of just giving them the answer to their problem without helping them understand the problem itself. Many people you are going to talk to and deal with, they do not think they have a problem. You have to get them to see the problem first. In most cases, the people that we work with, they come to us so they know they have got issues.

I always follow that little three-point outline that I give you when you have an issue in your life.

1. The first thing you have to do with people when you are dealing with them is you have to identify the problem. When somebody comes in to me and they start laying out all these problems in their lives, the first thing I do is to get them to identify the problem. Because talking about all of the circumstances has never solved anybody's problem. You have got to get to the root of the problem and you have got to identify the problem.
2. Once you identify the problem, the second thing you have got to help that person do is isolate the problem. We are all human beings and we all struggle with things and I know I would do this too and we all do it. We have a tendency as Christians, many times we know what our problems are, but it is much easier for us not to deal with the problems so we focus on our good qualities and leave the problem. That is never good. You will never fix your problem by focusing on what is not wrong with you. You have got to isolate what is wrong with you and you have got to identify what is wrong with you.
3. Then the third part of that thing is you have got to identify, you have got to learn to isolate, and then you have got to learn to take the problem and you have got to annihilate it. You have got to do whatever you have got to do. You have got to get that problem and mark it for what it is and then invest whatever time you have got to invest in fixing that problem, whatever you have got to do. Obviously problems are on different levels. So that is what we are going to do with this and I am going to try to teach it to you in that format.

Yesterday, ladies, I talked to you about some of these things that you take these principles and you teach them to people. I think that you will see how you are going to be able to do that today. Now, I have numbered these 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 again. I did not pick up from the last time because it is easier to just number them that way. So I think you got 26 or 27 last time. We are not going 28 or 29 now and moving up. We are going to start over with one. But this will be your second set of principles that you want to apply.

➤ **Principle 1: The Attitude Towards God's Word (Proverbs 2:1-9)**

This is going to break down into three sections. Some of these longer ones are going to break down into three sections. It will be go back to number one will be go back to Proverbs 2:1-9. What I want you to be able to do on these extended ones, I want you to be able to explain the concept. It is so important for you to be able to do that. It is so important for you to be able to get

to the point in your life where you really understand how to explain something to somebody. You have got to get past the point, no matter where you are at in your life, you have got to get past the point that you get out of the "monkey see, monkey do" mode. A lot of people can read something and then mimic what they read without really understanding it. That will never work in your own personal life. It will never work in dealing with people. You have to understand these principles yourself. Hence what I told the ladies yesterday is they break down in their groups and they actually teach these principles and get some experience in doing it.

You remember in Proverbs chapter two, I told you that this was a great passage. The first part of this is the six things that we do when we come to the Word of God that we ask God to give us. I told you that:

4. When you receive the Word of God.
5. You hide the commandments.
6. You incline your ear unto wisdom.
7. You apply your heart to understanding.
8. If you cry after knowledge and lift up your voice for understanding.
9. If you seek and search for her as for hid treasures.

All of these six things form an attitude when you come to the Bible. I gave you the verses on them and everything so you should have those already. But in its basic format, these six things form the attitude that you have got to have of what you are going to get out of the Bible. You come to God with this attitude about the book. You come to the Word of God that it is truly God's Word. You receive my word. You come to it knowing that you have got to do something with it so you hide the commandments with you. You realize that it is going to take work to study this so you are approved. So you have got to incline your ear unto wisdom. Then the fourth one, you have got to actually take what you are learning and you have got to apply it to what you are doing in your life. Then the fifth one talks about your prayer life. That somebody is actually praying to God to teach them the Word of God and to give them the principles. I cannot tell you how important the aspect of prayer is in learning these things. Then the sixth one says, "If you seek and search her as one that finds great treasure." That is your attitude. That is your motive. That is how you view the Bible. You view the Bible as the greatest book in the history of the planet that has every answer that man has. You take this attitude of heart approach toward the Word of God. When you do that, then that is this is the first one. I said there are three parts to this.

### ➤ Principle 2: Finding Understanding and Knowledge (Proverbs 2:1-9)

The second thing, then, is the two things that you find. You remember that he says if you do all those things then he says, "Then thou shalt find." What he gives you is two things. He tells you that now if you do those six things:

10. The first thing that you find is you understand the fear of the LORD.
11. Then the next thing is you find the knowledge of God.

I talked to you about the fear of the LORD being particularly defined in the book of Proverbs as helping you get the Word of God. But the fear of the LORD, to find the knowledge of God, is simply you get God's perspective on everything in your life. I told you many, many times that is the job of every Christian once you get saved. The only key to success for you in your life as a Christian once you get saved is to stop looking at things in life the way we have looked at them before. And now start looking at them and see them how God sees them. The only way that you do that is to get an attitude toward the Word of God that "Thy word is truth." You make that truth the final authority in your life. Then you go from there. So the first one is the six things. The second one is the two things that you get from it.

➤ **Principle 3: The End Result (Proverbs 2:1-9)**

These two aspects when they are in your life based on the first six form for us the next four. This will be your third one. This is the end result. Now you see what you can do, ladies, is you could take one Sunday with your prayer group. You could give one lady the first section, one lady the second section, one lady the third section. You can accomplish it in fifteen minutes. Something along those lines. But the third one is the end result. Once you do the first six and you find the knowledge of God and you have the fear of the LORD. Here is what the end result is. These are the four things that God gives you that makes you qualified to be able to deal with any situation in life. These are absolutely vitally important.

12. The first thing he says that God gives us is the understanding of righteousness. We have talked about how that simply means that now you have the ability to know what is right from what is wrong. That may sound simple but it is very complicated in the world that we live in because most people today they do not have a sense of right and wrong. The book of Isaiah, I think it is in chapter five, talks about in the last days that was going to be one of the problems we all face that right became wrong and wrong became right. Boy, that is exactly where we are at today in our own world. But you see the Bible never changes. The Word of God, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. The Word of God never changes. This is why the devil wants to get rid of it. This is why the devil keeps coming out with new Bibles. He wants Bibles to change as the circumstances of time change. What we have got to have in a Bible is something that when the world changes around us, when Christianity loses its way. When everything out there gets upside down that we cannot figure out and our value systems are now gone. We have got to have something that takes us back to the core values of God. It has to be the Word of God. So we have to know what always is what is right. In dealing with people many of the times that is the choice you are going to have to deal with them. You are going to have to show them what is right.

13. Then the second one is judgment. Judgment is the aspect of dealing with what is wrong in a person's life. You find many Christians who know what is right. You find many Christians who know what is wrong. You find a lot of preachers that their preaching is all about two things: how you want to live your life and then how you do not live your life. They just beat people up constantly. That is, you find a lot of Christians like that. You find a lot of Christians that know what is right. You find a lot of Christians that know what is wrong. But you do not find many Christians that have the third element here.

14. That third element is called equity. Equity is what we know as balance. Balance, the third thing, is the ability to blend what is right with what is wrong. And know how to deal with people on a balanced basis. Jesus said it better than anybody I think. It is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. When he said in John 1:17, he says that Jesus came by grace and truth. You see the truth would be the Word of God and dealing with people on truth. That would be righteousness and judgment. True, there is a right way to do it. Truth is you messed it up. But grace is the balance between the two that you do not get overkill in it. You have got to have the ability to balance out what is right with what is wrong, what the Word of God says and what a person does. That you do not just come down and condemn them without giving them a chance. We have all made mistakes in life. There is nobody here that can point any finger to anybody else in anything in life and say, "Look at you." Because we have all had our issues in life and we have all struggled in life. The mark of a strong Christian, a godly Christian, a biblical Christian, is someone that knows what is right and knows what is wrong, but then has the ability to balance the two out in dealing with people.
15. Then the fourth thing there would be, "yea, every good path." Every good path means now that you have the ability because you understand truth, you understand what is wrong, you have the grace to work it out. That when you sit down with somebody, you can show them what is wrong, show them what is right. Love them, give them the grace that they need, but then give them the path that needed to go on to show them how to get out of it. We do not do anybody any good if we just tell them what is wrong with them. I want people that not only know what is right and what is wrong, but have a good balance in the two. But you also have the ability to get people out of the problems they are in by showing them the options to get out of what they got into. That is the key. That is the key.

Some of you may find yourself there today. Some of you may be here today and you have been coming to the church for a while, but you never really plugged in. You may say, "Boy, that is me right there." There is always a way out of the circumstances that you are in. A true biblical ministry does not condemn anybody. It takes people to where they are at and then it helps them get to the point in their lives where they get where God wants them to be. So the first one was the fact that the six things you do. The second one was the two things that God then does for you. Then the third one was the four things that God gives you: righteousness, judgment, equity, and every good path.

#### ➤ Principle 4: Putting Forgiveness in an Understandable Format

Now, number four, this is your fourth principle. This is putting forgiveness in an understandable format. You are going to deal with people. This is what the whole second chapter of 2 Corinthians is about. It is about learning to forgive. One of the hardest things that God's people can do. I told you that when you put forgiveness in an understandable format, and this is very important because this is what you have to explain to people sometimes. This is what some of you need to know today. That I do not have any right not to forgive anybody, no matter what they did to me. You have got to have people, sometimes you have to be able to explain things in a way that people can grasp it.

You notice I will use a lot of things that are illustrations of other things. A guy this last week, I had a situation where I talked to somebody and they were, we were talking about some things that were going sideways. We were talking about sometimes things look good. I use the analogy, and sometimes you have got to do things like this because people relate to this. I said, "You know what, what you just told me is a lot like, 'Wow, somebody just gave me four brand new tires for my car. They cost \$500 a piece. I got four brand new tires for my car. Man, I got a deal.' The only thing is they do not fit my car." Many times we get excited about stuff that is great stuff, but it does not really apply to where we are at. What good is four tires that cost \$500 a piece if when the rubber hits the road, it does not work for you? That is the key. Things like that, you have to be able to help people understand and put them together.

Putting forgiveness in an understandable format is that there are three things that you and I always want to keep in mind. I always bring this before people when I deal with them on forgiveness. Many people get mad at other people because we talked about this, but you want to remember this.

16. They get mad at other people or they do not forgive other people because they got into a bad relationship with that person that never should have been. They put themselves in a scenario where they never should have got into. When it did not work out and they got hurt one way or the other, then they feel bad about that. They are mad about that because "How many times have I heard it? That person betrayed me. That person did this. That person did that." When the truth of the matter is you violated the biblical principles getting into that situation to begin with. When you do not get into it right biblically, you cannot expect it to work out right. When it does not work out right because you got into it wrong, you cannot really get mad at the person who did what he did because that is what that person does. You should have known that before you got into the situation with him. That is what you have got to follow.

Many times I have people that are upset with somebody and I say to them, "Why are you upset with her? Why are you upset with him? You put yourself in that scenario. You did not do what the Bible said to prove all things before you allowed yourself into this situation. Now it goes south and you are mad at her. You are mad at him." When the truth of the matter is this never should have been to begin with. When you see that and understand you do not have a lot. I do not have a lot to be mad at people with when I put myself in a place for failure. That is my responsibility. Nobody forces me into a situation. Nobody forces me to do anything. I make my own choices just like you do. How can I be mad because somebody ripped me off?

I mean somebody comes to my house and says, "Hey, you know." It happened a while back. Some guy came to my house about 10 o'clock at night. He knocked on the door and he came out there and he said he gave me this sob story. How he saw my light on and he just got back from the military. He said, "You know," he said, "I need gas money. I do not have anything and I saw your light on." He said, "Probably you are not going to help me. But here I am. Could you help me with something?" He did not put a mouth on it. I said, "You know," I said back, "How about \$20?" "\$20 would be great." I said, "Well, listen." He said, "I want you to know I am telling you the truth." I said back to him, "I do not care if you are telling me the truth or not. I will give you

the \$20. But I am going to tell you about Jesus Christ and what he will do for you. Then I am going to give you the \$20 and if you are lying to me you are going to die and go to hell. So it will not make any difference. It will be a good investment on my part. If you do do what is right then I am good with it." So here we are.

Now I knew at the point that he was shaming me. But I was ready that night because my wife left her billfold there and she had \$20 in it. So I was willing that night to give him the \$20 just to tell him the story of Christ. John Wesley one time, years and years and years and years ago, was traveling between one town and another going to preach. An old man, a young kid pulled him out of, he was riding along on his horse by himself. A guy rode up to him on a horse and put a blunderbuss on him and said, "Give me every dime you got." John Wesley did not have much but he gave him what he had, about 20, 30 shillings. The man lowered the blunderbuss and rode off. Just as he rode off about 50 feet, John Wesley said, "Young man, wait a minute." The guy turned around and put the blunderbuss on him again and he says, "What do you want?" He pointed his finger in his face and he said, "Young man, someday you may get tired of the life of sin and crime that you are doing. When you do I want you to know that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse you from all that sin." He put that gun down and rode off. Five years later, John was preaching in a revival and that guy came up to him, gave him the money back that he stole, wept in front of him and said, "You know what?" He says, "I have been looking for you for four years." He says, "I got saved a year after I robbed you on that road." He says, "The thing that just wore me out was the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses you from all sin." Sometimes just the right word dropped at the right place and the right scenario will cut like a knife for 50 years.

So I gave that guy the \$20 and I pulled my old John Wesley act on him. Do you know what? The guy obviously shamed me. In fact, three weeks later I saw him across to the neighbor's place down the road doing the same thing. Now, did I get mad about it? Did I feel bad? No. Do you know why? Because I willingly chose to put myself in that scenario. I got nothing to feel bad about. In fact, I felt pretty good about it, knowing the John Wesley story. But my point is this, when we allow ourselves to get into scenarios, you have no reason to be upset with somebody because they did you wrong. You have no reason to be upset with somebody that did you wrong because you put yourself in a scenario you should not have been in.

17. The second thing is, this is all under four now, putting forgiveness in an understandable format. People will hurt you because they many times get mad at God. They are not going to take it out on God because they know you are a pastor, you are a teacher, or you are a Christian and your walk with God is good. They are going to take it out on you. That is just what mean nasty Christians do. You have got to be smarter than the problem.
18. The third one under four is, why in reality could anybody ever, why would I ever be, could I ever really be upset and not forgive anybody for whatever they did to me? If the first one does not work and the second one does not apply, I can just simply look at it that whatever you would do to me that might make me angry and make me not want to forgive you, when I put it into a context of forgiveness, I ask myself this: "What have I ever, what have you ever done to me that I have not done to God at some point in my life and God forgave me, then

who am I not to forgive you?" You see, putting forgiveness in a context. That is your fourth one. There are three things to that.

➤ Principle 5: The Samson Principle (Judges 13)

Then your fifth one. Your fifth one is something now that you ladies can teach. I suggest that, you know, you are going to ask me the question, now you are supposed to put all these in the back of your Bible, but you are going to run out of room very quickly if you put Proverbs two back there and some of these long ones. So here is what I suggest to you do. Put the reference back there of what it is and then go to the place in Proverbs two or in this case here with Samson, the first book of Judges. That is where you put and lay out the outline for the principle. Do not do it in the back. You want to begin to develop your Bible that when you start to talk to somebody or you give somebody something, then you flip back to Proverbs chapter two and you show them the outline that you have got.

Now, in this case, we are going to talk about the Samson principle. I suggest that you put in the back of your Bible, "The Samson Principle," and then put Judges 13. Then go to Judges 13 and there you have the whole outline of the Samson principle. Do not put it in the back with your other thing. You will use up all your space. Just put the reference there, but go detail it out where the story takes place.

The Samson principle is a great story. It goes along with what we just talked about in a sense. You know the story of Samson. He was a Nazarite and a Nazarite was a vow that a man took that he was going to do something for God in this case, deliver the nation of Israel as a judge. While he was under that vow, he was told not to do three things:

19. He was told to touch no dead body.
20. He was told to drink nothing off a vine tree.
21. He was told that no razor should touch his head.

If he violated that, then he had some things he had to do. It is a picture of that God had a plan for him and he is under an accountability system much like you and me. But Samson's life, much like your life and my life, is a great picture of how we get messed up. Samson, his whole life, everything is just about him. Samson, everything he does is self-centered. It is self-serving. Every time he gets into trouble, it is so clear that he has violated a biblical principle. The first words out of his mouth, as you find recorded in the Bible, when he first shows up, the first words out of his mouth is, "I saw a woman." That was his problem, all down through it.

Now, the great thing about Samson is that it does not matter what your problem is. The principles are the same. This is the great thing that comes out of all of this. His problem starts when he takes a shortcut through a vineyard. Remember now, he is a Nazarite. As a Nazarite, he is not to have anything to do with anything off a vine tree: grapes, raisins, all that thing. So he is walking down the road going wherever he is going, and he suddenly remembers that there is a shortcut that he can take that goes through this guy's vineyard. A vineyard is where grapes are. So he comes across and takes the shortcut through the vineyard, and lo and behold, there in the middle

of the vineyard, he meets a lion. That lion, him and him get into a fight, and he kills the lion. From that point on, everything goes downhill from there.

The principle is here that if he would have stayed on the road that he was on, and not taken a shortcut, and gone someplace where he should not have went, the vineyard, because he is not to have anything with grapes. The lion, who the Bible says in 1 Peter 5:8, is the devil, "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The lion never would have been an issue. So you use this example to tell people and learn it for yourself that do not take shortcuts in life. Do not violate principles. Do not go places that you should not go. It is like I got a guy that is a recovering alcoholic, and so he is doing really well, but then he gets invited to his office Christmas party, and they have booze there, and he falls off the wagon. He gets drunk. The bottom line is, if Samson would have never went through the vineyard, the lion never would have been an issue. That is what happens, and that is a great principle. You need to explain that to people.

*James 1:13-14*

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

Foot Wilson used to say, "The devil made me do it." Well, the devil does not make you do anything, and God does not tempt you and me with evil. For the Bible says that God does not tempt any man. But what it does say is the fact is this, "But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." That is exactly what Samson did. He went where he was not supposed to go. He went, took a shortcut that he never should have taken, and then he meets the devil right in the middle of the vineyard, and it begins the downfall of his life, and he winds up a spiritual suicide. That is exactly the great principle that you ladies can teach that in your own prayer group. But you need to know that and understand that so that when you start working and dealing with people, you start putting things into their world and into their lives, you know that you can explain situations because many times they need to have an illustration that explains the principle. If he just would have stayed on the road and not gone through the shortcut where he should not have went, the devil never would have been an issue. How many times can we all say that in our lives? Of course it is not that God that puts us in that scenario, it is not even the devil that puts us in that scenario. We are enticed by our own lusts when we do not follow the biblical principles. He knew he was a Nazarite. He knew what the rules were. He just thought he did not apply to him. It always gets us in trouble.

## ➤ Principle 6: The Importance of Doctrine

The sixth one will be that you want to explain what the word doctrine means. A doctrine simply means to teach. Along with that you want to remember that doctrine is important because it will always form for you and for me the fundamental foundation of any teaching in the Bible. Paul tells Timothy and tells Titus, tells us that we are to have sound doctrine. Sound doctrine. That is going back to the Bible. That is operating your life, living your life by the principles. Staying out

of the vineyards. Staying off the shortcuts of life. Staying on the road and keeping accountable to the things that God has given us. So there is your sixth one.

➤ **Principle 7-10: The Doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer**

Now, the seventh one is four sections to this one. This is another study that you will want to put someplace back in your Bible. I suggest you put this back in Hebrews 4:14-15. But in this section we are going to deal with number 7, number 8, number 9, number 10. They are all going to deal with a different aspect of the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer.

➤ **Principle 7: Understanding and Explaining the Doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer**

The first one here in this section, will for you be to understand and explain the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. We talked about this absolutely unknown today. Absolutely unknown today. The two verses that you want to use here are Hebrews 4:14-15, which talks about Christ being our high priest. Then we want 1 Peter 2:5 that talks about how that we are Christ's priests, through that spiritual priesthood. I would suggest that you put this whole section again, just put in the back of your Bible, "The Doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer," and then put Hebrews 4:14-15. Go there and detail it out on that chapter.

➤ **Principle 8: Explaining the Levitical Priesthood as a Picture of Our Priesthood**

The second part of this, or number 8, will be for you to be able to explain the Levitical priesthood, the Old Testament priesthood. In particular how it is a picture of your priesthood and my priesthood. These are all things that we went through. These are all things that should be very familiar with you. How that our job as Christ's priests is to bring reconciliation. You want to remember now that the Old Testament priests, that is what they did in a physical sense. Somebody brought the sacrifice in because they trespassed against God or against man. They either brought a trespass offering or a sin offering. They brought it into the priest. The priest took it. He made the sacrifice and God was appeased. That is what you and I do as Christ's spiritual priesthood. The job of you and me, fundamentally, end of the day, bottom line, is to reconcile men's differences between him and God through the Word of God. That is why we learn the principle. That is why we learn how to be able to help people in scenarios. When you are at work someplace and somebody comes up and says, "Boy, me and my husband are having issues." Or "I am having a problem with my kids." Or "I am struggling in my own life with something." What you do when you open up the Bible and you give them a scenario or you teach them something out of the Word of God, or you give them verses, or you give them principles, what you are doing is, in essence, you are giving them the verses or the principles that will help them reconcile that problem. That is exactly what Christians should do. Christians should never cause problems. They should help solve problems.

➤ **Principle 9: Our Role in Forgiveness (2 Corinthians 2:10)**

Nine will be built around the two phrases that we need to remember in dealing with people as a priest and understanding forgiveness. That will be 2 Corinthians 2:10, where it talks about "in the person of Christ," and then where it talks about in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 "in Christ's stead." Those two verses are very important in understanding that we do this in the person of Christ and we do it in Christ's stead. We are His priests, just as there was a high priest in the Old Testament. He had sons who were priests. Christ is our high priest, and now in the church as Christians, we carry out the act of forgiveness through the Word of God that God has given us to do as the church.

#### ➤ Principle 10: Authority to Remit Sins (John 20:23)

The tenth one, and this will form the fourth one in here, explain the concept of our ability as a priest to take the Word of God and by the Word of God to free somebody from their sins. The verse you want here is John 20:23.

*John 20:23*

*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

When you win somebody to Christ, you have the authority as a New Testament believer, part of Christ's priesthood, to take the Word of God and to show somebody the plan of salvation and show that person how to be saved. Then through that process, you have the ability to relinquish them from their sin. Not because you and I have some kind of power, but God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit of God in us, the power of the Word of God, and as priests, that is what we do. We reconcile people to God. That is what we do. If you are unsaved, my job is to reconcile you through your sin that you become a Christian. If you are already saved and you are out of fellowship, my job is to reconcile you back that you become in a working relationship with Christ.

Now, there are seven, eight, nine, and ten in that. That is all one concept. I want you to be able to tell me when you explain it to me, I want you to be able to, that I know that you understand this concept, because you are going to be using this a lot. You may not use this at work when you are dealing with people if somebody comes to you, but if you have it in the back of your mind, you are working off of it to help them get to where they need to get.

#### ➤ Principle 11: Changing Your Thinking

The eleventh one is simply another great rule in counseling. You have heard me talk about this all the time, but these are things you want to remember. In dealing with people, you cannot solve problems in people's lives with the same kind of thinking that caused those problems. You just cannot. A person has to come to the point where the thinking process changes. A certain way of thinking will always get you into trouble. You cannot get out of that trouble thinking the same way.

I will take alcoholism for an example. You take a person as long as he thinks alcohol was okay, he will never get out of that problem. As long as he thinks that he can have a drink here and a

drink there, and it really will not affect him, he will never get to the place where he can get out of that issue. He has to come to the place that he changes his thinking about alcohol. He has to come to the place where he sees that alcohol is against what God, drunkenness is against what God wants. He needs to see how it has affected his family. He needs to see that his own children are following in the same path. He needs to see the devastating effects that it has. He needs to see how that it ruins his body and in time will make him completely dependent on it. It will become a satanic stronghold in his life until he sees it from that standpoint and changes his thinking about it, he will never get out of it. That is why it is so hard and most people do not understand it.

This is why, folks, when you start to deal with somebody, whether it is in your own personal life, whether it is somebody at work that you are working with, or whether you work with me in the counseling ministry, when somebody comes in with an issue in life and they have got struggles in life, you have got to identify that problem for them. They have got to know in no uncertain terms, what is the issue here? What is the root problem here that we need to fix? When you identify that, then you follow the next rule and then you isolate that. You do not say, "Well, a guy over here, 95% of him is good, he has got 5% it is bad. Oh, let us really talk about the good part." No, that 5% will ruin the other 95%. You have got to deal with what is wrong and he has to know what is wrong.

This is where these principles come in. This is where these stories in the Old Testament, and I told you at the end of the day, we are probably going to go through 60 or 70 of them that illustrate in the Old Testament actually things that as people go through. You have people that deal with depression. There is a story in the Bible that deals with depression, shows how the guy got in it, shows how he gets out of it, everything you need. All you do is tag the New Testament principles to it and you have got something to illustrate the problem and the principles to give it to him. You have got the same thing with selfishness, same thing with jealousy. Whatever the problem you want to throw at me, there is a story in the Bible that illustrates it by somebody doing right and doing wrong and then getting the principles, but you have got to be able to explain that to people. You have got to be able to understand what their problems are. You cannot just paint it with a broad brush, make it a vague thing that you have got some issues. That is what the world does. That is what many Christians do. Many, many people, you have heard me say this before and it is one of your principles, all they want to do is treat the symptoms. They do not want to solve the problem. Treating the symptoms will never fix anything. You have to forget the symptoms and find out what the problem is and treat the problem and then the symptoms take care of themselves. So you cannot solve problems with the same thinking that caused the problem. It has to become God's way, no longer your way.

➤ Principle 12-15: Satan's Advantage and Bitterness (2 Corinthians 2:10-11, Hebrews 12:14-15)

Now the twelfth one, and there are four in this one, and this is another study. The fourth one will run 12, 13, 14, and 15. This is another concept that you want to put this one in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11. On this particular one, on our inability to forgive, based on 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, here

is where it talked about how Satan will get the advantage of us. We talked about this in great detail. So I have broken it down into four segments so that you can better understand it.

➤ Principle 12: How Satan Gets Advantage (Daniel 1:8)

First of all, simply the fact that how does the devil get advantage over us? That is what he says in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11. He says that Satan will get the advantage over us, but we are not ignorant of his devices. The first thing you have got to remember, and this will be the one that you want here for number 12, is how does Satan get the advantage over us? The answer to that is the only way he gets the advantage over us is when we give it to him. There is no other way that he can get the advantage over us. If you are saved this morning, the Holy Spirit of God is living inside you. If you are saved this morning, you are in Christ. The devil has absolutely no power over you. He has no influence. He has no power. There is nothing to be afraid of. He cannot hurt you. He cannot do anything to you. There is absolutely no advantage that he has over you other than you and I giving the advantage. It is just that simple.

It is one of those things where I told you last when we study this that it is a simple fact. God has a plan for you and the devil has a plan for you. God wants to enact that plan and wants you to accomplish it in your life by giving yourself to the principles of the Word of God. When you do not, you do not have to want the devil to do it. You do not have to call him on the phone and say, "Okay, here I am." The moment you stop doing what God wants you to do, you start doing what the devil wants you to do. He has got a plan for your life.

We talked about how it is illustrated here now in Daniel 1 with Daniel. How he was taken captive and the devil, Nebuchadnezzar and his crowd who represents Babylon, the worldly system, wanted to give him all of the stuff that they had and at the end of three years that he might stand before Nebuchadnezzar, the most wicked king. They wanted him to learn the way of the Chaldeans, the tongue of the Chaldeans and all the ungodliness that they were doing. But the Bible says what? Daniel is sitting there and he says, "Hey, I may be here and I may be here against my will and I may not be able to go home and they may lock me up in the morning and they may let me out in the afternoon and lock me back up at night and they may make me do everything I have got to do. But they cannot make me turn my heart from God."

*Daniel 1:8*

*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

Do you know what Daniel knew? He knew even though he was in Babylon and he was a captive, he still understood that Nebuchadnezzar had no advantage over him. He had the advantage over Nebuchadnezzar. When we see Daniel's life, we see how that proved itself out, did it not? Great principle. Great principle.

➤ Principle 13: Giving Advantage to the Devil (Ephesians 4:27, Romans 13:14)

Number 13, two key verses that we want to use to understand how that we give our advantage to the devil. This goes back to the Samson principle. But two great verses here.

22. The first one is Ephesians 4:27 where it says, "Give no place to the devil."

23. The second one is in Romans 13:14 that says, "Make no provision for the flesh."

*Romans 13:14*

*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Those are the two great verses that go along with this whole study.

### ➤ Principle 14: The Pattern of Unforgiveness Leading to Bitterness

Number 14, this will be the third one in our series here on this particular section. You want to be able to lay out the pattern that comes into our lives when we cannot forgive. Remember how I told you that unforgiveness is a non-biblical emotion. It is not something that God gave us. When a person has an unforgiving spirit, that spirit turns into anger, it turns into hatred, and then it turns into bitterness. I told you that unforgiveness is a non-biblical emotion. It is not something that God gives you. Now anger is a biblical emotion because the Bible says that there are times that we should be angry. It is okay to be angry. Anger is all right as long as it is not anger out of control, anger within the biblical principles. Then hatred, hatred is a biblical emotion. God's people ought to hate some things. You ought to find out what God loves, and those are the things you ought to love, and you ought to find out what God hates, and those are the things you ought to hate. One of the things that God hates is God hates sin. So those two are biblical emotions, but what happens, they get out of whack. When somebody does not learn to forgive, then it turns to unbiblical anger out of control. It turns to hatred out of control, and it winds up becoming bitterness. Bitterness is a non-biblical aspect too. There is no place in the Bible where you and I are to be bitter about anything. There is no place in the Bible where you and I are to be unforgiving. There are places where we get angry, and there are places where we should hate. But there is no place where we should ever be bitter, or no place that we should not be unforgiving.

### ➤ Principle 15: The Root of Bitterness (Hebrews 12:14-15)

This brings us to the fourth one, and this will be number 15. This kind of ends out, rounds out this particular study that you need to know, and that is, we are given a definition, or the definitive verse in Hebrews 12:14-15, that really lays out bitterness. This is where I put all this material. I put my whole outline back here. That is what I have got in mind, and I go to it many times. Put your notes back there, put the one reference to Hebrews 12, but then have the study laid out on bitterness here, everything I have given you, in these four sections so far.

*Hebrews 12:14-15*

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

You want to always explain and understand what the root of bitterness is. The root of bitterness will be the real problem of what people have. Many times, what people are really upset about, or they say they are upset about, is not really what they are upset about. You have got to get to the root. But the real problem is always the root and getting to the root. When a person gets bitter, and this is the key here, and this is laid out in those verses, he says, verse 15, "Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God lest any root of bitterness spring up trouble." We have bitterness in our heart because the grace of God fails in our life. What does that mean? You have got to understand this concept. Understanding this concept of the failure of the grace of God simply means this: We fail in giving others grace that God gave us. We fail to see that we screwed up some time in life, and God gave us the grace. Somebody else screwed up, because they screwed up toward us. We are not giving them any grace. That is the failure of the grace of God in your life and my life. Taking the position that I am not going to forgive you because of what you did to me. That is the failure of the grace of God. That is how he is talking about it and using it.

Then I gave you eight aspects of bitterness and roots of bitterness. I gave you that whole scenario simply because I wanted you to learn that scenario because you are going to use this with people too. The eight scenarios are basically:

24. The roots grow under the surface.
25. Roots grow in darkness.
26. Roots grow best in dirt.
27. The more it gets contaminated, the better it grows.
28. It grows swiftly.
29. It grows stronger every day.
30. It grows deeper every day.
31. In time, it attaches itself to everything in your life, and it swallows you up.

All a picture of roots of a big tree under the ground that just keep going in the darkness and the dirt and attaching themselves to everything down there so you cannot pull it up. I choose the illustration. You take a tree, you plant it in the yard two years from now, you can probably pull it up by hand. Go back 30 years from now and you will die trying to get it out. Do you know why? Because those roots have tangled everything under the ground and have attached themselves to it. The longer you wait to forgive, the longer you wait to make it right, the harder it becomes, and in some people's cases, they never can. The roots are down too deep for too long.

That is an incredible analogy to use in dealing with people. I can see you sitting in the office and somebody coming up and saying, "You are Christian, are you not?" And you say, "Yeah, I am." And they say, "Well, I am struggling with something. Can you help me with this? I have got a problem here and this, so-and-so did this to me, and now she is working here. I just have a real tough time with her. Every time I see her, I just want to scratch her eyes out. Every time I see him, I just hate him. I feel bad about it." Do you know what you do? You have the time. You tell

them that story. You take that thing, break it down, get so familiar with it, that you can just without even opening your Bible, tell them the story about a tree you planted in your yard one time. Just take it into a completely out of that and just tell them the story. You say, "You know, one time we planted a tree in our yard, and my wife did not like where it was, and after two years, I had to pull that thing up and plant it someplace else. Then five years later, she wanted to move it again. You realize that I just, I tore the rear end off my car. I broke two winches. I broke everything in the thing, trying to pull that thing out. Do you know why? Because the roots got down so deep and attached themselves, that was impossible."

"Now, let me tell you about root of bitterness. The Bible says that there is a root of bitterness, and those roots of bitterness, when they are not dealt with, they just go down, and the longer you have this problem without dealing with it, that gets down, and pretty soon it is going to take charge of everything in your life." You see how you use it? You just take a basic, simple thing and explain it to them. Bring in the Bible at some point and lay it out for them. They say, "Oh yeah, I see that. Man, that is exact." You have a lot better chance of helping them with it when you identify it. But we are so inept when it comes to being able to come to a practical thing, where we just talk about it in a, Jesus always did that. He always took the most basic things. He said one time, "See those little children? That is the way you are supposed to be." He wanted to teach them about soul winning. He sent them out fishing. When they got all these fish, he says, "You need to be fishers of men." He is always using the common illustrations of people's lives to show them great biblical concepts. What you have got to learn to do is what I am giving you. That is what I am giving you and how you are going to follow through with it.

#### IV. Conclusion and Call to Action

I am going to hold up there today. We are not going to get through all these, and it does not matter. We will get this done, and we will pick them up after Easter and finish them up. But let me say this to you before we go. Let me ask you this. You heard a lot today, and you heard a lot today about biblical principles that will change your life. Now, I do not know where you are at in your own world today. I do not know where you are at. Deep down in your heart, you and God are the only two who know where you are at. But I do know this. This is why these times are so valuable. They are more valuable than just a good, hard preaching sermon. Because I have laid out now for you that some of you, you fall into basically three categories.

32. Some of you are going to take this stuff, and you are going to finely sharpen yourself, and you are going to become part of this ministry, and you are going to help me on those levels.
33. Some of you, you are not maybe ready for that yet, and you will be maybe in time. But right now you are just going to take it from the aspect that, "Wow, there are people at work that are coming to me all the time." Right now, if I can just learn how to use these things and be able to talk with people at work, God will, there is a great study in the Bible about how God, in Acts chapter 8, and it is a great study of how God has prepared sinners. He has got people out there that are struggling, that are lost, that need answers. He has prepared them. He has taken the downside of their life, and he got them to the end of the rope, so to speak, and they are looking around now for an alternative. He has got the sinners prepared, but then there is also

God has to prepare his servants. The study in Acts chapter 8, he had that Ethiopian eunuch who was the prepared sinner, but you had Philip, who was the evangelist, who was the prepared servant. It was the Holy Spirit of God that got the two of them together. I believe that where you work at today, or in your neighborhood, or with your friends, or people you know, or people you work with, I guarantee you there are people there. They have to be, that are struggling, that are hurting, and God has got them prepared. The problem is, God has got more prepared sinners than he has got prepared servants. God's people today do not know how to deal with people. They do not know how to talk to people. They do not know how to use the principles in their own life first, and then much less help somebody else. Some of you are in that category. Some of you are in a category where, you know, you could really be a missionary where you work. You could really change some things, maybe in your own family, but certainly where you work. That, "Wow, what a great thing for people to search you out, for people to know that this guy over here, this guy over here, when you have trouble, that is who you can talk to." But that is what you are looking for. That is what you want to be. That is why God talked about it before, how God will exalt you to the place where people will search you out. But you have got to have something to tell them. This is not where grandma's home-spun theology is going to cut it. You have got to know what you are talking about. So some of you are in that category.

34. In some of you basically, you just got saved, or you are right there in your life right now, and these things have to be for you. This is where you are at. These principles will change your life. They will help you be everything that God wants you to be. They will help make you into the man or the woman, to the mom or the dad, to the husband or the wife. They will bring those things into your world and give you the rock-solid principles. In a world that is absolutely upside down and absolutely in chaos, there has to be something that holds life together. It is the Word of God, and it is the principles in the Word of God, that if you will put them in your life and do what God wants you to do with them, apply them, then God will take it and use you.

Now, maybe you are here today and you are in the last category. Maybe you are here today and you would say, "Boy, what you said makes a lot of sense. My life is in an upheaval right now, and I do not have everything going the way I need to go. But boy, you made sense to me on one thing, and that is, God is really the way I need to go." We all come to that conclusion at some point in our life, and at that point, you pretty much fit the scenario of a prepared sinner. Maybe God has done something in your world that we do not know anything about that kind of got your thinking, looking toward what you heard this morning. Maybe somebody in your life, maybe your husband or your wife or one of your kids, God did something in their world and it got you thinking, and now God has got you looking and hearing what he wanted you to hear today.

So I say to you that if you are here today and you do not know for sure that if you died right now, if you do not know for sure today that you would go to heaven if you die, that what I am about to say is for you. I like every head bowed and every eye closed and no one looking around and just praying today. But let me just say this to you. God loves you, and God, it would be safe to say that God orchestrated everything that we talked about today just for you because he knows where your heart is at today, and he loves you desperately. He died for you, and he wants you to know

that he will take your life and make your life everything that it needs to be if you are willing to commit yourself to him and to simply say, "God, here I am. Take me and use me. I need to be saved."

Now, I do not know who you are today. Do not know where you have come from. Do not know what your background is. But I do know this about you right now. If you are here today and you do not know for sure that you would die, you would go to heaven, and there is an emptiness in your world, I guarantee you right now you know that. You may not want to let me know you know that. You may not want to let the person you are sitting next to know that. But deep down in your heart, the Holy Spirit of God is putting his arm around your shoulder right now, just like he did with me so many years ago, and he is saying to you, "Come on, pal, you know you need me. You know what that man said is true. You know that I am here for you." He is putting his arm around you, and he is saying, "Hey, sweetheart, you know that what he is telling you is the truth. Well, I have worked everything in your world. All the bad things that have happened to you in your life and the disappointments in life, you thought that I was against you. I was not against you. I was just trying to get you to a place this morning where you could hear what I really have done for you. I needed to show you that the world will treat you terrible, but I will treat you good."

Maybe this morning you are here now, and you know what you need in your life. The Bible says that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you. He shed his blood that you might have the remission of sin. The Bible says that he came down and he took your place on that cross. When he died on that cross, he took your place so you never have to go. He went to hell for you so you will never have to go there yourself. All you have to do is recognize that. The start of your new life, the start of a life of principles, and I will help you. I will do whatever I have got to do in your world. I will help you any way I have to. I will put whoever it takes in your world to get you where you need to go. I will spend whatever time it takes because I think that you are worth that because God died for you. If you are willing to make that acceptance of what he did for you, then I am willing to do whatever I have got to do in your world. But it is your choice. It is always your choice, and it will always be your choice.

So right now with our heads bowed and our eyes closed, I am going to pray in just a moment. I would like to pray for you. If you are here this morning and you say, "Bob, I do not know for sure if I would die right now, I would go to heaven." And God has spoken to you this morning. But right now with our heads bowed, no one looking around but me, would you just put your hand up and say, "Bob, pray for me. I am not sure." I will not embarrass you. It will be between me and you and God this morning. But would you just put your hand up and say, "Bob, pray for me. I am not sure if I would die today. I would go to heaven." And God spoke to my heart today. Anybody? Just going to wait for a moment. Anybody at all? "Here is my hand. Pray for me. I am not sure where I am at today. Here is my hand. But God has spoken to my heart." Anybody? Anybody at all? Okay. Good enough.

Father, we do thank you and praise you today. I thank you for the folks that are here today. I thank you, Father, for the fact that we got a good thing accomplished today. That, Lord, we have given them what they need to begin to put this all together. We get back after Easter. We will

finish it up. We will give them all of the scenarios that they need. Lord, help these people to realize that, Lord, there is a group of these that will make fine counselors. They will make good people to work with people. Then some of these folks, Lord, that they will be good at where they are at at work. They will be diligent. They will take these things. They will see that in their own family, in their own world, in the world that they minister in, where they work, that God will send people to them. They can use these principles. They can make that job place a little mission field under themselves, because that is what it is. Then, Lord, help the ones here that maybe are just new at this and just trying to find their way. Help them understand today that this church is here to help them, that I am here to help them, that I will help them learn how to do this. I can put people in their world. It will show them and help them with these principles. Help the prayer groups, Lord, understand and grasp the vision of what I said yesterday. Lord, help us just to all focus on these things that are life-changing principles that will change everything about us and help us be everything we need to be. We love you today. We pray you bless the rest of the day and all that we do in our efforts at Restart. Thank you for the people down there and how much we love them. Just pray, Father, that you will just bless us now in all that we do. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen.