

2 Corinthians 8

Sunday 1/6/2013

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to turn over here to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. Now that we are past the last year and got through everything, as you know, we have been coming through the book of 2 Corinthians. Today, on our first Sunday of the new year, we are going to start a brand new chapter in 2 Corinthians chapter 8.

I must tell you that I am really excited for the beginning of this year. I think that we couldn't have had a better start than we had New Year's Eve with time in the Bible together. So many of you are just really excited about that and getting a hold of that. Truthfully, that will absolutely change your whole demeanor about the Bible and make it a lot easier for you. If you need some help putting it all together, let me know. I have some people that obviously have a good handle on the Bible that will be great in helping sit down with you and put all that material together. I will be glad to help you with it if you want to come over and sit down with me and let me see how you are doing with it and help you give you some pointers on it. Now that we have it out there, now that you have it, you want to make sure that you do it right and you do it well because that is going to be the key here. So I am really excited about that.

I am excited about getting ready to start our counseling ministry, our people ministry. I think that you are going to see, for those of you who are going to be part of that, that it is going to be literally a life-changing thing for you, not only because of what you are going to learn, but by what it is going to require of you to do it. It is going to be a great time. I am looking forward to spending that time with you and really building the base here. We will talk more about that when we get together on the date of that meeting.

I. Thematic Overview of 2 Corinthians Chapters

Today, as I said, we are going to enter into 2 Corinthians chapter 8. In this chapter, we continue to work our way through this book, and yet we find another great aspect of the ministry. This one today is a little different than what we have come through in one respect. Anyhow, when we came through chapter 1, I showed you how that every chapter really defines for us a main theme in ministry. Sometimes you have themes underneath that main theme.

- Chapter 1 deals with the fact that you are becoming one with your people through their suffering. That is really the key: going through trials with people, learning from those trials, and then them taking the things that they learned by going through it and helping somebody else.
- Chapter 2, we saw really the aspect of the forgiving spirit of the minister. We talked about all the different aspects of that.
- Chapter 3, Paul was called into question on his own ministry by the Church at Corinth, and we looked at that as the proof of our ministry. Of course, the proof

of our ministry, the proof of our salvation, is the people that we work with and the people we have built, and all that goes along with that.

- Chapter 4, we saw the defining of our ministry. We talked about how that the ministry has to be run openly and honestly, and how that there can be no hidden things of dishonesty or handling the Word of God deceitfully. We went through all of that.
- Chapter 5, I think, was probably the chapter that all the other chapters point to, and that is your perspective on the ministry, and that is why we do what we do: the judgment seat of Christ. Someday we will give an account of what God has called us to do and how well we have done that.
- Chapter 6 was the fellowship of the ministry. We talked about the fellowshipping with truth and people who love the truth.
- Chapter 7, we just finished up, and that was the promises of the minister. Again, we showed how that the principles of the Word of God are really the key to applying them into your life and how that all works.

II. The Heart of the Minister: The Crucial Foundation

Now chapter 8, we find what I think personally is the key to all of it. This study is different than all the rest simply because this chapter has two chapters with it to go together. In chapter 8, it deals with the heart of the minister. In fact, as I said, chapter 8 and 9 go together. It is the only subject in this book that requires two complete chapters to lay it out.

I always tell people that want to study the Bible that you always want to, you never want to under-emphasize something that God emphasizes, but you do not want to over-emphasize something that God minimizes. A lot of people get messed up that way. They will take something that the Bible really does not say much about and make a big deal out of it, and the big thing that the Bible makes a big deal out of they never really see. But here is a thing where it deals with the heart of the minister, where He takes two chapters to cover this. To me, based on that, knowing what I know about the Bible, that would make this a very key chapter. I tell you, when God emphasizes something, we need to always want to put it together.

There are several places in the Bible where the Bible will say, "He that has ears to hear, let him hear." I have always found that when the Bible said that, He was emphasizing something that He wanted me to hear. When He puts a double tap on something that He talks about it in two chapters, when all the other subjects He talks about in one, you can guarantee it is probably pretty important.

Before we start to work through this chapter and see all the things that we have here, there are some things that I want to talk about. I always like to give you an overview of what we are

looking at so you have a better context to put it in. As I said, the theme of these two chapters, chapter 8, which we are going to get into today, and chapter 9, will be the heart of the ministry. That is really key because, and I am sure you already know this, or you should know this anyhow, that the attitude of heart is everything.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

It is the most important thing you have got to guard. Of all the things that are a child of God, you have got to watch out for. Of all the things that you have got to protect yourself against, and there are many things out there, the thing that you have to guard 24 hours, seven days a week, is your attitude of heart toward the things of God and toward God. The reason for that is because ministry will always begin in our heart. Everything begins in our heart. Not only does ministry begin in our heart, but we know from the Bible that also that is where sin begins. It begins in our heart.

The other night when we came through the 27 different sections of the Bible, I showed you how that the devil was a created being. Before he fell, the Bible says he was perfect in all his ways. But then the Bible says that iniquity was found in him. When you study it all out, it was found in his heart. He said in his heart, "I will ascend my throne above the stars of God." He said in his heart, "I will be like the most high." Your heart and your heart attitude is absolutely crucial in determining whether you make it or whether you do not when it comes to God. Because not only does ministry start in your heart, which we are going to see today, you are going to find that sin starts in the heart.

Proverbs 4:23

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

Keeping our heart with all diligence. That is exactly what Solomon told his son. It is exactly what his son did not do. Rehoboam became one of the biggest messes in the Bible and really messed the whole concept up.

III. Laws Versus the Heart: The American Context

I had to laugh right after the turn of the year, 2013. They came on the news and they talked about how that immediately, I forget exactly, four or five, 600 new laws went into effect. Every time there is a problem in America, they think that solving the problem is by creating more laws. That is how they look at it. You have all these nuts out here shooting people with guns, so make new legislation, new laws about gun control. People are obese, so they want to outlaw certain food that you can eat. Make new laws. You cannot get a 64-inch Slurpee. Things like that. They are always going at it that way.

I have learned anything, and you are smart enough to know this too, the issue in America or any place is really never really what it probably seems to be. You can change all the laws you want.

You can create all the new laws that you want, but until you change man's heart, nothing is going to change because everything goes back to man's attitude of heart.

There are so many great lessons that at some point, I have got so many studies in the back of my mind I would love to do, but at some point I would love to go back and do a study. We could probably do it on a Thursday night. I do not know, maybe it would be a good New Year's Eve study, but I would like to go back and completely lay out the structuring of America, the Constitution, and our founding fathers. I think there is so much you can learn from going back and looking at that and seeing because of the period of time that it was, because the men that were alive at the time, because the spirit that was in this country at the time, and most of all where the whole world was in relationship to the Bible you hold in your hands, that you find some of the most incredible things that you could ever learn that helps you understand why things are the way they are today.

John Locke was one of our founding fathers, and he was a great man and a moral man, and he had a lot to do with the institutions when we started our country, but he was not a saved man. John Locke, when they looked at framing the Constitution that put our government into effect, John Locke said that to have good laws you have to have good government. He was saying that good government will produce good laws. He said, if you want to have a good government you have to have good laws, and if you have good laws you are going to have good government.

William Penn, who they named the state of Pennsylvania for, was a saved man. He stood up in that same meeting and he said something that I think is one of the most profound things that was ever said. It shows you the character of the mindset and how our country was back then and how it was thinking. Do you know that after our Constitution was set up that each state had to come up with a state Constitution? Do you realize in the early beginnings of the state constitutions that every state Constitution had within its parameters, that you had to be a born-again Christian for you to be able to hold office? That you had to believe that there was a God? You had to believe there was a heaven? And you had to believe there was a hell? You also had to believe that as a public official you were going to stand before God because of your decision, based on the Bible. It is incredible. You could not find that anywhere today in anything in just a short 200 and some years from where our country was founded.

Yet at the same time, as I have said many times, our country was not formed as a democracy. It was formed as a republic. A republic is based on the principles of the Word of God. It is a very great study to take. But William Penn stood up in that meeting and he made a great statement. He countered what John Locke said, not that John Locke meant anything bad by it. John Locke was a good moral man, but he was not under the influence of the Word of God like William Penn was. William Penn got up in the exact same meeting and he said, "The key here is not good laws, but the key here is good men." In other words, saved men. He said, "Good laws do good, but good men do better." He says, "Governments are put in motion by men." He says, "Good laws may lack good men, but good men will never lack good laws, nor will they ever pass bad ones." And in "good," he is talking about saved men.

You know what William Penn knew? William Penn knew you could pass all the laws in the world, but it will not change anything because the only thing that will change anything is when man's heart gets changed. He knew that you could have all the good laws you want, but if you do not have good men, saved men, men who have a changed heart, they will never go the way it is supposed to go. When you begin to look at chapter 8 and then a little bit later on in chapter 9, you see that all the issues begin in man's heart.

IV. The Heart's Role in Salvation and Ministry

Over the years, I have seen parents that had kids who were not what they wanted them to be, and they were worldly or they were whatever. Many, many times over the years, the parents have come to me and they said, "Why don't you put some really good people with my children?" The idea is, and I understand your concept, the idea is, "Well, if I get my worthless boy with some people who have some worth, he will not be so worthless." Now, that sounds good, but it is not true. You could put a thousand people around somebody who is worthless, and unless that person has the changed heart to do what is right, nothing is going to change. Geographical locations, changing geographical locations, never solve our problems. Our problems get solved where they all start: in man's heart. That is why these two chapters, I think, are absolutely key chapters.

Ministry will begin in a man's heart because that is where salvation started: in your heart.

Romans 10:9-10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We want to get kids out of the ghetto. So we think if we take them out of the ghetto where they live in cardboard boxes and put them up in multi-million dollar palaces that we have solved the problem. We want to get kids out of the public school because the public schools are corrupt. So we take those kids or we homeschool them or we put them in Christian schools or alternative schools, and we think that is going to solve the problem. The only thing that is going to solve man's problems is when man gets a heart transplant, that he gets the heart of God that he did not have. Until that happens, you can do whatever you want to do. You can put as many people in that worthless kid's life. You can do as many laws in this country as you want until that person's heart changes to the things of God. It is all for naught. It is all for naught.

When you get into counseling and dealing with people, you are going to see how simple it really is. I do not profess or pretend that dealing with people is a hard thing. It really is not. People are hard to deal with, but dealing with them is not hard. It is just many times people cannot make the hard decisions in dealing with them. Ministry then will begin in our hearts because with God, He always goes after a man's heart. You are going to find a lot about the heart in the Bible.

Jeremiah 17:9

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

Yet you are going to find over in Psalm 119 it says,

Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

You see, your heart toward God and what you do for God or what God does with you is the key to everything. That is why He put two chapters in here. That is why He wants us to see then the aspect of ministry, the absolute vital key at the end of the day is going to come down to your attitude of heart and my attitude of heart. It is as simple as that. It is as simple as that. Ministry begins in our heart because that is what God changed about us.

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ministry begins in our hearts because that is when God gives us a new heart.

V. Biblical Examples of the Heart

If you ever want to study it out, there are four men in the Bible that really set the tone here of what a heart is: two in the Old Testament, two in the New Testament.

➤ The two in the Old Testament will be David and Solomon. The Bible says in the book of Acts,

Acts 13:22

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

➤ If you want to study in the Old Testament a man who had God's heart, study David. If you want to study a man that had God's own heart when he started out after David, study Solomon. You find that those two men in the Old Testament are a great study of not only how to get God's heart but how to lose God's heart.

➤ Then when you come into the New Testament, you have two men here, and they will be the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John. The Apostle John is a great study because he does something that no other man in the Bible ever did. I have told you many, many times how that the Bible says that he is the only Apostle that Jesus ever said He loved. I understand He loved them all, but you are going to find of the 12, John had a special love for God and God had a special love for him, and you are going to find that he is a great example of that. He did something, or I

should say accomplished something, that nobody else in the Bible ever did. He actually leaned over and put his head on the very breast of the Lord Jesus Christ and heard the heartbeat of God.

Now I know that Jesus Christ is not here and you and I cannot do that in a physical sense, but he did it in a physical sense. The physical act is a great representation of the spiritual thing because you and I may never be able to do that physically, but we sure ought to be able to do it spiritually. The heartbeat of God is the Word of God. In fact, when you get into Song of Solomon chapter 2, down around verse 6, it talks about our relationship with Christ. Right there in the middle of that thing, down there around verse 6, it talks about the Lord's hand being around somebody's waist and their left hand being on their head.

Song of Solomon 2:6

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

Do you know what that is a picture of? That is a picture of somebody leaning over and listening to the heartbeat of God with his hand on his head and his right hand around his side. That is what it is a picture of.

➤ The second great picture is Paul. Where John heard the heartbeat of God, Paul saw in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, and we have not got there in our study yet, but we will. Paul sees the glory of God. He gets taken, transported up to heaven, and when he gets to heaven, he does not stay there. He is the only man in the Bible that goes up and gets kicked out, but when he got kicked out, it is the reason why he lived his life the way he did. He saw the power of God.

Those two men in the New Testament are probably the two greatest examples to study. John was so moved by the heartbeat of God that God used him to write the greatest book in the Bible that deals with the deity of Christ, the Gospel of John. God used him to write the last book in the Bible which overcaps the whole Bible and shows you everything about Christ coming. When I study John, I study what my own life should be: to be able to have a relationship with God above the rest, and God to show you things that He just does not show everybody because of the relationship that you have. Paul saw it. He was taken up. He saw the glory of God and it overwhelmed him, and as I said, his life was never the same again.

That is why, as I said, chapter 8 and 9 go directly together, and they deal with the aspect of the minister's heart. These two great chapters in the Bible on giving and your heart directly really have nothing to do with money at all.

VI. The Grace of God: A Multifaceted Concept

I want to read for you chapter 8 verses 1 through 5 here as we start this out, and then we are going to make some comments about some things that I think that will really kind of help you put it all together.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

Now Father, help us today to come to Your Word and to learn and glean from it. We love You. We thank You for the people. We thank You for the good year You have given us in 2012, and Lord, we thank You for the way we ended it, and so many of these people now, Lord, have everything at their fingertips to be able to get the Bible down and to grasp it and to get a hold of it. We pray now as we move on into this year and we take these 40 or 50, 60 people who want to be part of learning the ins and outs of dealing with people and all their circumstances. We pray Father that they would, Lord, that they would, that You just bless us in all that we do. Help us today. Help us to put it all together. Help us as we go out to restart and accomplish what You have us to do there. We will be careful to give You all the honor and the praise. In Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

This is, for me anyhow, a great chapter in a lot of ways. Look at verse one and I want to show you how this whole thing is built around basically one word. Verse one says, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed upon the churches of Macedonia." The grace of God. You know, grace is the key element in everything in our life when it comes to our attitude of heart. Grace is the fundamental precept by which everything revolves around. A study of the word grace will be a tremendous study for anybody that wants to take it. When you study grace, you are going to find that there are many different aspects of it applied to us. It really forms the balance in our life.

You know, the balance for the Christian life is found in John chapter 1 verse 17. I do not know if you know that.

John 1:17

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The two great balances in your life and my life that forms the basis for an attitude of heart and wherever we go with God are those two words right there: grace and truth. Grace and truth are the key. You have got to have grace to do what God wants you to do, but you better have truth to make sure grace stays in line and vice versa. Those two things are vital, and those are two things that when you get saved you grow in. Those are two things that when you get saved you never

quit growing in. The older you get, the more you ought to have grown in those two concepts, and when you do, then I guarantee you, you will fulfill everything that God had for you to fulfill.

Now, I want to explain this so you are not confused. You heard me New Year's Eve talk about the church age as the age of grace and the Old Testament of being under the law, and that is true, and that is really what John chapter 1 verse 17 is saying. He is saying that the law came by Moses, but when Jesus Christ showed up, He brought grace and truth, and it is an absolute statement to say that we live in an age of grace. The church age is the age of grace. The Old Testament is under the law, and that would be absolutely correct. But remember what I said a few moments ago, there are many different aspects of grace, and this is what I want you to understand, many different aspects of the grace of God and how it works. From a Bible standpoint, grace is in operation all the way through the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is just not applied the same way. That is the key. You find grace in the Old Testament, you find grace in the New Testament.

Somebody says, "Well, that is confusing because the Old Testament is under the law and the New Testament is under grace. How can there be grace in the Old Testament and the New Testament when it is under the law?" Because it is not just talking about the element of grace as far as salvation is concerned. In the Old Testament, you had to keep the law, and that is how you got righteousness with God. In the New Testament, there is no law. We get it by grace as God gave us. But the truth, when you look at the word grace and you look at all the different aspects of it, nobody, Old Testament, before the law, during the law, or after the law, nobody could be saved at all under any circumstances if God did not first give the grace to be saved, no matter how it is. So it is not in the term just of grace, but it is how it is applied.

Genesis 6:8

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Now, did Noah get saved by falling down and trusting Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior? Absolutely not. Did Noah get saved by grace like you and I got saved? Certainly he did not. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. You know how he got saved? He got saved by building a boat, and he could have believed God all that he wanted if he would not have built the boat that God told him to do, he would have drowned like everybody else. So grace, when you take that word, and this is so vital that you understand this, grace is a word that has many dimensions to it. Because you hear it all the time for the church age, and we are saved by grace, and yes we are, and the church age is under grace, no question about it. Grace has many different flavors as you lay it out through the Word of God.

As I said, Noah found grace way before the law. In that same chapter in Genesis chapter 6 verse 3, after he was told to build the ark, God waited 120 years before He killed anybody.

Genesis 6:3

And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

You know what that is? That is grace. Anything God gives you in a period of time instead of dealing with it the way He should is another form of grace. Grace as you find it is not always just talking about salvation. You are going to see that as you grow. God gave Israel grace way before the church started. You know how He gave them grace? They were so destitute and so messed up and so screwed up, He should have gone down and set them into captivity, but four or five hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar or Sennacherib ever came down, you know what God did? God sent them Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. He sent them prophets to try to get them straightened out before He whacked them. You know what that is? That is grace. That is God coming down, should have come down and killed them all on the spot, but He did not. He sent somebody else to get them back to where they needed to be. That is grace. In other words, grace is when God gives you something that you do not deserve, and not only just always in salvation. God gave grace to David. David, when he did Uriah and Bathsheba and that great tragedy, there was nothing in the law that he could do. He could not bring any sacrifice whatsoever. But you know what God did? God, who should have killed him, God should have demanded his death, did not. You know what that is? That is grace.

Somebody said, "Well, grace is salvation." Well, grace is more than that. Grace is whether you are saved or not this morning, if God did what we are supposed to do, He would come down and kill every one of us, but He does not. You know what that is called? Grace. It is grace. So when we talk about our salvation and being saved by grace, yeah, we are, and we use grace to define it as unmerited favor with God. I did not deserve to be saved. God came down and by His grace He saved me. That is true. You find grace takes many forms. There are many forms of God's grace, and grace is in operation all through the Bible, not just in the New Testament, but through the Old Testament. Nobody can be saved, Old Testament and New Testament, without God's grace, that is just the way it works. So you have got to look and see how the word is used, and it is used differently, and it is important to understand that. It is not always applied to salvation. Grace just does not always get applied to being saved. It is applied different ways.

VII. Grace in Action: Stewardship and Practical Application

Let me show you the process here, and I think this will help you figure it out. There is, as we have talked about, a grace for our salvation. We live in a church age, we are under grace. That is great. That is true. You and I got saved, we got saved by grace. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, to save a wretch like me." That is how it works.

But you already realize that sometimes another aspect of grace is that grace is a period of time. We saw that in Genesis chapter 6. We saw that with the prophets coming to Israel. Grace is a period of time. He gave them a period of time to repent before God came down and killed them. You see the same thing with Jonah and Nineveh. God gave him grace.

Sometimes grace is an ability that God gives you when you are dealing with somebody that is trying to do right. God gives you the grace to be able to work through a situation. Sometimes grace is a particular kind of grace in circumstances that you want to help somebody get through, maybe a sickness or maybe a death. In some cases like that, grace is a temporary thing. Somebody dies and somebody needs the grace that they have or needs what you have to be part

of that, and you have to help them. That takes grace. See the empathy that you have for them. It is a temporary thing in that state.

Sometimes grace is something God gives us to build something for Him, like in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 10, where He is talking about the judgment seat of Christ and He says God gives us the grace to be a wise master builder.

1 Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Grace is the ability that God gives you and I that we do not really deserve and do not have, but it is in many, many things. You have to have grace to be able to teach the Bible. You have to have grace to be able to pastor a church. You have to have grace to be able to disciple somebody, work with somebody, and certainly grace is something you need if you are going to work with people. I mean, you are going to get into working with people and getting through their problems. People are never going to be the way you want them to be in very few cases. You are going to have your expectations the way things ought to go, and the moment you start, you are going to find it is not going to go that way. Now you have got two choices. You can just throw your hands up, be frustrated with it, or you can exercise grace and realize in life most things do not go the way we want them to go, but it takes grace.

It takes grace in raising a family. You have got to put up with things raising a family. It takes grace when you get married. You cannot have everything you want your way all the way you want it. It takes grace when your marriage does not work and you get a divorce. Grace you find is in everything we deal with in the world. We have to have grace to deal with it, and it is not just for salvation. Many Christians have a hard time forgiving other people. I find out all the time we are a Christian who they took God's forgiveness but they cannot forgive somebody else. See it all the time. Why is that? It is because you took God's grace to forgive you, but you will not exercise that same grace and give it to somebody else. That is how it works.

So the word grace is not just about salvation. In fact, if you look at our text here in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, these people are already saved. They are already saved. The grace here he is talking about is their grace in giving. Chapter 8 and 9, their grace in giving. In other words, grace is the key element of our salvation for sure, but grace by grace so you are saved through faith. I understand that, but also the key element in our life after we get saved. You see, you are saved by grace, okay. We got that. You are saved by grace, but then you grow by grace as God gives us the grace. That is how it works, and these two chapters deal with the grace of giving in ministry by our attitude of heart.

But before we look at all of that, I want to lay a little foundation here for you. Now, verses 1 through 3 here, just so you get a context. He is talking about a physical money offering or goods that they raised for the church at Jerusalem. The church of Jerusalem is going through some great problems financially, very poor. They helped send a relief down there by taking up an offering

for them. But the key to all of it is not the giving of money or the offering to the saints at Jerusalem. That is just the storyline here. You have got to get underneath that.

You know, people always get it backward. People get so anal about the aspect of giving, and money, they think that God wants their money. God does not want your money. Preachers want your money. The key to biblical giving is found in this church in verse 5, and it has nothing to do with money. He says in verse 5 there, "And this they did not as we had hoped, but first gave of their own selves to the Lord and under the will of God." You see, God does not need or want your money. God wants you. That is what He wants. He cares nothing about your finances, nothing about your house, nothing about your car, nothing about the thing that you have that you spend so much time worrying about. What He wants is you because it is real simple. When He gets you and really gets you and gets your heart and you get a changed heart, He gets everything you have got. That is how it works. Not hard. When God has you and me first, He will get everything you are and everything you have got. It is just real simple.

This is why you find legalism versus the Bible. I call it the John Locke syndrome. Just like making good laws will not make good government, making Christian rules will not make good Christians. That is what legalism does. Legalism tells you how to wear your clothes, how to wear your hair, where you can go, where you cannot go, and pretty much takes everything out of your life. You just get the sheet of rules, you are good to go. Just like creating good laws do not make a good government, creating Christian rules do not make good Christians. In both cases, it goes back to our attitude of heart.

When I preach, I am not big on a lot of rules. I think the Bible is very clear on the main ones you have got to follow, and we do not even have to talk about it. We know those things, but I am not big on a bunch of Christian rules. When I preach, I do not lay out a system of rules. When I preach, I go after one thing when I preach: it is your heart. That is what I go after. I preach not to your body, not to your face. I preach to your heart because I understand that if God gets your heart, He will get you.

David, when he went through his great sacrifice and his great struggle in Psalms 51:17, he said, God told him down through there, "I am not interested in your sacrifice. I am not interested in what you do. If you really want to get some kind of place with Me, then the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, that will not despise." God wants your heart. So when I preach, I do not go after the things you do. I may talk about things that are sin, but I do not go after anybody's particular deal. I just preach at somebody's heart because if that does not get you, you are ungettable. Like I said, I could create the greatest spiritual environment that we could have, which I have. I could put 50 people around you that love God when you do not love God, but it will not do any good if your heart is not where God wants it to be.

You know, in the Bible, and we learned this now again from our New Year's Eve, in the Bible, free will is a great study. We know that free will is the whole plan of God from Genesis to Revelation. God gives everything that He created a choice. We know that now. When God created man, He made us free moral agents. We get to decide. If you are sitting here this morning, you get to decide whether you are going to go to heaven or hell. People came in

Thursday night, and the people that were there were lost, some were saved. At the end, we gave an invitation, and some people who were lost decided, "Hey, I want to get saved." They changed from darkness to light. They got saved. They made the choice. After you get saved, you have another choice. That choice is, are you going to grow or are you not? That choice is, are you going to do what God saved you for? Are you going to keep your whole life for yourself? Boy, it is an understatement to say it. I know I say it a lot, but it is an understatement. Life is choices. As a child of God, you think your choices are over the day you got saved. No, you are wrong. Your choices are just beginning, but now you have the wherewithal to make the right choices where before you could not make any right choices. But it is free will.

Now, I know that Calvinism and Calvinists try to take that away. I have a number of friends who are Calvinists. I have known a number of people who are Calvinists. For those of you that do not know what a Calvinist is, John Calvin was a reformer along the time of Martin Luther. John Calvin basically started the Presbyterian Church when Martin Luther was doing the German Reformation. John Calvin was doing his own Reformation in Switzerland and Scotland and places like that. John Calvin was a man who wanted to start his own church setup. So he founded the Presbyterian Church. The difference between John Calvin and Martin Luther in my own mind, from my own study, is one was saved and one was lost. I do not believe John Calvin was saved for five seconds. If you believe what he wrote in his articles of faith and you believe what he wrote down through history about salvation, he believed you had to be baptized to go to heaven. If you can get to heaven that way, there is more power to you. But when Martin Luther turned the world around for God, Calvin turned around for himself.

When Calvin, he came up with the idea that way, way, way back before Genesis chapter 1, way back before we started the other night, God looked down through heaven and saw everybody sitting here. In essence, everybody in the world that was ever born. God decided that you are going to heaven and you are not, and you are going to heaven and you are not, and you are going to heaven and you are not. He chose who was going to go. John Calvin taught that God chose everybody. They call it predestinated. So God either predestinated you to go to heaven or God predestinated you to go to hell. There is nothing you can do about it. I mean, Jesus loves me. Sorry about you. You are not one of the chosen few. I mean, if He did not choose you, there is nothing you can do to get to heaven. If He chose you to go to heaven, there is nothing you can do not to go to heaven. So they do not put a lot of emphasis on winning people to Christ because they believe that if you are saved, you are going to get there.

I always think you can pin a Calvinist down in his heresy when it comes to the little babies dying. You know what Calvinists teach when a baby dies? A Calvinist has to look at that parent's face and say, "Well, there is a chance your little baby went to hell because the age of accountability does not apply." You see, it is not like, "Well, when you were a baby, you were under the age of accountability. And then after you hit the age of accountability, God chose you or did not choose you." No, He chose you way back when. So a Calvinist has to look at that parent's face who were putting that little wicker casket down on the ground and say, "Your child, your baby only had a 50-50 chance of making it to heaven. Because if he was not chosen, he is going to hell." Now, how would you like to face two parents and tell them that? You know why

they, why I know Calvinists are so crooked? They will never address that issue. Never address that issue. Well, if I believed it was true, I would be telling you right on the spot, but I am telling you right on the spot it is not true.

I have friends that are Calvinists. I do. I have looked at them over the years, and I can tell you one thing about every guy that I know that is a Calvinist, and that is simply this: you could not put what he knows about the Bible in the left half of a blind gnat. He does not know anything about the Word of God. He does not know anything about the Bible. If he knew the Bible, he would not believe the foolish things that he believed, but that is what Calvinism is. See, Calvinism says that God picks on you, the rest of you He did not pick. You cannot do anything about it. In other words, Calvinism takes away your free will, and God chose. We know the other night that is not true. Why? God gives everybody a choice. You know why? Because free will is the name of the game. Everything you do and I do, and everything you do for God and I do for God, is based on a free will. By your free will, you sat and heard me preach some time or somebody preach, and you decided to be saved or not to be saved. After you are saved, you come to the church, you go to church, and every Sunday you make a conscious free will choice: I am going to do what God says or I am going to do what I want to do. That is the way it works.

Seventeen times you find in the Bible it talks about free will, and every time you find it, it is dealing with something somebody is giving to God. It is a choice. It is a choice we make in life. Every choice we make, I do not care what it is, is based on free will. We talk about building the character qualities of Christ in our lives and being Christ-like. Without a doubt, the greatest single number one character quality of Christ was the fact that He gave, "For God so loved the world that He gave." I am not talking about money in any way, shape or form. This church here, even though they got an offering and sent it down in Jerusalem, Paul said, "Forget the money, they gave of themselves first because they were growing in grace." If you are not willing to give your own self first, you can forget the rest of it. It is not going anywhere. I mean, it is so simple. When we have the character qualities of Christ, it is simple. We give. We give of ourselves. We give to others, and we give our lives to God. When we do not, we keep it all for ourselves.

VIII. The Balance of Grace and Truth

It is giving of your own self first. You come through a very simple, basic process when God changes your heart. I have seen so many of you come through this process. I mean, I could just list your names off of how I have watched you from the time you got saved grow through a process. Many of you now, you are head and shoulders above others that have been saved all their lives. Why? Why is that? Why can somebody get saved and be saved for four or five years and be where this person had been saved for 10, 15 years and they are nowhere near where the person only saved five years was? Why is that? Anybody have an explanation? It is real simple. Your choosing, your free will choice. You can actually see the process in people's lives. I mean, to me, it is one of the most exciting things I ever see.

First, God gives us the grace to be saved. We know that. "By grace are you saved through faith, not of yourselves. This is the gift of God. Lest any man should boast." God gives you grace to be saved. Then that grace God gave you for salvation. Yes, we understand. It is unmerited favor

with God. I do not deserve it. I could not do anything to get it. God gave me His grace to save me. But He gave me His grace. What, do I just put it in my back pocket like I do my wallet? Do I just fold it up and put it on a shelf like some book I never read? He gave you the grace not only to save you, but He gave you that grace that you could grow in it because He has got something He wants you to do. Once you are truly saved by that grace, God again now will take that grace and grow you through that grace to have you do what He wants you to do. He adds to that grace. You know what He adds to it? He adds truth because grace by itself is not enough.

You take grace by itself and just be somebody that, and you see it all the time. You see churches that have a lot of grace, but they have no truth. Then you find churches that have truth, but they have no grace. You find Christians the same way. You have Christians who know the Bible, know the Bible, know the Bible, but they are so intolerant with other people. They have no grace for anybody else. When it does not go their way in about 15 minutes, they are ready to bail out. You know why? Because you have got the book, but you have got no grace. Then you have got other people who have got grace, and they will just put up with crap on and on and on and on and on. They will never drop the hammer. They will never deal with it. You know why? Because they have got grace, but they have got no truth. They are out of balance. The balance for you and me, as we grow in grace, as you grow in grace, you have to grow in truth because Jesus Christ brought us grace and truth. Yet one keeps the other in balance.

All through this now, you have a changed heart toward the things of God. As the Bible says, and we teach you, you are a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things have passed away. All things become new. In Colossians chapter 3 verse 22, this is now called the singleness of heart. God changed your heart, gave you His heart. You have got God's grace. Now you do something with that grace, you grow in that grace, and there lies the character qualities of Christ. I mean, it is so basic and so simple. It is unbelievable. As you grow and you grow in truth, you grow in grace, then God gives you the different aspects of His grace.

1 Peter 4:10

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Anytime a preacher starts to talk about stewardship, the congregation immediately starts thinking about, "Here we go again, money." But you know what? When he talks about that stewardship in the book of 1 Peter, it has nothing to do with money, and it has to do with the fundamental thing that we are talking about. Because he says in 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 10, "As every man hath received the gift," that will be the grace of God, "even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold," manifold, more than one dimension, "manifold, grace of God." A manifold on your car sits on top of the engine block, and it has got all the different ports that goes down inside the engine, more than one. Manifold, that is why they call it a manifold. It has got more than one access into the engine. The grace of God that God gives you, you need to be a steward over the manifold, all of them, all of the different aspects of God's grace. You do not just take God's grace and get saved, and that is all you do with it. You need to become a steward, and you want a great study on that. The great study on that is Abraham and Eliezer. Back in the Old

Testament, Abraham had a steward. His name was Eliezer, and the Bible tells you that he was over everything that was in Abraham's house, all right? Abraham is a type of God the Father, Eliezer a type of you and me. Look at all that Eliezer had, what he entrusted to him, what he did. That is your job with God. It is just simple. It is simple. The manifold grace of God, all the different aspects. I am not just to have them, I am to be a steward of them. I am to look at them as something that belongs to God that God gives to me that He put me in charge of, that I have got to give an account of, of the grace that God gave me.

Boy, do not you know, do not you know when we get to the judgment seat of Christ, when you start to nitpick all these things through, you know the judgment seat of Christ is going to be a lot more about just what you did and what you did not do. It is going to be what you were stewards over that God gave you. Can you imagine standing at the judgment seat of Christ when you realize all the grace that God has given you, and now why He gave it to you, and He made you steward over it, and you by your own choosing chose to do nothing with it except take it for salvation. Oh, I am telling you, I am telling you. Manifold grace of God, the many aspects to it that we have to have to be a steward, a good steward in the ministry that God has saved us for.

You know, in doing the ministry, it takes grace on your part to do it right. That is why when you get saved, you do not go right in the ministry. You start to do basic things. You help out here. You begin to grow, and then you get disciplined, and you go through a process of learning to grow. That is why it is so vital that when you get disciplined, the person to disciple you knows what they are doing. That the person to disciple you has a good life that you can look back and say, "Man, if I want my life to be just like that." In doing the ministry, it takes grace on your part to do what is right. When you get saved, you begin to grow, and you begin to do the little things. As the Bible says, you will be faithful to the little things. God will make you rule over many things, and you grow. As you grow in grace, you also grow in truth.

I think one of the greatest for me, I cannot speak for you. I am not getting these out of a book someplace. This was through my own life experience. I think the greatest definition of grace, and I know it is unmerited favor with God. I know that. You can find that anywhere you want to go, and every preacher tells you that. But I think grace personally, I think grace is my ability to recognize what God has given me and what God is doing in any particular situation. I think that is grace. I think grace is the ability that God gives, that we give God to do some things in His own time, that we look at a situation we recognize. "Yeah, I would like this to happen a lot quicker. Yeah, I would really like this to happen. Boom, boom, boom." But grace is the ability that you realize that it is not. Your ability to see whatever circumstances you are in, whatever you are doing for God, you may have your own plans, but God has His plans. Sometimes, most of the time, just about all of the time, they do not really line up. You have to be able to, you have to have the ability to adjust. You cannot look at a situation when it does not go the way you want it. You just throw it out.

Grace is the ability to recognize that you have to give some things some time for God to do something. Grace is giving people time to work through some things. It is easy to look at somebody we do not like and hack them off at their ankles because we do not like them. I look at that, and I see that and fear that all the time with people. When I start to feel that way, I just look

at my own ankles and I think, "Boy, I am sure glad God did not whack me off there." That is grace. Being able to give somebody else extended time in something based on just keeping a record of your extended time that God has given us. But you see, you have got to grow through that.

Grace is putting up with things because you have got to deal with larger issues first. You are going to find this when you work with people. There will be a lot of little irritating things that people do, but you realize that put those over here right now because we have got larger fish to fry over here. That is grace. That is grace in working with people. You cannot fix it all at one time. I would love to. You will not find anybody on the planet who would like to get a quicker fix than me, but it does not work that way. The reason why people do not make good ministers, do not make good pastors, do not make good people that work with people is because they do not have the grace to give people the time that they need or be able to recognize circumstances when God is doing something in His timing, not ours. Or the fact that it is a thing where it just, you know, you have got to work on this first to get to this. These are all things that somebody would say, "Wow, what book did you get that out of?" I did not get those out of a book. I got those out of my own life because those are the things that God did with me. If you are honest this morning, those are the things He did with you that did not, between me and you, I learned them and you did not. I do not know why, but I know this, it is choice, but I know this, it is grace.

Grace is giving people time to develop themselves even though you think they, like I said, should move on faster. Grace is seeing the situation as it really is. God working behind the scenes even though it is not real obvious. Somebody says, "Well, wow, Bob, you are really setting yourself up, man. People will just pull the wool over your eyes all the time. People will just tell you what you want to hear." Why? With that laying that thing out, I mean, somebody could just play the game, go pick up their fiddle and just be fiddling around and playing that thing and playing you a sweet song and doing whatever they want to do. You see, that is where you are wrong. That is grace. But the thing that always balances that grace out is the truth.

I look at grace as the road of life. If you drive home today and you are on a big highway, you have got lots of room there to drive. But you know what? You have got a center line and you have got a white line over here that tells you what you have got to stay in. If you get outside of that, you are going to wind up in a ditch. If you get on this side, you are going to wind up dead probably, maybe dead in both cases. But the bottom line is that is the truth. The road is the grace, but the white lines are the truth that holds you on the road. That is how I look at it.

When grace is giving people the time they need to work through some things, as I said, truth will always show you when they are wasting your time. Oh, yeah. It is not grace, grace, grace, grace, do whatever you want to do. No, you give people grace, but you have got to hold them accountable to truth. When you give them grace and they abuse that grace, it is the Word of God that shows you when they are wasting your time. I have had people that I have tried to help over the years, people I have tried to get involved with. I saw their potentials. I have said many, many times. I tried to get involved in their life, tried to do this, tried to do that. I got absolutely nothing back after a period of time. I move on. It is now a waste of my time, not because I am a bad guy, not because I do not have grace. It is because you did not change your heart and you want to stay

where you are at. You can stay there. I will come down and sit with you for a while, but I am then moving on with or without you. I will find somebody else to work with. It is the way it works.

Yeah, sure. Grace is giving people time they need to work through some things. You bet it is, but truth will always show you when you are wasting your time. I told you a couple of weeks ago, you cannot read people's hearts and I never claimed to. I do not have to. You cannot read people's hearts, but truth will always reveal to you their character and their attitude of heart.

1 Corinthians 8:3

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

Where grace is giving people time to develop themselves, truth will show you when it becomes a game. And they are playing a little game with you. They are telling you one thing and doing something else. You see, grace and truth. I hate to reveal all my secrets. I am the greatest game player you ever met in your life. There is not a game that you try to play against me, but I do not see it before you ever get the game, call the cards out of the box.

I worked with Truman Dollar for a number of years. Truman Dollar, I learned so much about the ministry from him, and I will be in eternal debt for him giving me a chance to be in the ministry. He may not have wound up very good, but I publicly never say anything bad against Truman Dollar. I appreciate everything I learned. Truman's style of ministry, and we had like 18 staff pastors on the staff at the same time, in a mega church. Truman's style of leadership was pitting one against the other. I think he liked the challenge of it. I never was part of that, and I was smart enough to see that. All the rest of them, and I do not mean this in an arrogant way, but I always looked at them as dumber than a stump and me smarter than the stump. I always saw the games, and I never got involved in it. He would tell somebody to watch somebody else. He would tell that same person to watch this person, pastors. He created this era, and that is how he ran things. He ran by control, and he controlled people by telling them certain things.

We had one guy on the staff, and his name was Herb Hubbard. Some of you know Herb Hubbard. I have got to say it to Herb's, whatever, he is now one of the biggest pastors down south in Atlanta, got a mega church down there, which means nothing. But Herb was a butt kisser. He was the biggest behind kisser you ever met in your life. He knew nothing about the Bible. He knew nothing about ministry. He knew nothing about anything. His whole world was politics. That is how he got the big church down there. It belonged to somebody that he knew to get down the step, a stepping ladder that goes down the line. Herb Hubbard was always the ear. Whatever Herb went, he went back and told him. That is how he controlled it. He would get his little guys out there telling him what to hear, and he has got all kinds of good information. Not a bad plan if that is how you want to do it.

Well, Herb was always pumping me for information. I got fed up with it. So one day I told Herb, I said, "Well," I said, "I will tell you Herb," I said, "I need you to pray for me for something." He said, "Oh yeah, what?" I said, "Well," I said, "I am really struggling because at that particular point, my Sunday school class was off the chart. I mean, my Sunday school class gave more to

missions in one year than the whole church gave. I mean, it was going to town, and Truman did not want to lose that. He was smart, and he knew how to play it. So I told, and he was always worried that Mel Sabaka, who was now in New York, was going to pull me out and take me to New York with him. I knew that, hey, want to play the game with me? I will play the game with you. So that day, I had it with Herb because he was just a, yeah, he was. So I told him, I said, I said, "Yeah," I said, "I am really struggling with the decision." I said, "Mel really made me an offer to go to New York with him." He says, "And I just cannot pass it up." Immediately, I mean, I could see the doo doo doo doo doo. He says, "Well, I will be praying for your brother." I just kind of walked out to him. Immediately, he walked out like he was going to his office, walked around this thing. I was watching him. He walked down there, and boy, he went right to the preacher's office. He told Truman.

A week later, Truman calls me in the office about something else. Before he called me, Mel called me. Mel says, "What is going on down here in this place? So you guys lost your mind?" I said, "Well, we probably have all lost our mind, but what is the deal?" He says, "I just got the most scathing letter from Truman Dollar. How he absolutely detests the fact that I would try to take you out of that church and bring you up with me." He says, "I am going to quote Mel. Can I quote Mel? Can I quote him? What in the hell is he talking about?" I said, "Just hang on." I said, "I have got to go in and see him." So I go in. We are talking about some other things. He, Truman kind of pulls back in his chair, and he says, "Well," he said, "I want to tell you something, buddy." He says, "I just fired off a letter to Mel Sabaka last week." He says, "I am as mad as," his favorite thing was, "I am as mad as a striped snake." He says, "I found out about him wanting to hire you up there and bring you up there. I just, I just, I just called him everything in the book, and I just let him have it." I just sat there. He says, "I thought you ought to know that." I said, "Well, I think you ought to know that none of that was true. I just made that up and told Herb that." That is exactly what he did. He said, "What?" I said, "None of it was true. Mel never tried to hire me." I said, "I am sick and tired of that little errand boy running around and telling you something. He is pumping me all the time for information. So I gave him something juicy, and I love you, and you can fire me anytime you want. But if you are going to try to play that game with me, get somebody better than him because I know how to play the game as good as you do or anybody else out there. If you are going to play the game with me, Truman," I can call him, we will call him preacher. "If you are going to play the game with me, preacher, get me somebody worthy of the game." Herb was so mad at me. He hated my guts to this day probably. I loved it. Hey, do not tell me about playing the game, man. I know it. I know it. I know it.

I have told you many, many times we had the greatest night New Year's Eve you could ever want. 250 plus people on fire for God went out of here. Hallelujah. I got the Bible, and I am not so stupid to know that 20 minutes after you were out of here, the old devil started to undo what God did that night. I watched some of you take the position of being a deacon or do this and do that. You want to pretend to me that you are doing all you are supposed to do, and you know as well as I do, and you know as well as I do, it is a game now. It is a game now. It has become a game now. I know how to game play. Are you kidding me? You think I am some bozo off the turnip truck up here? I just pretend to be stupid. For me, it is easy. I have seen those situations all

my life. I know that fake plastic smile. I know that little nice little voice. I know the, I know the, "Okay, brother," I know how it all goes.

Where grace is giving people the time they need to work through something, truth will tell you when it is now over and it has now ended into the games. All this is the basis for the great principles I keep putting before you. That is the ultimate game plan for me. Never want anybody to do right and never want anybody to come to church more than they want to. Meet them on their own turf. Always wanting to do what is right, always be there if they ever decide, but realize that grace is the ability to say, "I am here for you," but truth is the ability to say, "But you are not ready for it." He is not playing me. I mean, he looked like a fiddle, but my strings are broke. When you do that, you get taken advantage of because your grace was not balanced with your truth. You are outside those white lines, and you are going to get killed.

I never chase people who do not want to get caught anymore. I did for many years, but I do not chase people who do not want to get caught. I do not try to help people who will not help themselves. I do not get the idea that you put bad people with good people just so it will help the bad people. If that heart does not change, nothing is going to change. Better get it. In doing the ministry, it takes grace to do it.

I think the book of Philippians is a great book, and it has so many, to me, the book of Philippians is the Christian book on balance. There are 10 verses in there. I have given them to you before. There are 10 verses in there coming through that book that if you get those 10 verses in your life, you cannot miss it. It is all you had to live your life for God was the book of Philippians, and you could not get the rest of the Bible. Those 10 things would get you through. But I find reading through that book when you get that book down and you understand the balance between grace and truth. There are 10 real areas of a balance I know I need in my life, and they probably need for you.

You see, a Christian who is balanced, grace and truth.

- A Christian will always be self-reliant. He will not have to depend on a lot of people because he is a leader. But he will never get to the place where he becomes self-sufficient. See, that is out of balance. You can be self-reliant because you have the Word of God, but you become self-sufficient when you do not need God anymore.
- A Christian needs to be steadfast. There are some things that a Christian needs to hold a line with. But a Christian never wants to become stubborn because he has to look at things change sometimes.
- A Christian always wants to be tactful in what he does, but a Christian never wants to be timid in what he does.
- A Christian wants to be serious about the things that he does, but he never wants to become pious or self-righteous in what he does.

- A Christian should be unmovable in some things. There are some things that I am unmovable on, but a Christian should never become stationary because we always have to keep moving forward.
- A Christian should be generous. A Christian should try to help people. A Christian should be generous, but a Christian, that is grace, but a Christian has to use truth that he does not become gullible. Has to be a balance. Has to be a balance.
- A Christian should be meek, but he should never be weak. Meekness is God's power under control.
- A Christian should be gentle, but a Christian should never be wishy-washy.
- A Christian needs to be tender, much like myself, but not touchy or thin-skinned or taking everything personal.
- A Christian always balances truth. He always preaches truth, always stands for the truth, but he seasons that truth with grace, and he has the ability to do it back and forth.

In doing the ministry, it takes grace to do it. It will take grace for you to deal with people. As you grow in grace, you should grow in truth because that always helps keep the balance. But it all goes back to a man's attitude of heart, realizing as you build your character qualities of Christ in your life, it will be about the attitude of your heart in giving back to God what God has given to you based on your growth in grace, based on the greatest character quality that He ever gave us, His grace. As you get more of His heart as you grow, you get more of His grace. As you get more of His heart, as you get more of His grace and you get more of His truth, then in time you come to a point where you give God everything that He wants of your own self, and you become like the church at Corinth, you gave your own self first when you do not.

IX. The Ultimate Goal: Giving Your Whole Self

I must tell you, there is nothing more obvious. We all have a blind side in things. In that verse, 1 Corinthians 8:3, it works both ways. It says, "If any man love God, the same is known to him," but it does not say this, but it is a reversal verse. If any man does not love God, it shows the same way. Nothing more obvious than a child of God who does not want to do what God wants him to do. We are all blinded. We all like to blind ourselves to it. It is like, you know, we do not want to ever admit that our kids have any problems. I have known parents that their kids have drug problems, drinking problems, all these problems, and the parents just lock it all up. They just keep it all in house. Nobody ever finds out about it. Their home wants to be a hell on earth. When a boy overdoses some day or that, then it will be somebody else's fault. They just cannot. We always have to turn a blind side to things. But there is nothing more obvious than a child of God who refuses to give God all that he is.

It is like the proverbial elephant in the living room. I mean, you go home tonight and imagine a 1200-pound elephant or two-ton elephant in your living room. You can say, "There is no elephant here." You can sit there and watch television and look around it and say, "There is no elephant here. What elephant?" You can deny that there is an elephant in your room right up to the point where he goes over in the corner and makes the most humongous mess you ever saw in your life. At that point, you cannot ignore it anymore. Now you have got to deal with it. Life is the same way. You can ignore and pretend that you are where you are at when you are not. You can pretend that you love God when you do not. You can pretend all the things that you want right up to the point that your life makes the biggest stinking mess in the corner you ever saw in your life. Then you have got to deal with it. I would just think it would be better to deal with it now, but that is me.

As we go through this great chapter, 8 and 9, you are going to see these things. My goal for you, I did it Thursday night, was to give you the truth, the Word of God, New Year's Eve. Excuse me. Was to give you the truth and the Word of God. But truth is not enough. You can have the truth, but you have got to have the grace. You can have the grace, but you have got to have the truth. One of the things that we will do with our people ministry that you will get, or you will not make it, you will learn to grow in grace. You will learn the different aspects of it. You will learn the manifold stewardships of that grace. You will be in situations, see situations where I cannot explain them like I can in there. I can sit down and say, "Okay, here is scenario number one. Watch this, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. Why did this happen down here? Let me show you why. How could it have been inverted? Here is how it could have been inverted. What does the Bible say about it? Here it is." That is how you learn, because it is grace and truth. Grace and truth.

When God saved you, God saved you by His grace. After you are saved, He wants to take that grace and He wants to develop that grace because the goal is you want to get in your life by your own free will is to get God's heart and everything you do, character qualities of God. The only way you do that is to grow in two areas, grace and truth. They always have to stay in proportion to the other. Maybe a little bit, little bit, little bit, little bit, little bit, but they always balance out because that is what it takes. Grace and truth. Grace, the road of life. Truth is the white lines that keep us or whoever you are working with between them. It makes it real simple, but it makes it real easy. That is why the first thing I wanted to show you in this chapter before we ever got anywhere with it and never got anywhere was where he says, "the grace of God." Because the grace of God is something that needs to be understood. You need to get out of the mindset that it is just about the day you got saved. You got grace to be saved, but then God gives you grace to do what He wants you to do. It comes in many forms, many fashions, manifold grace of God. Your job and my job, to be a steward of them. Let us pray.