

## I. The Evil Man and the Strange Woman: Doctrinal and Practical Understanding

Last week, we took a detailed study of the evil man from a practical standpoint and showed you how, inspirationally, it really applies to you and to me. You ought to be seeing now why I tell you the Book of Proverbs is so invaluable. The Book of Proverbs, and this is why I want to kind of give you both understandings of it, is so that you see how it fits doctrinally. Israel, God's son, was up against an evil man and a strange woman. We know now that doctrinally, that evil man is the Antichrist who, through other evil men, all down through Israel's history, has tried to destroy them. We also know now that the strange woman was Baal worship. We saw that illustrated in two people during Israel's time: Ahab and Jezebel, and now we understand how that had all come about.

Last week, we began to look at it from a practical standpoint. We now know that the evil man will be the worldly wisdom that the devil uses, and it becomes his devices. We talked about Proverbs 19:21, there being many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. But we know now that from a practical standpoint, the evil man is all of the worldly wisdom that the devil puts together through unsaved men, for unsaved men, to justify themselves and to get themselves around the Word of God. I also gave you some examples of what the world comes up with. We looked at some of the "ologies" of life, the philosophies that man gets into, and how in time, I told you that it will always creep into Christianity within a time frame of 20 or 30 years. The importance of Proverbs and the instructions of a Father, to us the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ, are to keep and preserve us.

Today, we want to finish up chapter 2; we want to take a look at this strange woman. We want to look at her from a practical standpoint. Our text today, for the last time, will be basically the same text that we had the last two or three weeks, which deals with both of these, and now we're going to look at it one more time today.

*Proverbs 2:10-22*

*When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;*

*Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:*

*To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;*

*Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;*

*Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;*

*Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:*

*To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;*

*Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.*

*For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.*

*None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.*

*That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.*

*For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.*

*But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.*

Now Father, help us today to come to Your Word and to open up the scriptures to us and to give us and admonish us, Father, and teach us and instruct us in this great book. We know, Father, that the devil has a plan to destroy us that's just as viable as the plan that God has to use us. And we also know that every time that God moves in our life to do something, that the devil moves to counter that. So help us today to see how he does that. Help these people here today, Lord, understand the great teachings that are found in this book, and Lord, help them not just to see it and understand it, but to apply it to their lives. And we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

## II. The Strange Woman: False Religion and Its Deception

As I said earlier, we do now understand from a doctrinal prophetic standpoint that this woman is the religious system that we know as Babylon, Mystery, Religion, the Mother of Harlots found in Revelation chapter 17 and 18. We know that now. We've systematically come through and looked at that from a doctrinal standpoint. We now know that the evil man and the strange woman are a team. They work together. We saw it in the picture of Ahab and Jezebel, a man of total darkness and worldly wisdom teamed up and supported by a religious system that has no light or no truth or no wisdom, and the two together are used to destroy and undo everything that God wants to do.

Now, today we'll look at it from a practical standpoint. I want you to see how it affects you and affects me and how it works much the same way. The evil man, we know, will be the worldly wisdom that unsaved man gets from the devil to counter the real truth of God. And we saw him last week. We know the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 11:14 that it's no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. And this is his wife. This is the strange woman. She will always be the religious system. She will always be the false religion that works in concert with the strange or the evil man. Where the evil man puts out his heresy, where the evil man puts out his false doctrine and false teachings about the way life should run, the strange woman takes those and brings them into religion and Christianity to destroy it. And in time, it brings biblical Christianity to a standstill.

Verse 17 says that there are religions today. Verse 17 says that there are churches today, denominations and Christians and preachers today who have forsaken the guide of their youth and the covenant of their God. And we studied church history a while back, and we brought you through it, and then we put out the first volume out in the book, and through there, one of the

things that I did when we studied it is to show you how this system works. I show you how church history is broken down into seven periods and how the whole concept is one where God moves through history to accomplish His plan, and the devil moves to counter that plan to stop what God is trying to do. And I showed you that. I showed you how there are two lines that get developed. Two lines that begin in the book of Acts and then come through history. One is the true line of God's Word, who is going to put out the gospel and accomplish the plan of God. The other one is the counterfeit. The other one will be the evil man and the strange woman who take the things of this world and try to reshape them into spiritual things, even when they're not, and then bring them into our lives. And you see it. You see it today.

### III. The Erosion of Christianity and the Loss of Savor

I told you last week how Matthew chapter 5:13, that everybody thinks the world is getting more wicked, and it's not. It's just that Christianity is more powerless. And as I said last week, Matthew chapter 5:13, the salt has lost its savor. Christianity, people with the Bible who believe the Bible, are a preserving effect. They keep the erosion from a country, from a family, from an individual. It's the thing in your life. And you know it's true. The moment you stop studying your Bible, the moment you quit coming to Bible study on Thursday night, the moment you try to take out of your life the things in the Bible, you begin a process of spiritual decay. It's just that simple. You may not see it the next day. You may not see it the next week. But that doesn't mean the process doesn't take place.

Most men who die of prostate cancer or any other cancer, prostate in particular, is a cancer that is very slow. It doesn't have any signs. A lot is going on inside your body, but you don't feel the effect of it. Not until you go to the doctor one day and he checks your blood level and he checks all of the things, and you come back, and suddenly you're in third, fourth stage cancer of your prostate. And you know what? It was a surprise to you. But it's a thing where sin is just that way. It's a very slow process. And when you stop studying your Bible, reading your Bible, when you take yourself from other God's people and you separate yourself from the church. Hey, I've known people that they had a problem with church and didn't like going to church. They like other Christians. They like doing this. But coming to church, they found every excuse not to be there. And you know what's going on in their life? The erosion is taking place. They may still talk about how much they love God. They may talk about the things of God. The erosion is taking place in their life. And that's the process. You saw it down through church history. You see it down through Christians' lives. And that's the process that it goes.

I told you last week, the five steps down, that when a man begins to leave God or when begins to leave God, it's a five-step process. And it's a very slow process. It's something that you don't even see yourself until it's too late. Two hundred years ago, if you went to the Baptist church, any Baptist church, and you went to the Sunday morning service, the preacher there would tear your hide off and hang it on the wall. He would say things that you wouldn't want to hear. He would say things that you didn't like. And so you'd get your nose bent out of joint. And you know what you'd do? You'd go down the street to the Methodist church and you'd show up on a Sunday morning. And believe it or not, that guy would take your hide off and hang it on the wall. And

you'd get mad at him. So then you'd go down a little bit farther down the street to the Presbyterian church. And that guy would take your hide off. So then you'd get frustrated and go down to the Lutheran church. That guy would take your hide off. Two hundred years ago, they all preached the same message. It was straight, hot, and true. Some of the greatest preachers coming up through history were Methodist preachers, were Presbyterian preachers. Bob Jones, Sr., Sam Jones, they were Methodist, but they were great preachers because back then churches preached the same message.

Today, all that's changed. Now you don't like what I say. You don't like how I preach. If I'm too mean-spirited or I yell at you all the time, you don't like this, you don't like that. You haven't figured out yet that you're better off having me yell at you than God yelling at you. But you don't get that. Now you don't like what I say or what I teach. You can go and find a church that will exactly fit your lifestyle. You can find churches that will think it's okay to drink booze or it's okay to be a homosexual. You can find them out there. You'll find churches today that will bring God down and the Bible down to man's level. You'll find exactly what you're looking for today because the evil man has brought in his junk, and the strange woman has repackaged it and now brought what was in the world 200 years ago right into Christianity. The bringing down of God's truth to the level of man.

#### IV. The Strange Woman's Tactics: Flattery and Positive Thinking

Then, through the devices of the evil man and his marriage to the strange woman, you now can get rid of all the negative things in the Bible. And that's why people don't like the Bible. That's why people don't like this style of preaching or biblical style of preaching because it isn't all positive. Now there are some great positive things in the Bible. I just haven't found them yet. There's nothing positive about you in an unregenerate state. There's nothing positive about you as a child of God living like the world. Nothing positive at all. Now you get on fire for God and fall in love with God and the Word of God and do what God wants you to do in your life. That's a positive thing. That's a great thing. But you don't find that very often today.

You find that this strange woman, she uses, verse 16 says, that she uses flattery. She uses flattery in her speech and her approach. She does away with all the negative things. I think the greatest example of this today is Joel Osteen. He'll get 25,000 people in an auditorium, pack that place out. You know why? Because he'll never say one negative thing to anybody about anything. There's no hell. There's no sin. It's all positive. And people just love to have that today. It doesn't work for them. But they don't care. They don't want to go someplace today where they really hear the truth about where they're at in life and what they've got to do. And in many cases, what they've got to change. They don't want to do that. This woman fits that bill. She uses flattery. She uses the power of positive thinking. She tells you how good you are. There's no preaching with this woman. There's no yelling. There's no raising your voice. It's all sweetness. There's no heaven. There's no hell. There's no sin. It's just we're all good people. She tells you that sin is just a sickness or it's a challenge in your life or it's just a shortcoming that you have. She tells you to do good and to think positive thoughts to get the right karma, and your life will go along that

way. She teaches that every man is the spark of goodness. And you don't need Jesus. You don't need some radical, fanatical preacher up here ranting and raving about the truth of the Word of God. You just need somebody to fan that spark in you. Yeah, that spark's going to get fanned someday, and you're going to wind up in a lake of fire. That's how it's going to work.

She tells you to do good. She tells you to think positive thoughts. She uses enticing words. She gives us the assurance that because we are all God's creation, that we have to be all God's children, and we know that God would never send His children to a place called hell. They talk about being saved by the blood, being a slaughterhouse religion. How could you think about the bloody mess of doing anything for anybody? That's where they go with it today. As a religious harlot, she's big on love. Not the love of truth, but the love of self, the love of pleasure, the love of people but in the wrong way, and the love of things. Her main speech is, "God is love. Love is God. So if we love everybody, we're like God." That's how it works today. Her main goal will be always to support her husband, the evil man. To take his teachings, his thoughts, his philosophies of life, his program, his ideas, and to work his teaching thoughts into religion and to destroy it. And you see it if you just pay a little attention.

## V. Historical Examples of Compromise and Counterfeits

I think about back in the early 1800s, they started what is called the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army was truly a Salvation Army back then. General Booth, a Confederate War general, headed it up, and he was an avid soul winner, and back then, it was a soul-winning army. That's exactly what it was, and they won people to Christ. They started programs everywhere, and their goal was simply one thing: the truth of the Word of God and telling lost men and women they needed to be saved or they're going to die and go to a burning hell. You couldn't find that today if you walked into the Salvation Army today. It's a social gospel. It's meeting man's needs. Every time there's a disaster, every time there's an earthquake, every time there's a volcano, every time there's a flood or hurricane, the Salvation Army runs in and passes out food and blankets and all that stuff, and that's good. But what good do you do a man if you feed him and you let him die and go to hell? Why, if William Booth came back today and walked through the Salvation Army, he'd have a heart attack before he got past the first ashtray. It's a social organization today.

You see it with the Methodist church. Sam Jones, Bob Jones Sr. Boy, they could take your hide off and shoulder away for six months when they preached. Not today, not today. There's no preaching. They've all gone to the social gospel. You're okay. I'm okay. They all let everybody, and we're all God's children, and it's a mess today, and that's why, because the evil man and his teammate, that strange woman, that religious harlot, has taken the filth of this world and translated it into the things of God to make all the evil man stands for look like it's legitimate. To bring the world into New Testament Christianity.

Now I told you there's a model for everything in the Bible, and in the Bible, if you're paying attention and you're any kind of Bible student at all, you know what the devil does is not new. And you go back to Numbers chapter 22, and the story there is the exact story of how the nation of Israel got destroyed, and it's the exact same story that how the church got destroyed, and it's a

story of two men, Balaam and Balak. Now Balaam hates the nation of Israel. Balak wants Israel destroyed, so he comes to a prophet named Balaam and he says to Balaam, "I want you to destroy the nation of Israel for me." Balaam says, "I can't do that." And he says, "Well, I want you to do that because I want to get rid of these people." And he says, "I'll tell you what, I'll give you all the money in the world that you could ever carry off if you'll just destroy the nation of Israel." Balaam says, "I'm telling you right now, I am not, what good would it do to do? That Bible says according to Israel, 'I'll bless those that bless thee and I'll curse those that curse thee.' It doesn't matter how much money you give me; if I go attack and wipe out Israel, God's going to kill me." Balak looked disappointed, but Balaam said, "But wait, I can't do it, but I'll tell you how you can get it done." He said to Balak, "You get very young men to marry your girls," which is the violation of the Old Testament law, "and you get your girls to marry their men, and you intermingle them, and you know what? I won't have to kill them, you won't have to kill them, God will come down and wipe them out." And that's what he did. He knew that God was a holy God. Some of you haven't figured that out yet. He knew God would not stand for you to violate His Word. He knew, an unsaved prophet, he knew that God meant when He said, and he knew that if the nation of Israel broke the law, went after those other nations and brought their women and brought their husbands in, they would bring their gods, and that would be to start a Baal worship, and God told them, "If you mess with those, I'll come down and judge you." That's the plan of today. That's what got Israel destroyed, and that's what got the church destroyed. We're not a holy church anymore. I've told you many, many times, I haven't seen a sinner for so long, I forget what they look like. We live in a Christianity that doesn't bother anybody, that you can do whatever you want to do. You can be a homosexual, you can be a lesbian, you can be a drunk, you can be a dope addict, you can be this, and you can be a Christian, and nobody sees a contradiction. Now that's a world that is messed up, and you wonder why Christianity has lost its savor, the salt, its power. It's simply because God's judgment is on His own people. It's exactly what it is, and you see it all the way through. You see the effects of this in God's Christian church. You see it in God's people all the time, in every place. More and more as we get farther and farther from the Word of God and closer and closer to the Second Coming. People who claim to be Christian but have no real love for God or the holy things of God. Churches today that have left the path of uprightness for a path of darkness. So they've got to make their church into a Hollywood movie set. They have no light from God, so they bring in artificial light. They have no power from God, so they turn it into light shows, and they bring in all of the stuff that sounds good to counterfeit the light that's not really there.

## VI. The Danger of Not Knowing the Real Thing

Last week, I gave you eight verses that I keep in the front of my Bible, and if you don't believe me, there are a lot more than eight; I just gave you eight, but I'll show them to you. Eight verses that I never want to forget. There are eight verses that always keep me in touch with where I'm really at in this whole world, and I gave you eight of them last week. Another one I use all the time, and boy, it's a real killer, and personally, I think this is the real number one issue today that the evil man got going for him with his wife, the strange woman, and I never lose sight of these verses, never do. I've got them in the front of my Bible with about 15, probably more, and I look

at them probably once a month just to keep my perspective on where it's at. The one I want to give you today is in Haggai chapter 2, and I think it's probably for understanding where we're at today, for understanding why things are the way they are, for understanding why Christianity and Christians are in the mess that they're in today. To me, this is it; I don't need another verse. This verse says it all, and it's in Haggai chapter 2, verses 2 and 3.

*Haggai 2:2-3*

*Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,*

*Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?*

That's a powerful statement. You know what's going on here? Solomon comes to the throne about 900 BC, and when Solomon, who's permitted to build the house of God, the temple, David wasn't. When Solomon is permitted to build it, you find it in Chronicles, and it's one of the most incredible things you're ever going to read in your Bible. The architecture of the structure that goes in, the things that are allowed in, the things that are not allowed in, all of the things that go into its building. I mean, the dedication of the prayer is probably one of the single greatest things in the Bible you're ever going to see, and even though it happened historically, it's a dedication prayer for your house, your body; it's incredible in what it is. The Bible says on that day that when they had that great dedication of that temple, there was probably nothing like it in history. I think it says something like a hundred thousand goats and two hundred thousand this and a hundred thousand this all sacrificed. I mean, there were sacrifices all across that place; it was unbelievable. I bet the smoke of those sacrifices blocked out the sun, and it was all because God now had a temple. God now had a place in Jerusalem that the nation of Israel was going to worship God and fellowship with God, and that was going to be the central thing. Up to that point, He'd been in a tent, and they had to move it everywhere they went. Even when they got into the land, it was still in a tent, but now Solomon built it. Now it was the greatest single building, architecturally overlaid with gold, that the world had ever seen.

Then Israel goes to pieces. The evil man and this strange woman begin their work. I showed you last week with Solomon loving many strange women, and we begin to see the downward spiral of the nation of Israel, and it gets so bad, and the Baal worship comes in, and all the kings are wicked, and Ahab and Jezebel are in that line, and it becomes an absolute total disaster. And then finally, God sends them into captivity for 70 years, kicked out of the land that under Cyrus, king of Persia, God allows a remnant to go back, the residue. What He's saying, the Book of Haggai is one of two books that is written after they come back, and they clean up the mess. They try to get the temple back in effect, and they actually have a second, this is what Haggai is talking about, a second dedication. You know what he's saying? The Bible says that they're all excited, all the new people, all the new generation, they're all excited, they're all happy, "Oh, we got the house of God! Look at it! Boy, we got a praise band! We got this! We got that! We got the big, oh, we got, look at that big screen TV up there! We got every day, man, we got every day!" You know what the old men are doing? The old men are weeping. You know why they're weeping? That

verse right there. He says, "Those of you that were around or have the wisdom to know what the first house was that was built in Solomon's time, and compared to what this one is right now, it's a joke." Solomon offered 600,000 lambs and 200,000 sheep and goats. We got two chickens and a duck. It was an absolute disaster from what it was to what it had become.

But you know what the real tragedy is, and here lies the problem today? Those young people that were all excited about the second dedication had nothing to compare the real thing with. You know what's wrong with Christianity today? Most of you have never seen a real church. Most of you have never heard a real sermon. I can't even give you this country's never seen a real revival because there haven't been a real revival in this country from the 1940s, 1950s, well before you and I were born. And I'm telling you right now that that's the problem today. That's the problem today. I mean, there's no comparison of the real thing in Christianity. We go to churches now, and they do all this goofy stuff, and they see the evil man and the strange woman's fingerprints all over it. You think it's the real deal. You think it's great. You're saying, "Wow, what a great church!" You have nothing to compare it with to see what a real church was. I mean, it's real simple: if you never saw a real hundred-dollar bill, you'd never be able to tell a counterfeit one. And if you hadn't seen the real temple, these people hadn't seen the real temple, they didn't understand what it was all about. They thought it was great. The old men thought it was a travesty.

You know, in life, in everything, there are counterfeits, there are fakes, and there are forgeries. People will see something that is really valuable or collectible, and then they'll set out to fake it to deceive you to get your money. I mean, you see it in everything. You certainly see it in the collecting world. I mean, you go to an antique store, and somebody says, "Boy, that looks really old and that are really nice, and boy, I'll tell you what, boy, that that looks like it goes back to the 1800s." The guy smiles and says, "Yeah, it sure does." And you buy that thing for two or three hundred dollars, and later you find out that it was newly made. He put it out in the backyard and watered it and rusted it and got it all dirty and messed up, brought it in, and you thought it was the real deal. I know guys who collect baseball memorabilia or football memorabilia; it happens there. Somebody who's famous signs an autograph, and you know, in the back of their jersey, before you know it, there's a hundred of them out there. Gary collects old cars. I'm sure Gary could tell you there are fakes in that. Civil War memorabilia is for the last, I mean, you know what? I talked to a Civil War collector one time about two or three years ago, and I said, "I said, uh, uh, when you collect Civil War stuff, I said, how do you know? I mean, the Civil War was 1865, this is 2000, I mean, it's 150, 40, 60 years ago. How do you know it's real?" And he said, "Well, we just hope it's at least 80 years old." I collect World War II memorabilia, and I'm telling you, fakes abound in that. In the 1990s, two movies changed it all: Saving Private Ryan, which is a great movie, and then this miniseries Band of Brothers. When that happened, everybody wanted to collect World War II stuff, and you could take a legitimate, really rare World War II paratrooper helmet that was still the 101st, like Band of Brothers, and you could find one that somebody had, and if you paid a hundred dollars for it, you paid too much money for it. But when those movies came out, everybody wanted it. The fakers saw that in a heartbeat. They started faking them. There were guys that threw them up on the roof to rush to get all the things. They got all kinds of techniques. They put them in the ovens and bake them. They make them

look old. They scratch them with this and put that on them. They paint the insignias on them and drag them around in the dirt because those hundred dollars, that was how much were a hundred dollars. The last one I saw went for eighteen thousand dollars. Eighteen thousand dollars! And somebody sees that, don't know what a real one looks like, they'll pay that money for that and say, "Look what I got!" I don't know how many times I've been to a military show or somebody, and some young collector comes up, he says, "Look what I just found!" And I say, "Yeah, yeah, you found something all right." I say, "How much you pay for that?" "I paid four thousand dollars for it." I thought to myself, "You just got ripped off, man, because you know what? In anything that's real, you've got to know what to look for. The fakes are good, but there are some things you just can't fake."

When it comes to Christianity, same thing. The problem is, because you've got no comparison, you don't know what to look for. Guys use a helmet, "Whoa, I bet you Colonel Sink wore this! Bill Garnier probably wore that one!" No, it was in a barn. Somebody found it, scratched it a little, painted something on it, dragged it down the road by the car for a couple of days, and then threw it up on the roof, brought it in, and you bought it because you didn't know what you really needed to look for in a real one. People go to churches today, and they hear the guy's singing, somebody singing, the band sways back and forth, the big screen's on the deal, and the guy gets up and uses enticing words and tells them everything, and they say, "Oh man, what a great place!" No, you've got a counterfeit and don't know how to find the real thing. That's your problem. That's your problem. They simply don't know what the real one should look like. And someday, you know, and it's the same way with churches today, with religion today. It's been so long since the real thing was around that nobody has a standard to judge the fakes by. And it's hard to tell a fake, a counterfeit, if you never saw the real one. Hard to tell a fake Christian if you don't know what a real one looks like. A generation today of Christianity, new Christianity today, they have never seen the real thing, so they invest their life, they invest their time, they invest their families into something that's fake and counterfeit. And where the guy buying a fake helmet loses his money, they lose their soul.

## VII. The Importance of a True Church and Personal Accountability

You know, I've told you this before, I absolutely hate being born in the world where I'm in today. This world drives me crazy. I love all of you with all of my heart, but I'll be honest, some of you drive me crazy, and I love you to death. I don't understand why some of you just can't get some steel in your backbone to stand for God. I don't, I don't understand it. I don't. And I mean, I, but it's a time we live in, and I, and I hate it. I absolutely abhor it. I was, you know, I guess God, I know God had a purpose for me being where He put me in as a thing He wants me to do, but boy, if I'd have had my druthers, I'd have been back in the 17th century, back in the 18th century. I'd have been back someplace there, boy, where Christians were Christians, and they took a stand for it, and it was real. I love people, and I love the ministry, and I wouldn't get out of any of the world, but fake, phony Christians just drive me up the wall, and they're everywhere today. I thank God every day of my life that He had to put me in this world when He did. I was born in

1950. I thank God a day of my life that if He put me in this world when He did, then He allowed me to be born when He did because I had the privilege of seeing the last of the real thing. I had the privilege of seeing the last remnant of the old Philadelphia preachers. They're all dead now. I actually had the privilege to hear them, meet them. I actually saw Christian men who were real Christian men. I actually saw preachers who would take your hide off, brother, and never apologize for it. I actually saw Christians who took a stand, churches that believed what they're supposed to believe. You see, I saw it before the evangelicals were ever around. Hey, back in my day, there were no cell phones. You know what marked my generation? I remember when the first calculator came out. We had no air conditioning in our house. Everybody's got it. You know who had air conditioning in your houses back in when I was 10, 12, 13, 14? All the rich folks. We didn't have it. We lived on the other side of the tracks. We didn't have any of those things. There were no computers. If they were, you had to put them in a 12-story office building. Now you get them in a little laptop or your little iPad or your little whatever you call it, you know, a little thing you can reach the world with it. I didn't have any of those. We did. I remember when we switched over from a coal furnace to a gas furnace. Back when I grew up, every house had a little square door in the front where twice a month the coal man came in, backed up to the thing, gave you half a ton of coal. That's where I learned the two types of coal: bituminous and anthracite, because I asked my mom what kind of coal are we getting, and she told me that this anthracite or whatever was burned better than the other. I was just a little guy, and I remember my big deal was getting my dad shoveled, pushing the coal back in. My dad, I'm only one generation. My dad, in a little place called Elkton, Maryland, right outside of Frostburg, I'm sure you all heard of it. My dad had five brothers and two sisters. They were born in a log cabin. I mean, I saw the log cabin when I was little. It's gone now. But they were raised in a log cabin. They didn't have heat. They didn't have electricity. They didn't have anything. I'm my early generation. My grandfather rode coal miners out of West Virginia and Maryland. You know, so back then it was different. Back then, you actually, I remember when the first McDonald's came out. I remember driving in there to eat when it was only two sold. Now it's 300 billion sold. I remember when a bottle of pop was 10 cents. Twinkies were 12 cents. A candy bar was a nickel. You could go into a store with four or five pennies and come out a rich man with candy. I throw my pennies in the trash now. They just fall in my pocket. The dog eats them, and then 10 cents cost me 700 to get it cut out of his stomach. I saw the real thing. I saw it before the evangelicals took it all over. There weren't none back then. I saw it the way it really was. I saw it when the lines were still clearly drawn. I saw it when there were no Bible churches, no chapels, no community churches, no interdenominational message. See, I have a comparison. And I saw the final phase of when Bible-believing churches switched over from the King James Bible when the big push came for the NIV back in the 70s, in the early late 60s and early 70s. I actually saw Akron Baptist Temple, Canton Baptist Temple. I actually saw all the great Baptist churches that were formed and built on the King James Bible, but by the time they got to the 70s, and the pressure from the evil man and the strange woman to get that new translation, all those churches dumped the book, and they're all gone today. They're down to nothing. I saw it. I saw it. The evil man has brought in his teachings to the church, and the strange woman has developed her church around them, and that's why you see the message you see today. And the problem today, people have no idea what a real New Testament Bible-living, Bible-teaching church should be or what it

should be doing. And I feel sorry for them. I do. I really do. But I also know that in the world that we live in today, most of God's people have bought into the mess. They bought into the evil man. They bought into the strange woman. They don't want anything to do with the real deal. So I don't feel sorry for them. It's like Isaiah 5:20, they call evil good and good evil. They give out darkness for light, and the truth is falling in the street. And the evil man and the strange woman have counterfeited the real thing. They fake Bible Christianity, and they fake churches, and because people don't know the real deal, they're lost in all the phoniness. That's all it is. It's all it is. And if you just got that out of today and leave here right now, you'd have more spiritual worth if you could ever grasp that and I could ever tell you.

But I'm not done yet because I must tell you, in relationship to that, no matter how dark it gets, no matter how bad it gets, God always has His faithful few. God always has the light that shines in the darkness. You know, we talked about Ahab and Jezebel and how wicked they were and how they destroyed Israel, and that's the downside. But you know what the good side is? God told Elijah, "What are you sniffing about how bad it is? I still got seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." God always has His remnant. God always has His faithful few. And honestly, in my world, in my life, I believe that God put me where He wanted me. I mean, I would have been hell on wheels back in the 18th, 17th century, but I'd have just been one. Now I'm hell on wheels, and I'm all by myself. But you know what? I'm telling you, I know why He put me where He put me. When I started this church, my goal then and my goal now was to keep it as close to the model church in the book of Acts and the true line down through history that I could. And at the church at Antioch, when you come down through the church at Antioch and down through church history, you'll find seven absolute doctrinal positions of the church at Antioch, and you find them in a true biblical believing line down through history, and they form the foundation of what the church should be today. From Montanus to the historians in 200 AD to J. Frank Norris in 1947, there still should be the same. They were the same all down through here, but it's changed now. For 2000 years, it never changed. It never wavered. But Christians don't have a clue what they should be today. The church should always keep alive the truth and the fire of what the real Bible Christianity is all about and what it should stand for, keeping it as far from the evil man and the strange woman as it possibly can.

I know what my job is. My job is to take every young man and every young lady, every mom and dad who wants to, who's willing to, and to show them through this ministry, through the Word of God, through teaching the Bible, giving them the Word of God, what a real New Testament Bible-believing, on-fire church should be. I could care less what anybody else thinks about it. I see this church probably totally different perspective than many of you, probably most of you. I see it not only just as a place where you can still find the truth of God, but I also look at it as the, I mean, a church, a church that not only stands on the book but still operates by the book. And boy, there is a huge difference between the two. A lot of people claim they believe the Bible, but they don't operate by it. We don't only claim it, we operate by it. You find one thing we ever did that wasn't founded a model in that Bible, just show me one. I also know that God will use churches like ours to keep people honest in preparation for the judgment seat of Christ. You see, I look at it totally different. I understand what our job is, but I also see the dimensions of it. I know that God will bring two kinds of people here: those who are looking for the truth, and then those

who say they are but they're really not. But you know what God does? He gives them a chance at the real New Testament Bible-believing, New Testament church. He does this because they whine about all of the problems today and the mess today, but when they have to get involved and get to work, they simply are not found anywhere. And at the judgment seat of Christ, He'll take those people, and when they begin to open up their mouth and whine and complain, He's just going to show them the chances that they had, and they didn't take. It's that simple. I told you many, many times, at the judgment seat of Christ, God's not going to hold you accountable for what you know or what you didn't know. He's going to hold you accountable for what you could have found out, what you chose not to do.

I don't expect this church to ever run a thousand people. I don't expect to ever run off 800 people. But see, that's success today. You get a thousand people, two thousand people, and the people think, "Wow!" because that's what the evil man and the strange woman have got into your brain. So we think that a church has to be successful, has to be a thousand people, two thousand people. I'll tell you this, the opposite. I'm going to verify this and tell you this right now. You can bring any pastor, anybody you want to talk to me about it. We'll give him equal time on Thursday night, and I'll prove my point. You can't build a church of a thousand and two thousand today in the world we live in without compromising truth. You cannot do it. You have to sell out someplace. You have to sell out something because nobody wants to hear it today. And God brings us two kinds of people: those who are looking for the truth, and those who say they are but are really not. And when God gives them the chance with a real Bible, well then you know where it's at. See, I don't expect this church to ever reach those goals, but that's not my goal. But I'll tell you what I do expect. I expect me every Sunday, every Thursday, and every chance I can, to preach the truth of God's Word, declare the book as the only absolute final authority on this planet, and then let the truth do the work in people's lives. Most pastors, most churches are results-oriented. I am not results-oriented. I am truth-oriented. To me, I don't care what the results are as long as the truth is preached. People will come to a Bible-teaching, preaching church, and they, and God accomplishes two things. One of them will say, "This is exactly what I've been looking for. This is exactly what we need. Let's get in, get involved, and go to work." Somebody else comes in, they look at it, they stay for a while, and they see what goes on, and they get a real taste of what it's really supposed to be like in the book of Acts, and they simply say, "No thanks, the cost is too great."

There's a great story that illustrates this in Matthew chapter 19. You probably remember it's where a young man came to Jesus, and he says to Him, "Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus kind of plays the game with him, and He says, "Well, keep all the law." And he said, "Well, from my youth up, I did that." Jesus says, "Well, that's good. Okay, if you really want to follow Me, if you really want to be one of Mine, if you really want to do what needs to be done, then go sell everything you've got and give it to the poor and come and follow Me." The Bible says he went away sorrowful. You know why? Because he had many great possessions. The things of this world, the things of this world. You see, we live in a world of Christianity, we think we can have it all and have God too. And of course, it doesn't work that way. It doesn't work that way. Some people want to serve God. They say they do. But when God brings them here and they see what it really takes, on their way they go. They don't count the

cost. The cost is too great. And when they don't want to count the cost, they do what everybody does: the blame game. "Well, it's this person over here. I don't like this," or "Somebody was mad at me," and "Somebody didn't say hi to me," and all that boils down to, you know what? You came, God showed you the real deal, and you just couldn't count the cost to get it done. That's where it goes today. I see all that. I see it all the time.

You know, preachers are different. I have my own style of ministry. Everybody does, I guess. But when I preach, I'm not a shotgun. A lot of preachers are shotgun preachers. A shotgun goes out and it scatters. So they come on Sunday morning, and they just blast and hope it hits everybody in the crowd. That's not my style. I'm not a shotgun preacher. I'm certainly not a BB gun preacher. A lot of pastors are like that. No power, just a little projectile comes out, hits something, falls to the ground. I'm not that kind either. I'm not a machine gun preacher. A lot of preachers are like machine guns. They get up there, never shut up. They just mow everybody to the ground. That's not my style either. But there are preachers like that. You ever hear a good Pentecostal preacher get going, "And I'm going to tell you now, and I'm going to know, and I'm going to do this, and I'm going to give you that." Anyway, we call it, we call them wind suckers. "And I'm going to tell you this, and I'm going to tell you that, and I'm going to..." Not my style here. A lot of preachers are like a cannon. They just like to blow everything up. That's not my style either. No, no. When I preach, I'm a long-range sniper who will put the crosshairs right on your heart at 600 meters and nail you. And when you leave, you know you've been nailed. They go back, "What preaching is," because see, now it's up to you. Now you have to choose every Sunday, and sometimes after weeks and months, the choosing gets so laborious, it gets so hard, you just decide to go someplace else where your kid can be a homosexual, and you're just fine. Your kid can have illegitimate kids, and you just have a great time. You can go out there and drink, smoke, chew, and do what all the other girls do, and you're just fine. But not here. See, now it's up to you. Now it's no more talk, no more alibis, no more complaining. Here it is, brother, all you can eat. What will you do with it?

I've known some of God's people that never finished everything they ever started in their life when it came to God. And tragically, I know some of God's people that never did anything or even started anything in their life for God. It's safe to say that God's people like to play games with God today, and I may give you a little bit of advice: that's never a good idea because you'll never win that game. One of my favorite verses, Job 9:4, "Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?" The answer is nobody. Why, if the evil man and the strange woman can't beat God, are you so foolish to think that you're going to come out ahead? My God, what a fool you must be. I've seen people start to do right with God, and God begin to work in their life and take the messes of their life one by one and fix the issues, give them good friends, take away the old friends, get them disciplined, put people in their life that are positive in the Word of God, get them a good job, get them a house or an apartment, work through their financial issues one issue at a time, and do exactly in their life what He says in His Word that He will do when we get on the path of uprightness and do right. I've seen it a thousand times over the years that I've seen that same person go back to their old friends, leave the good ones, stop coming to Bible study, stop being in their Bible, pick up the beer, pick up the drugs, head right back into the darkness of this world, and really think they're going to be okay. And one by one, the things that God gave

them, the friends, the job, the car, the house, He takes away, and they're left, as I said last week in the book of Haggai again, a bag with holes. That's where their life is, right back to where you started, only worse.

## VIII. The Point of No Return and Consequences of Disobedience

Now I want to show you something, and I want you to get this. I want you to look for a moment at verse 18 and 19. You play games with God. You play this three-way game of going back from God to the evil man, to the strange woman, and you, and God has a little something in store for you, brother. And this answers a lot of questions why Christians come to the place in their life where they care nothing about God. They may go to church every day in their life. There's no power in their life. Their life is so dysfunctional. Their life is in such a mess, and they're in total darkness. In other words, Haggai 1:6 fulfilled in their life, their life becomes a bag with holes. Look at verse 18. You better get this. If you hear nothing else I said, you better get this.

*Proverbs 2:18-19*

*For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.*

*None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.*

That's all the unsaved people you traded God for. That's all the unbiblical things that you went after because they were your friends and you loved them. It didn't matter that they were completely out of line with the Word of God. Verse 19, "None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life." Now you better get this. You want to play games with God? You want to play games with the One that saved you? You want to take His salvation and then do your own thing the way you want to do it? You want to go through life and just give God the token things of your life or nothing at all, and you want to keep the majority of it for yourself? Well, I want to tell you something, there comes a time when you play the game with God in your life, when you play that silly game so long and bury yourself in the evil man and the strange woman of this world over God, and you sear your conscience, you rejoice to do evil, you delight in the frowardness of the world, you take those five steps down, and there comes a point in your life where you're not getting back to God. You're done. You're cooked. You're as cooked as a turkey on Thanksgiving afternoon. You've reached the place in your life called the point of no return. And if you think that can't happen, you do greatly err, not knowing the scriptures. Some of God's people embrace stupidity like it was a virtue. I'm telling you, you get to the place in your life where you turn God off and you turn God off and you turn God off and you turn God off, and you do your own thing and running from God. It saves you. You lie. You rationalize. You procrastinate. You deceive. You justify. You build a stronghold in your life against the principles of the Word of God and the true God and God Himself, and then you can't get out. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "a threefold cord is not easily broken." You take a little piece of thread, you take a little piece of thread and you wrap it around your fingers one time, and you snap it like it's nothing. You take that same little thread and wrap it around your fingers a hundred times, and you will die trying to break it. You take the things in your life after 15, 20, 30 years of your life,

and you do it your way, and you wrap yourself in those chains around you, and then you try to break out of them, you're a fool. You lie to yourself so much. You live the life of deception. You went down those five steps I talked about last week. Now here you are, and you can't get back.

And let me say this and make this very clear: it's not that God won't or can't change your circumstances. I want to be very clear on that. God is always willing. It's not God's problem. It's your problem. It's the fact that you have lived a lifestyle that you developed with the evil man and the strange woman, and you threw God out, and now your life is so complicated and so dysfunctional. Now what? Now what do you do? Here you are, two or three bad marriages. Now what? Three or four kids that you've got that you're not even living with anymore, and every month before you get a nickel out of your paycheck, you've got to pay their support. Now what? Now what do you do? Now what? You're flesh controlled by alcohol. Now what? You're flesh controlled by drugs. Now what? An unsaved girlfriend who you've linked yourself to. An unsaved boyfriend who you've linked yourself to. Now what? Illegitimate children. Now what? Married some unsaved clown. Now what? You bury yourself in those things. You wrap yourself with those things, and sometimes you go so far, you don't get back. It doesn't matter now how many drug programs you get in. It doesn't matter now how many halfway houses you get in. It doesn't matter how much money you make. It doesn't matter how good a job you have. It doesn't matter how many rehabs for alcohol you check into. You're done. You gave your mind, your spirit, and your flesh totally over to the evil man and the strange woman, and now the great principle comes into play. You rejoice to do evil. You're delighted in frowardness. You seared your conscience. You made a mockery of God, and now God makes a mockery of you. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Boy, does this answer a lot of questions.

When I was right out of high school, before I went in the army, I worked at the Hoover Company in North Canton. We made vacuum cleaners, washing machines, all of those things. I had the best job, obviously outside the ministry, that I ever had. I was a fork truck driver, and I was a Christian. I remember I just got right with God, and I really was on fire. I did a lot of stupid things. Our fork trucks run on propane gas, and you know, you put the propane tank on the top, you screw it on, you turn ignition, and it acts as fuel, but it blows hot air out the back, and not real hot. And I would swing around taking parts to the line, you know, and all these old ladies would be on the line working, and I'd have to put my truck in there and put the gas down to lift the thing up, and it blows hot air around, and they just would, oh, they'd have all kinds of problems. They'd hate when I came up. But what are you going to do? If the line goes down, then I'm in trouble. So you swing that truck in there, you do what you've got to do, and they just don't like it. Well, I got an idea after I got saved. I got me a big sign, put it on the back of my fork truck, and it said, "If you think this is hot, wait till you die and go to hell without Jesus Christ." That lasted about a week before the foreman made me take it off. But I'd swing that truck around in there and put the thing down there, and now I'd hold it down a little longer, you know, and I'd look around there, and they're like, "Look at that thing!" We had this big storage area that had hundreds and hundreds of thousands of parts, and I got put in charge of it, and it was, it was probably five or six or seven or eight rows, probably a hundred yards long, with big steel racks where you put every part for a washing machine or vacuum cleaner, every part you could ever

think of. And my job was to, I mean, they were way up high. You had to go up high and hook them up, and you know where they were, and you bring the parts down, get them over the line. It was just a mess. It was an absolute, it was an absolute just a nightmare of a part. Had to be a million parts in there, and it was a long corridor all the way down to the wall. And I remember one time I was so frustrated, and I've thought about this many, many years afterwards, didn't think it at the time, but I was sitting down the thing on my fork truck, and they were just driving me crazy, and I was so frustrated, and I said, "You know what I'd like to do? I'd like to get off this truck, walk up there to that opening, this thing, my truck's way back here, and I'd like to get my big old hooks here that I pull stuff down with, and I just, I'll show them. I'll just pull this barrel down and that barrel down and this tub over and that one, and I just, things all over the floor, and I throw this down and I throw that down, and I kick that over there, and I pull that down, and I'll show you guys, and I'll throw it down here, and I'll throw this, and I'll throw that down all the way back to my truck." And I'm down here, and I'm saying to myself, "Wow, look at that! I threw every hundred thousand pieces of junk that they were looking for. It's now on the floor with the shelves and the racks and the thump and everything." And then it hit me. That was really fun, but now I realize the only way out of that corridor was through the mess that I had created. And for me to get out, I had to now pick up everything that I threw on the floor, every mess that I created, that I could get out of the corridor of the mess that I made that put me up against the wall. You know, that's where a lot of God's people are at today. Your whole life has been just that, just one big party, one big destructive force, one big mess after another. And now you're up against at the end of the corridor. Now you look back at that aisle, all the fun things that you did. Oh, it was fun when I was rolling those racks over, but it isn't fun when you've got to pick up every piece to get out of a mess you've got to get in. That's what's problem today. And I'm telling you, this isn't a fact that God won't help you. This is a fact that God didn't care for you. It isn't the fact that God doesn't love you. It's the fact that when you make your life that mess, God will help you. God will give you the people that put you in a church, give everything you need, but you, you and you alone, have to clean up the mess one piece at a time that you made. Most people can't do it. It's compounded itself. Now it's got a million problems. Now it's worse than it ever was. Sure, God will forgive you. Sure, He'll put you in a Bible-believing church. Sure, He'll put people in your life. But brother, you, you, you, one piece at a time, must clean up the mess that you made. And after 10, 15, 20 years, two or three, four or five bad marriages, financial pressures, losing your kids, losing your kids to drugs, alcohol, bad relationships, family issues, the compounding effect of a life of sinful merriment, you can't get past the mess. It overwhelms you, and it swallows you up.

Let me tell you something. It says, "For her house inclineth unto death, none that go unto her return again." You play with God, will you? You take God like a little dog and throw Him out there and tell Him to fetch when you need something. You take God out of His little pen like a little hamster and pat Him on the back, and when you're done with Him, put Him back in, will you? Now husbands, you better, I want you to listen to me, and you better get this. I know that most of you probably won't, but you better. You play around and play the fool and play the game and don't do biblically what's right with your wife. You learn to grow to be Christ in her life and in your marriage. You turn a deaf ear to her issues. You continue to beat her up verbally, say the filthy things you say when you get into arguments, and you call her, you abuse that spirit she has

and treat her like dirt. You think that because you can buy her new things or give her this and then say what you want to say and treat her like dirt that you can get away with it? Hey, there's coming a day when you lose her, and you'll never get her back. You violated the three most basic principles in a marriage relationship of her needs, and now she's at the point of no return. She has flipped that switch, and I've seen it a thousand times. You'll make every promise now. You'll beg on your knees. You'll cry out, ask for forgiveness. You'll cry out to her, cry out to God, cry out to me, cry out to your friends, but she's as dead to you physically now as you were to her spiritually then, and you don't get her back. I'm telling you that evil man and that strange woman will kill you and everything in your life.

You play with God, will you? You pray to Him like He's your little pet turtle or He's your little pet this, a little pet that, and you just give Him token things in your life. I'm going to tell you right now, some of you young parents, you will lose your children forever. You'll play the game of the double standards. Husbands will lose control of their family. You'll come to church on Sunday morning and drink your beer on Saturday night. You'll walk your child right down to the house that belongs to the evil man, and you'll turn them over to the world and all of its garbage by your double standards and your lack of leadership. And some of you see it right now, right now. When they're eight, nine, ten, eleven, you have to make them come to church. They don't want to be here. They don't want to do it. You have to force them, "Get your clothes on, we're going to church!" "I don't want to go! I don't like that place!" They see it as a waste of time. That's because you and your stagnant lifestyle see it as a waste of time, and you've taught them that. That's because they see it in your life, and when they get to be 19 and 20 and 30, they'll never touch another church again. They'll never be around again. You've lost them. You made no investment in it. You gave God your token time. You showed up to church intermittently. You showed up church to pacify your wife or somebody else or to keep up appearances. You just played the game. Your kids go out to the world, and the evil man and the strange woman high-five over in the corner. They get on drugs. They get on booze. They get into immorality, and there's nothing you can do. Oh, yeah, there is. I'm sorry, excuse me here, there is. Blaming on somebody else. Blaming on the crowd they hung out with. Blaming on the guy that sold them the drugs. Blaming on the 7-Eleven that didn't check their ID. Blaming on everybody except taking responsibility for yourself. And someday you'll stand at the great white throne judgment.

Here's the tragedy. I mean, you talk about it. Here's the real tragedy. You get to go to heaven. They probably don't. Play the game, will you? You get to go to heaven, but your kids don't, all because of the game you played. And someday, here's the tragedy of it. Someday you'll stand at the great white throne, and as your children come up there and look at you, and you look at them, and they look up in your eyes and ask, "Dad, why? Mom, why did you let this happen? Why did you, why did you drink your beer instead of teaching me the Bible? Why did you smoke your cigarettes all your life and give me a double standard? Why did you talk about the preacher and the message and the other people in the church? Why did you blame everything on everybody? Why didn't you hold me accountable? What did you hold me responsible for? Dad, why did you never one time pray with me? Dad, Mom, look at me! I'm lost! I'm damned! I'm going to spend an eternity in a lake of fire, separated from you, separated from God! Why did you take me to that evil man?" And in that day, your answer will be, "Oh, how terrible!" Those kids that you

raised, those kids that you love, those kids that God gave you, and when they cry out to you in that day as you stand there in that glorified body, it won't be Mom and Dad and my children anymore. It'll be the Son of God and the sinners of this world, and you'll point your finger down onto that kid who right now you have a chance, right now there's something you can do, but you won't. Right now there's something that you could have done, but you won't. And you'll point your finger down there with tears running down their face, crying out, "Mommy, Daddy!" And the words out of your mouth won't be, "Oh, my little darling! Oh, I love you! I'm sorry!" The words out of your mouth will be in that day, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire and brimstone." Now that's Bible preaching for you. You won't get that in the Methodist church. You won't get that in most Baptist churches today. But you get it when you preach the Bible. That's the reality of life, folks. That's where it's really at. You can play the game all you want, stick your hand in the sand or wherever else you've got it, and you can live your life pretending that it's okay, but in that day, the real truth and reality will come home. I think that's the most terrible verse in the Bible is the cry of your children, the cry of people God put in your life that because of your indifference, because of your lifestyle, because of your mispriorities, because of your self-justification, your stubbornness, your selfishness, because your walk in darkness and relationship to the evil man and this strange woman allowed them, and in the case of your children, sent them to hell.

The games we play. There was a girl came to our church here four or five years ago. Most of you probably don't even remember. Most of you were not here then. She was a sweet kid, nice girl, wasn't saved. She came into our athletic program, and she played softball, played volleyball, hung around for probably six, seven, eight months, and she quit coming to church. I really liked this kid, and I thought she was a, she had a great, she had great potential. And I ran into her one time, I even forget where it was now, and I, I, I said, "Man," I said, "We really missed you." I said, and I knew she was back into the world. I knew all the story, you know. But I said, "We really miss you," and I said, "I really miss you," and I said, "You know, you probably, many of the young people in our church, you probably got more potential." And she told me this story. She says, "You know what?" She said, "I'm not going to tell you who, I knew who, but she says, 'There's a guy in your church who's there every Sunday, comes with his parents, who claims to be a Christian, and he just lives like hell. He drugs. He drinks. He parties.'" Now you know what? She says, "I, I considered becoming a Christian." And she said, "But I want to tell you," she says, "I look at him, and he's got the best of both worlds." And he says, "So I'm going to have the best of both worlds." She said, and I tried to say, "Well, please don't make your decision based on this clown." It's, you know, but it's too late. Obviously, she wanted to justify what she was doing, and he was the example. He's no longer in this church either, thank God. But a year later, on a Thursday night, as a matter of fact, Bible study night, she was over and over in a park where some of her friends, they were at a beer fest in some park someplace, and they were driving home speeding on a front road, lost control of the car, hit a concrete abutment or something. Car exploded. She burned to death in the car. Burned to death in the car. Somebody said, "What do you think about that?" I said, "You know what I think? If she would have been on Thursday night Bible study that night, that wouldn't have happened." But I know why it happened. It happened because some Christian who claimed to be a Christian, who probably is no more saved than any unsaved person he ever found, showed her by example, told her by example, that you can do

drugs, you can drink, you can party, you can fornicate, you can do all the things you want to do and still be a Christian. And she took that, and now she's in hell this morning.

*Romans 14:7*

*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

There's always somebody watching our lives. And the cry today from that young girl, I can hear it when I close my eyes sometimes at night, along with the cry someday of many of your kids, your friends, your mom, your dad, that you made no effort to win to Christ while you could, will cry out probably what I think is the most lonesome, terrible verse in the Bible, Psalm 142, verses 3 and 4.

*Psalms 142:3-4*

*When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.*

*I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.*

That'd be the evil man and the strange woman laying a snare, overwhelming your spirit, putting you on a path that they can snare you. It says, "I looked on my right hand, and behold, there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me: no place to go." And I can see her and so many other people that should have been won to Christ but weren't won to Christ, and so many of God's people who played a game that will stand there in that day and said, "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." There it is. Oh, we care about things. We care about our job. We care about making money. We care about our careers. We care about all the things that we want. But no man cared for my soul. That cry will resonate from the great white throne time after time after time for a million years as your friends, your kids, your father, your mother, everybody that God put into your life that you were too busy playing the game, looks at you, looks at me, and says, "No man cared for my soul."

And now you have it. Now you know that evil man and that strange woman in a practical sense will be the world and all of its filth put in our lives. So many people will think you can live like the world and still be a Christian, that you can do whatever you want and it's okay, and there are no consequences, that Christianity is a state of living that doesn't require holiness, doesn't require principles, doesn't require guidelines, doesn't require responsibility or accountability. And the strange woman takes those things and slowly brings them right into the church and into the lives of so many Christians, and the whole concept of biblical New Testament Bible preaching, Bible teaching gets counterfeited with a fake and false Christianity. I tell you something, the job of this church, the job of any church that claims it believes this book and operates by this book, is to stand against that evil man, to stand against that strange woman, no matter whether you make friends or you don't, and to teach the people the truth. You can preserve your family. You can preserve your kids. You can preserve your marriage. You can preserve your relationship and keep

it if you're willing to do it God's way. And my job here and so many others is to help you do that. But the problem is simply this: nobody knows what the real deal is anymore. We're like they were back there in Haggai's time. They're all excited about this 25-cent temple that they put up, and nobody compared it with the one that Solomon did when Israel was at her greatest. And you see God's people doing the same thing because your body is the temple now. And where once you saw men and women's temples of God that were straight, that were strong, that glorified God, and she did everything that they did, give God the honor and glory. Now you see the 25-cent Christians today who do nothing for God, who, where the real Christians back then were overlaid with gold, the dedication of Christ versus the humanity, these are overlaid with the world. They're overwhelmed with the filth, and they're overwhelmed with the filth. They're overwhelmed with the filth. They're overlaid with all of the things the world has, and young people today go into churches, meet other people, and they actually think, "So that's what a Christian is." They never see the real thing. Your job and my job, the job of this church, is to show them the real thing. Your job, whoever stands behind this pulpit, is to preach the real thing, give them the truth, let them know that there are still seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, that will hold the line and preach the truth until Jesus comes back. An unbroken chain, an unbroken line of men and women who love a book, love the author of the book, and stand for the things that are right today.