

I. Introduction to Proverbs and Practical Living

If you have your Bibles this morning, I would like to invite you to turn back to the book of Proverbs. We are going to start Proverbs chapter 3 today. Today is going to be a very practical message for all of us. I think that if you are going through something in your own life, and I know many of you come to this church and you have issues that you are trying to work through. You recognize that the only way you are going to get past them is to put God in your life. You have been down the road of all the different areas that have not worked for you. You come to the place in your life where you now know that if you do not make the spiritual change, it is never going to happen. I think today's message out of the book of Proverbs will be a very good help to you. I think it will help clarify some things, not only the things that you need to do, but you will have a better understanding of why we do the things that we do the way that we do it.

If you are working with somebody, I think this will be tremendous insight for those folks that are in the people ministry. Again, we get a little closer to finding why we do what we do and help understand a little better the process of people that you work with and help them. I think it will just be a real benefit. This is why I love Proverbs. Proverbs, without a doubt, has some of the greatest practical material in it that you are ever going to find. It really does. There is a lot of good preaching material in it, a lot of things you can just really preach and preach well that come out of the book. But fundamentally, the book is a book about the issues of life. It shows us really God's mind in a great way of why things are the way they are and how we can change those things in our lives and get the victory that so alludes us.

We have a mission tonight. For those of you that go down to the mission or have been to the mission, you know that their favorite song down there that we sing is "Victory in Jesus." You can sing any song you want, but when you turn to that one and you sing it, they sing it. I do not know if you have ever paid attention to that or noticed that, but I have often thought to myself why that song is so important to them. It is simply because that is what they all desire. They all have lost the fight of life. To them, the thought of victory in Jesus is probably the single hope and desire that they have. So that song means something to them because they want that victory. Probably many of them have never had a victory in anything spiritually in their life. They go to that place and people come down and try to give them the Bible. Many of them have addictions that are beyond belief and many of them do not make it. But it is obvious that if you pay attention, the songs that they sing the loudest are usually the ones that they desire the most, and that is "Victory in Jesus." Yet that is true of you and me because the job of a Christian is to get to that point in your life where you do have victory in Jesus.

We are going to talk about a lot of practical things today. I think that as we get farther in the book of Proverbs, I want to try to balance it all out. I told you I want to give you some doctrinal things. I want you to come away from this book getting as much as humanly possible as I can give you. I want you to see the doctrinal side of things, how it applies to Israel. I want you to see the hard line things as it applies to your life and my life, like we preached on the laughter of God and

things like that that kind of stir our hearts and get us back to the focus of what we need to be doing. But there are a lot of practical things in it and I do not want to miss any of it. I do not care how long it takes. I do not care if it takes me six months to get through a chapter. We want to squeeze out of everything. I am the kind of guy, I can have four brand new tubes of toothpaste down in the drawer below where my toothpaste is. I will crank that sucker and get every drop out of it. It is not because I am frugal and do not want to open another tube of toothpaste. It is just the fact that whatever is in there is not going to elude me. I paid for it. I am going to get it. I crank that sucker down and squeeze it out and twist it sideways and upside down. I have even broken them in half because they are made of that cheap metal. Then what I do is pry them open and scoop it out and put it on my toothbrush. I want to do that with the Book of Proverbs. I want to get everything out of it we can. I think it will help us.

II. Review of Character Studies and Biblical Structure

Last week, you remember we finished chapter 2 of the Book of Proverbs and now we have four character studies laid out for us. These are vital, not only vital to understand the Book of Proverbs but vital in your own life. We now have a wise man, a foolish man, an evil man, and a strange woman. It is the easiest possible way to understand it and keep it in your mind and lay it out in your Bible. We now know that the evil man is the world's system of ungodliness. The strange woman is his counterpart, the religious systems, the fake counterfeit religious systems of the world that not only affect lost people but affect saved people in many churches. We know now that the devil uses her to get all of his worldly devices into Christianity. We have talked about the two aspects that were in Israel's problem when the devil wanted to destroy them. It is the same with us. We talked a while back about how Israel got destroyed by the evil man and the strange woman. But in a context that is true, we also then laid it out and I showed you how that the devil's plan was not just to go after the leaders of the nation. God's plan was to just go after the families. When the devil got the Baal worship into the families, then it spread itself and infected itself into everything in Israel. The strength of any nation, the strength of any church will only be as strong as the families that are in it. That is why it is so important to understand that.

Our wise man will be the child of God who gets the knowledge of God. As you start coming through Proverbs, you see all of these different aspects: the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, the understanding of God, the discretion of God. The wise man will be the child of God who gets these things. He will get the knowledge of God. He will get the wisdom of God. He will get the understanding of God. Then he gets the discretion of God to stay away from this woman and this evil man. The Bible talks about when we do that, that we preserve ourselves, that God actually preserves us in a state of preservation that not only to you as a Christian but it carries on into your own family. In time, now that we know that the churches are built by families, we see it preserving the church. If we would follow it across the board, it is what for 200 years preserved our nation, which no longer has the preserving hand of God on it as you well know.

We are set now for the rest of the book. We have laid out these four character studies. They are going to weave their way through the rest of the book. You are going to see them come in and come out and you are going to work in and out all through the book now. Now we know. We have something to work with. Now we are set for the rest of the book. Today we are going to start Proverbs chapter 3, verses 1 through 4. Let us read it together and we probably will not get through all of this today in preaching on it, but we want to begin it today.

Proverbs 3:1-4

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Now Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We love You and we just ask You, Father, to give us the things that You have for us today. Lord, we know that Your book is all truth and we know that the book of Proverbs is the central book in the Bible from which all the other issues that are found through the Word of God weave their way back to. So what we have decided as a church, as a body of believers, as men and women who want that victory, we want the victory in Jesus. We want to have that in our lives. We have decided as a church to come to this book and to lay it out. Lord, we have built a lot of families, we have built a lot of couples, we have built a lot of individuals. I have seen Your hand change marriages, change lives, change kids, change adults, change moms and dads. Lord, it is a thing where when we focus on those things, Lord, that we really see what God can do. So help us today. Help us to grasp these principles. We love You, we thank You and we look forward, Father, to not only learning them for ourselves but then in time taking them to others that we might help them find what we have. Lord, we just thank You and praise You in Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.

My father in the Lord many years ago, Mel Sabaka, made a statement, made many statements, but I got a list of all of them, I never forgot them. But he made a statement and he had a way of making a statement about something that was so true and so pointed that you never forgot it. We look at Christianity with all of the bells and the whistles that you have today and all the things that go on that we think is really Christianity. He had a way of summing up things in just a one-line sentence that was everything that it needed to be. He said one time, "Christianity is just one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread." Boy, that is so true and that is our job. Our job is to let God change us and then when God gives us the things in our lives, allow God through our lives to change others. That is really what we are to do as a church and what we do as a church and it is a thing where it is so true.

Now the first thing I want you to see here in chapter 3, verse 1 is again, "My son." This will be the fifth time that we find this phrase "my son" and I told you that a number of times through the book you find that phrase and we find it again today. You remember our outline of the book of Proverbs and I told you that Proverbs has three sections to it.

- The first section is chapter 1 through chapter 7. Every one of those chapters and many times throughout those chapters, he actually starts it by saying, "My son," "my children." It is very pointed to he is writing to his own son and yet in an inspirational application, it is God writing it to you and me as His son and that is very important to see.
- Then I showed you that the second section is chapter 8 through chapter 30 and that deals with all the issues of life. This is where we really get into the proverb. We have not gotten into the proverb yet. The first seven chapters are an introduction of what you want to get out of it. The proverbs themselves start in chapter 8 and run up through chapter 30.
- Then we come to the third section, which is chapter 31, and there we have the finished product, the virtuous woman.

Now I know you hear Mother's Day messages on the virtuous woman. I know you hear everybody talk about, "Well, my wife is a virtuous woman," or this or that and that is all good and fine and true, I am sure. But in particular, the virtuous woman as we find it in Proverbs is the church in an inspirational application. It is you and me and when we get to that great chapter, we will detail almost every aspect of what your ministry and my ministry should be once we have all the book of Proverbs in our life. By that time, many of you will be able to look back in your life and actually see how it worked. You will actually see that what you have here and what you have been doing here has actually been this biblical process.

My goal is to show you in everything about the Bible. One of my goals is to show you how easy books of the Bible are, like the book of Proverbs. You look at the book of Proverbs or you get Ruckman's book on commentary back here, which is an excellent commentary. This sucker is that thick and you look at the book of Proverbs and it kind of winds its way through things and it talks about this and talks about that and it can give the appearance of being a complicated book. Many books in the Bible give that appearance. But my job is to show you how really easy the book of Proverbs is if you just look at a couple of things and remember a couple of things and use the natural helps that God has given. God would not write a book called the Bible and give it to you and then tell you that He is going to judge you by it, by what you do out of it and what you can get out of it or what you do not get out of it, and He is going to hold you accountable someday for what you could have found out if He had wrote a book that nobody could understand. He wrote a book that any common man with a sixth-grade education or less could find out everything he needed to find out about God. The problem is today is we have made Christianity much more complicated than it really is. I have learned over the years in my own personal time and just putting it to the test, and I am no genius by any stretch of the imagination. I always tell people if I can learn the Bible, anybody on planet Earth can learn the Bible because it is a thing where for me everything of life can be a struggle when it comes to thinking. If it would not be for the Word of God, I am not sure where I would be today. But if you just follow and use the helps that God has provided and do it God's way instead of trying to do it man's way,

but this is what the evil man and the strange woman do. They try to take the simple Bible with a simple rule that you follow so you could get it and then get that out of your life and make it so complicated that you get defeated before you ever even get started.

The first thing that I tell you that I want you to remember is that you see it in the book of Proverbs, I gave you an outline. I gave you three sections: chapter 1 through chapter 7, chapter 8 through chapter 30, and chapter 31. The book of Proverbs has an outline and every book in the Bible is the same way. Every book in the Bible will have a natural outline. Now you can get over there in our bookstore and you can get some great material and I have seen guys that have divided books up for their own and they put it out that way and I am not arguing with that, but I have got just about every book over there. But I am telling you this, those are good and those will help you, but never take a book that man writes over the book that God wrote. What you have to learn to do is understand that Larkin's outlines may be good or Ruckman's outlines may be good. Those are basically the Bible, but you are going to find that everybody looks at a book and says, "Okay, let us break it down this way." I understand what they are doing and I am not arguing with it, but what I am telling you is this: every book in that Bible has a natural breakdown, a natural outline that God has put in there so that if you follow that outline, the book just falls into place. You will never find that outline that I just gave you of Proverbs in any book you are ever going to find or read about Proverbs. You never will, but that is because it is not a man design, it is a natural breakdown of that book. The first thing you want to remember is every book in the Bible has that. Understand the outline, get the outline down and that is a great place to start.

The second thing that we use is the paragraph marks. I have told you before about this and that is how we are studying the book of Proverbs, where you are going from paragraph mark to paragraph mark because paragraph marks in the Bible are vital. They will break the subject, sometimes they will break down the dispensation for you, but they are absolutely vital. I have told you before that you do not find any paragraph marks after Acts chapter 20 and there is a reason for that, but up to that point, you have the whole Bible broken down by paragraph marks. When you study your Bible, pay attention to those paragraph marks. They will tell you that you are changing subjects or changing themes or changing subject. It is an incredible way to follow it.

Then another, the third thing that you want to always look at is look at the chapters themselves. Look how God does things and this is what we want to talk about today. You want to see how God does things in the Bible in chapter to chapter and you want to see how that many of the things in the Bible is true in the book of Proverbs, it is simply this: God will say this, "Bob, if you do one, two, three, four things, then I am going to come back and I am going to do one, two, three, four, five, six, seven things or eight things or nine things." The chapter by chapter in the Proverbs and throughout the Bible is God saying that if you do this, then I will do this. That is an incredible, I mean, it does not sound like much, but I cannot tell you how important that is, not only in the book of Proverbs, but in the scheme of life, for it is an illustration of a great truth. I have been telling you for years and I continue to tell you that and it is simply this: God says, "Bob, if you do these four or five things, then I will come back and I will do these six or seven or

eight things." The great principle illustrated here is that we, you and me, if you have got problems in your life today, if you have got things that you want to work through, if you have got someplace you want to get to in life, if you have got some things you want to get shed of and you have got some things that you want to get going for you, the first thing you need to understand is that you and I must first do the work. The work has to start with us. God says, "You do this, then I will do this." You see, once you and I start the work, then God supplies the help. That is why I tell you all the time in dealing with people, you cannot make people do what is right. I tell you all the time in working with people, do not want somebody to do right more than they do because when you do, and parents get into this terrible trap all the time with their kids and that is why they wind up losing their kids. It is a thing where you cannot want anybody to do right more than they do because real change in a person's life does not start with you or you or you. I could put ten thousand people with you and never change a thing about your life because the principle is here that you have to do some things first and when you do, then God does His thing. It is incredible concept and it is all the way through the book of Proverbs. We saw it in chapter 1, we saw it in chapter 2 and now we see it again in chapter 3.

III. The Principle of Cleaning Up Your Own Mess

You remember last week I told you about the illustration of when I worked many, many years ago at the Hoover Company in North Canton, Ohio. I talked about the big parts aisle where they had all the parts for the washing machine, the vacuum cleaner. There were probably two million parts. The thing was probably 200 yards long. It was as wide probably as half as wide as this room here and probably five times as long. It started in the main center where the line was and then went up against the wall of the building. I told you how that one of my days of frustration, everybody calling you on the phone wanting this, you can only do one day at a time. I thought about the idea of I hated these parts so bad and these things were always, I used to dream about them. I thought to myself, the best way, would not it be fun just to start and ripping down everything off the shelf? I mean, ten thousand nuts go here and bolts go here and parts fall over here and rotator over here and all the little rubber bands that go around here, ten thousand of them. You just go down there ripping the whole thing off and then finally when you got back to the end and you were done and you were saying, "Man, that was great, that was the greatest time," and then it was time to go to lunch, you turned around you saw the mess in that quarter that you had to clean up before you could get out of that mess that you had made. I told you that is a lot the way that life is with people. People today bury themselves in the issues of terribly bad choices and those bad choices in time swallow them up because they get to the point where, hey, it took me fifteen minutes to put all that trash off those shelves on the floor and I am standing there so proud of myself, "Well, look what I did." But you know what? It will take you four weeks to clean it up. It always takes you longer to fix something than it did for you to break it. It always takes you longer for you to fix something in your life than it took for what in your life wrong to go wrong. When you let it go for years or years, this is why people commit suicide. God's people commit suicide. Unsaved people, you can understand why they commit suicide, I mean, they have got nothing to look forward to. But God's people, I do not know how many times a year God's people will take their own life. You know why they do? Because they are at

the end of that quarter. They made all the messes through terrible bad choices and now it overwhelms them. Now it swallows them up and now they look at, I mean, you have got to clean every piece up. You have got to get every piece that you pulled, every bad decision and it is compounding effect. Now your life after what, ten, fifteen, twenty years of drugs and drinking and fornicating and marriages and illegitimate children and all the things that go with it and all the debt that comes in and financial woe and all this stuff, you look down that quarter of life when you are up against that wall and you look back down life and you say to yourself, "I will never clean it up." You get so despondent, it looks like there is no way out. So you know what you do? You commit suicide. You take what you think is the easy way out. That is the way it works. That is the way it always works.

I told you that you and I when we make the mess, we have to clean up the mess that we make in our lives. This is why many people come to the point of no return. As I said last week, they get to the point where they cannot ever get back. It is not that God does not want them back. It is not that I do not want them back. It is not that you do not want them back. It is the fact that they have gotten themselves so far away from the things of God and spent so much time with the evil man and the strange woman and have complicated their life and literally pulled down everything in their life by a bad choice and put it in a quarter of life. But now the cleanup is just impossible to them. They look at it and they say, "Where do I start?" They have come into my office sometimes and laid it out and I did not say it to them, but I was scratching my head on the inside saying, "Where do I start?" They can get the real mess and this is where people get to the point that they cannot get out of it. It is not the fact that God will not get them out of it. It is not the fact that God does not want them out of it. It is not the fact that they do not want out of it. They are overwhelmed. They have got now the compounding effect of all the bad choices that they made growing legs and now a hundred bad choices have grown into a thousand bad choices because a bad choice is like a lie. One lie just leads to another. What is really hard being a liar? Remembering all your lies. What is really hard with bad choices? They compound themselves and pretty soon you cannot remember them. You forget you are looking at what you are going with right now and you forget that where you are at right now in the depth of that darkness all started way back here with just one bad choice. That is the way it works.

Now let me show you how the principle of Proverbs chapter 3, verses 1 through 4 works. You may be here today and you may find yourself in that mess. Maybe not as bad as I laid it out here, but you find yourself in that. Maybe your quarter is nowhere near like that, but there is a lot of people, maybe not here today, but maybe it is, I do not know. But whatever mess you have in your quarter, let me show you how this principle works. Now I am going to walk you through a seven-step process. It is not seven because it is divine from the Bible of God's number of seven, it is just I could not think of a number eight.

Once I decide I am going to put it in my own life now. Once I decide that I have made this mess in my life and nobody else has. Now see that is the first step.

1. The first step of you ever fixing anything in your life is you taking personal responsibility and accountability for it. That is the first real step. That is the first step. As long as you and I blame our problems and our circumstances on everybody else. Boy, parents love to do this

with their kids. Well, they do. I told it is just incredible what they do. You find that their kids grow up doing the exactly same thing. "But I am not going to church because I do not like so and so." Well, you mean you like everybody where you work? You are on a, you go do this or you go to that, you like everybody there? Is not it strange how we can go to work with people we do not like? We can go here and do this with people we do not like. When it comes to people, they are just looking because they know that they have got a problem, but they want to blame it on somebody else because they do not want to take personal responsibility for it. I am telling you when you decide or I decide that I am going to clean up this mess in my life, the first thing that you have to get straight in your mind and your heart is that you are a mess. You made it. Nobody else made you do it. I have had people out of town over my whole life, I have had parents or people or wives or husbands, you say, "Well, it is the person my husband hangs out with," or, "It is the person my son hangs out with." I always tell them, "You mean they came over and handcuffed and roped your husband and your son and threw them in the back of their car and took them and kidnapped them into a life of sin or was it the fact that he chose to go with them?" It is your choice. It is always your choice and what you choose is what you do and what you do is where you wind up.

2. Once you decide you have made this mess and it is yours and it is you take the personal responsibility and the personal accountability for it, then you decide the second thing that I have got to clean it up. It is my mess. You take personal responsibility for it and you say, you do not have to buy anymore. You simply say, "Bob, it is my mess. I did it. I understand it and I must clean it up." You come to the place in your life where you say, "No matter what it takes or how long it takes." Now for those people working with people, always be leery. This is a little people ministry spillover and I give them all the tricks and the trades of ins and outs of looking and dealing with people. But I will spill a little over to you. When you start to work with somebody and you know they have got problems and you start to lay out a plan that they need to do and they start putting conditions on the plan, you have got problems. When somebody really takes responsibility for their problem, they do not care what you tell them to do. If I would say, "Go stand on your head in that corner for an hour and that is where we are going to start," that is what you will do. Once a person who has problems says, "I want help," and you try to help them and then they start correcting you on the help and telling you what they will and what they will not do, they do not want help. They have not yet come to the place where they have taken full responsibility for their mess. At that point, you are wasting your time. I am not saying you do not be their friend, buy them a burger, but you know you are not going to get anywhere in life with them trying to fix the problem. It is just not. When a person decides that it is my mess and I am taking responsibility for it, then number two, they will do whatever it takes no matter how long it takes because they will understand that it is my mess. When it is my mess, then I am responsible and if it is really real, then they are going to do whatever they want to do.
3. Now you have got a mess in your life and you have decided it is your mess and you decided you are going to clean it up. I commend you for that. I have watched many of you do this exact same thing. In fact, I put this together this week thinking about so many of you watching what God has done in your life and there are about four or five of you right now that are going through this process and you are the poster child for it. Once I started to head

the right way, the Bible calls it, we have seen it in Proverbs, the path of uprightness. Once I start to go that way and do it God's way, come to the end of self, that is number three.

4. Now here is number four, this is where it starts to get better. God will not clean it up for me. God will not come down and say, "Well," He will not do with me as His child like a lot of parents do with their kids. "Well, come on now, he is a good guy. Come on, she is a sweetie. Oh, you know. Well, let me fix this for you. How many times have you been in jail? Now we will bail you out just one more time. Oh yeah, we are the helicopter of carrots. We are hovering over you. I have got a life vest. I have got rations. I have got cans of water. I have got a little flare pistol." You have got everything but what they need. You know what you need? Shut a course and leave them in the water. Because when you get to that point in your life, you realize that God with His children, He will not come down and rescue you from the mess. He is not going to do that. A lot of people get mad at God because He does not do that. It is like a guy said one time, "We like to sow our wild oats and then go pray for crop failure." No, no, God is not going to come down and take your mess away. It is your mess. You have got to clean it up, but you know what He will do? He will throw you a shovel. That makes the cleanup a little easier. One time when I was in the Army, I got into some trouble and the drill sergeant, this is a basic, the drill sergeant, and I am sure many of you guys in the Army could relate to this, he made me clean the latrine, which was not a bad idea because it was not that big of a latrine. When he gave me a toothbrush, the job got out of proportion. Would you ever think about cleaning all the urinals and the stools with a toothbrush and then the floor? Now you give me a mop and a scrub brush, I could have had that thing done in 20 minutes. But he gave me a toothbrush. You see, when you decide to do what is right to clean up the mess in your life, God is not going to give you a spoon. He will give you a shovel. That makes it a lot easier. Now instead of picking the pieces up one at a time, you can shovel them up.
5. Number five, as you continue His way and do well, then you know what He does? He is not going to come down and clean up the mess, but He will give you the tools to clean it up and now He will give you a wheelbarrow. Now you can get some things done. Now instead of picking it up and carrying it over and dumping it, now you just put it in the wheelbarrow and you can get a lot in there and dump it. Oh, it gets easier. It is still your mess and you are still cleaning it up, but He is giving you the tools. He is giving you the tools.
6. As I stay faithful to clean up my mess and stay on that right path and I every day I say it is my mess, I have got to clean it up and God now is giving me a shovel. God now giving me a wheelbarrow and I am staying on that thing and I just keep moving along those things. One day I come out to clean up the mess and lo and behold, there is a backhoe and a dump truck out there. Now I really can pick up some stuff. You see, I am making progress and God is watching my progress. His job is not to make it harder. His job is to make it easier, but He is not going to come down and do it. When I take responsibility and I begin to do it, He is going to be the one who gives me the tools. How many ever went to Lowe's? Okay, well, okay, here we go, thank you. You walk into Lowe's and they have got every tool you could ever want. You want to tear up your own, you want to knock down your own house, you get a bulldozer. You want to dig a swimming pool hole, you can get a backhoe. You want to till your yard, you can get what you want. You want to do your shrubs, it is there. You want to cut your

grass, it is there. You want a snow blower, it is there. You can get every tool that you ever thought to do the job at Lowe's, but nobody at Lowe's is going to come and do the work for you. Lowe's, I like that. He bled so you could have the tools. That is how it works. He died on the cross for our mess. He is not going to go down and clean up the mess, but He bled so you can have the tools. When you start going through it and doing what is right down that path, the tools get bigger. Now you are going out there and you have got a dump truck and a backhoe.

7. You go to climb up in that dump truck and here is number seven now. You get into that dump truck and you start and lo and behold, when you open that door, what do you find? You find somebody that God has put in your life. You find some Christian like so many of you men and women here who will get into that dump truck and you will help that person at this point. Now you have come so far on your own, you have done all the work, God just supplied the tools. Now He gives you a dump truck and a driver for the dump truck. You know why He has to put somebody in your life to drive the dump truck? Because they have been where you are at and they know all the best dumps in town to dump their trash because that is where they dumped theirs. You get everything you need. It is just that simple. It is just that simple. See how it works? When it comes to life and the messes that we get in, we need to do the work. We need to take responsibility for it, but God has all the tools from a shovel to a backhoe. He has all the tools that we need and you do what is right. He gives you bigger and better tools to clean it up. But you and I have to do the work. He is not going to come down and do it for you.

IV. Four Essentials for Cleaning Up Your Mess

Now this is what you see in chapter 3. I want you to look at this. Look at chapter 3 now. We saw it in chapter 2. We saw it in chapter 1. Four things you must do first. Have you got a mess in your life? Okay. Do you want to get your life where God wants it to be? Okay. God is not going to just come down some night because you want to while you are sleeping, roll the roof back off your house and sprinkle you with pixie dust or some kind of spiritual wisdom from God. No, no, no. You have got to clean up, recognize the mess is yours, begin to clean it up no matter whether it is a big mess or a little mess or whatever mess it is. But there are four things you have got to do first. Look what He says.

8. Verse 1, "My son, forget not my law." At some point, you have to get into the Bible because the tools for you to clean up this mess is in that book you are holding in your lap right now. I do not know how many times I have seen people, God's people, go through some great trial in their life. How they do. This happens or this happens and the first thing they say, "Well, I cannot go to church now, I am touchy." The very place they had to go to get the peace and the solace and everything that they need is the very place they forsake. It does not speak much of their relationship with God and the Word of God, but you see it all the time. No, no. If you are going to clean up this mess and you are going to, the tool shed is in that book, you are going to have to get into the Bible. You are going to have to take the things of God in that book and you are going to have to put them in your life. You are going to have to get the law of God and you are going to have to stay there.

9. Then the second thing He says in the same verse, "but let thine heart keep my commandments." You see, first you do not forget them, then you have got to, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." You have got to do something with it. It does not do you any good to have the Bible if you are not going to apply the Bible to your heart. I mean, the Jehovah Witnesses read the Bible probably more than anybody in this room and they are all dying and going to hell because they will not apply what they read. Having your Bible in the right Bible and all the big Bible is great. But if you are not willing to take the Word of God first and then apply it to your heart second, you are not going anywhere. You see this all the time with people who have issues in their life. You try to work with them, you try to help them, you try to get them where it is and I know there is a process it goes through. I understand all that. But there are things that you look for and there are things that when you do not see them, you are wasting your time. I do not mean that you do not try to help them, I just mean do not want them to do right more than they do. You better find another plan of attack because that one did not work anymore.
10. Then He says number three, "Let not mercy forsake thee."
11. Then He says number four, "let not truth forsake thee." See, you want to keep them in your heart, keep them in your life. Now we will talk about how a Christian loses mercy and how he loses truth next week. We are not going to get into that all today, but we will talk about it next time we get into this thing. But He says in verse 3, "take mercy and truth and bind them about thy neck and write them on the tables of your heart." Wow.

Now these are the four, if you want to clean up the mess and you want to start and you want to take responsibility and this is what you have got to do, you have got to start with these four things. These things are the essentials in cleaning up your mess. All these deal with inward attitude change. Remember I told you about attitude and action? Whatever your attitude is on the inside will produce the action on the outside. When you get messed up, it is because you have been hanging out with the evil man and the strange woman and their cohorts. You have got a bad attitude about God, about church, about God's people, about the Word of God and it produces a bad attitude and now you are back out into the world. Do you want to change that? Do you want to get back? Do you want to do what God wants you to do and be what God wants you to be? It starts with your attitude. Attitude starts with you taking responsibility, quit blaming everybody else and then doing inwardly these four things.

I told the people last time, which was a couple weeks ago in the people ministry and I will give you this, I do not let them talk about what goes on because we talk about a lot of personal things in there but some of it, when it goes where we are at, I will tell you what I told them. I said, "You know what, when God changes somebody, because people will fake it, they really will. People will try to fool you." When you get a little farther along in the Word of God, you can read the signs of a fake pretty quickly. I mean pretty much out of the gate. There are certain things that you look for in a real person's change and when you do not see them, it does not mean you go up and say you are a phony, you just let it play itself out but you do not get yourself so involved in it because this is what you call discretion and discernment and you will get there in time. But I told the people in the people ministry last time we were together, I said, "You know what, when God changes somebody, the attitude change is immediate." People will fool you. People will fake it.

People will tell you what you want to hear to get you off their back. But when you are dealing with somebody like that, I never listen to what the person says. I always kind of push that aside and look down into the attitude because when God is really changing somebody, the attitude change when God is in it is immediate. It is not, "Well, you know, I am thinking about it, Bob." "Well, you know, I am going to, yeah, I need to get back to church. I know you are right and I am not where I need to be." No, no, no, no, no. No it is not, "Well, yeah, I am coming and then you do not come." It is the fact that, "Well, yeah, I know I have got a problem but I just know," no, no, no, no, no. When God is in it and it is really of the Holy Ghost and God is doing what He is doing, the attitude change is right now. It is immediate. "I am wrong. It is my problem. I have got to fix it." I am not saying that people do not go through a process to get there. I am not saying that. But what I am saying, do not pop the champagne cork just yet because real change in a person's life in an attitude inward is immediate. They may not have the action fixed yet. They may still struggle with their issues and their problems but their inner man, inner woman is going to be immediate that they now want to do what is right and they are going to, in spite of their problems, they are going to be at church. In spite of their problems, they are going to be at Thursday night. In spite of their problems, they are going to get into discipleship. In spite of their problems, they are going to get what they need because they now know it is their fault. They have got to clean it up and they know they need tools to do it. When you do not see that, you are wasting your time. This is a fundamental aspect of repentance, change of direction based on change of attitude. When we talk about repenting, we are talking about turning from something. Turning from something without turning to something is a waste of time. Repentance is a two-edged sword. Yes, you have to turn from something but you have to turn to something. When they just turn from something and do not turn to nothing, it is a game. It is a game. I am not saying that they do not work through things. People work through things. We all work with people. We know they do. I am talking to you in a fundamental aspect. People will drag out your world, bring stress and heartache into your life. They will drag you out and drag you down and the devil uses it so not only do they not do anything for God, you get out of church. You get out of Bible study. You get out of ministry. Now, the devil never had any plans for them coming back but because you could not deal with it biblically, you are out of the ballgame too.

V. Seven Blessings from God

Now, look at our text again. When you do these four things and change your attitude that in our text God does seven things back to you. Oh, I have got to stop here and tell you about this great principle. This is what I love God so much. This is what I love about God. Remember God asks me to do four things and I do them. Get this now. If you do not get anything else, get this. God always gives back more to you than He asks from you. See that thing? You give four, He gives seven. You know why He does that? To encourage you. He knows you are in a mess. He knows you are struggling. He knows that even though you are trying to do what is right, you are going to have down time and bad times that the devil is going to come after you, you are going to start second guessing yourself. He knows that. So He knows because He is a good Father that when you are on the right path and you start doing these things right and you give Him the four things

He asks, He gives you seven back. He will always give you more than you give Him. I love Him for that. Now let us look at these.

12. The first thing here is length of days. Now this is not living a long life or a long time. But once you get to the place in your life that you get your mess cleaned up, you go through that process and you get now to the point where those four things are in your life and we will talk about all of that in detail next time. Then God gives you seven things back. The first one is length of days. Now this is a life filled with joy, a life filled with happiness, of seeing the fullness of your relationship with God, to see God how He uses you and your wife and your kids, your son, your daughter, your son-in-law, your daughter-in-law in ministry, side by side. Man, what more could a guy ask for? He put the emphasis on all the wrong things in life today. I am going to tell you right now, there is no greater joy or blessing for you young parents on this planet. There is no greater joy or fulfillment and no length of days getting out of your life everything there is that you to get to the point in your life where you are at unbroken chain and your family is by your side ministering the Word of God and you are there doing it together. It is a lot like you see it in the world. Some guy will have his house burned down. Some guy will burn to the ground and he has got his wife and three little kids there and the channel nine on channel five comes up and the house is smoldering in the background. Lost every picture, lost every clothes, do not have anything but what is on their back. Lost their car, the dog got killed, the cat got burned up, the canary got roasted, everything died in there. They lost everything and they are standing in front of that smoldering house and they are standing there with channel nine cameras and the thing going and the guy says, "How are you doing? How are you doing?" And he says, "We lost everything but I still got my family." You fool. He did not care about the house. He did not care about the car. He did not care about anything. The blessing for him and the fullness of him, he lost all that. That can be replaced. His family cannot. Just like I got some good news and bad news. "What is the bad news?" "The transmission just went out of your car." "What is the good news?" "You just inherited \$100 million." Who cares about the transmission? When your family is online with you, the greatest blessing you can have, you young couples, the greatest blessing you can have is your kids by your side and when you have that in your life, there is not much other problems in life going to get you. Who cares if the house burned down? Who cares if the transmission goes out? You have got \$100 million right standing by you. The joy and the blessings of the length of days, getting the most out of your days on earth for God. My taking responsibility, it starts with you taking responsibility, me taking responsibility and then realizing that in life, I am just telling you. I do not have any responsibility for getting anybody saved in this church. Nobody except her, her, her. I am guaranteed that. You, I am not sure of. You, you are iffy. You are preaching tonight, you better be. Norbert and Sandy could not cook that good and be lost. But I am not responsible for you guys. I am not. I am not responsible for anyone. I am responsible to give you the truth. I have no guarantee with any of you. I believe you are saved. You are part of my ministry and I love you to death. But bottom line, end of day, I do not have, it is not my responsibility. I preach the truth. God gets you saved. I am glad. I have no guarantee with you. The only guarantees I have is that one, that one and that one for sure. And then I have a guarantee that you do what is right with yours. You do what is right with yours. You do what

is right with me. Why did I ever go there? Well, sometimes you get caught up in the spirit of God, you can say some really things you are going to regret later. I am not kidding. Length of days. Looking back on your life. I hope to get to the point in my life, I do not know when I will die, but I am hoping to get to the place of my life. If I die tomorrow, if I die 10 years from now, if I die 20 years from now on that deathbed, boy, I am not going to be worrying about what this about that. I am going to look back and I am going to thank God for the length of days. I am going to thank God that when I go off the scene, I have got a family that is going to carry the word of God on, take that word of God out. I do not have to blink twice about it. This church will go on. The ministry will go on. Everything will go on. That unbroken chain and line of ministry. That should be the goal for your young kids.

13. Then he says, number two, long life. Wow, this is a little different one. Now this promises for a full life, a long life to serve the Lord. You see the promise is not only to your family and the preserving of your family, but it is to you personally. There are many examples of this in the Bible. The Bible says that Moses was 120 years old and yet his natural strength was not abated. That is hard to believe. Joshua was 110 when he died. I think all of them, the greatest example, and I love to preach on Caleb. Caleb is one of my favorite guys in the Bible. He is 85 years old. The last time you see him in Joshua chapter 14, verse 11, he is going up that mountain with a sword in his hand to kick the snot out of the guys that have got his promise land up there. 85 years old. No Alzheimer's, no cancer. I mean, if he was Alzheimer's, he would never find his inheritance. He would be wandering around forever. 85 years old and he is going by himself. There are probably two or three thousand of them up there. He was not concerned. You know why? Because him and God made up the majority. That is why. It comes down to your long life and you have got to realize, kids, that God has only given you one body to serve Him with and when you destroy it with drugs and alcohol and all the things that the world has, it takes years off your life. Drugs and alcohol and booze are not the only thing. I mean, you eat wrong, you get diabetes by the time you are 50. You smoke cigarettes, you get lung cancer by the time you are 60. There are things that you put in your body that God never intended or you do not eat right and do not do the right things and do not take care of your physical body. You know what? God, you come up short on the end. God gave you, you do your job of taking care of this temple. God does His job of taking care of what is on the inside. I hear Baptist preachers. I have watched them all my life. They get up there and they preach on this, they preach on that, they preach on that, they preach on this, preach on that, preach on that. They have not seen their toes in 30 years. They have got no reason to preach on anything.
14. Number three. Verse 4, "taking favor in the sight of man." I think this is a great one. I think this is absolutely one of the best ones in here. It is simply your reputation with people based on your walk with God. We see this down at Turn Around and Restart. I told you we would. We went down there and we asked nothing and did everything. Now they have looked at us, especially Turn Around. We have been there a shorter time than we have been to the other place and Turn Around already have contacted us and want us to be the teachers for all their mentors. Right now, Bob is putting together a list of men who are going to go down there and teach life principles. Is that what it is, Bob? That is unheard of. You know why they do that? You know why Restart keeps sending us stuff and telling us how much they love us and

appreciate us? You know why? It is not because of just what we do for them. It is because what they see in you is real. You are real. Nobody would think much of you as a preacher. You would not look like you would be a pastor. You are quiet. You do not say much, unassuming. In fact, I am talking to you right now just to keep you awake. Old Derham tore him up down there the other night. Had him down there preaching to the mentors. Had a room full of guys and gals that are trying to turn their life around and they ask him, I did not send him down, did I? They ask you. You know why they ask you? Because they see the labor he puts in that down there. He goes down and picks those guys up down on the river, go down and picks up here, bring them to the church, go down and bring them there, spend time with them. They want guys down there that are going to do what they are going to do. He gets down there, he relates to them. He gets down there, he talks to them. They want to hear what he has got to say. You know why? Because they just not work to them. He sees what they did. They called me this week. I could not do it because Gene is going to be here and I told him, I said, "I will be glad to do it." They call me out of the clear blue sky. They have, I do not know how many people to support that down there financially. They are having a big thank you get together for all the people that support it financially and they wanted me to speak to them. I am thinking to myself, "What about what?" And they just said, "You just talked to them about what mentoring is and what this place means to you and what you guys have done down here, da da da da da, and let them see what is really going on." Why? You have got 40 other, you have got what? 200 other mentors out there. You know why they pick this church? Because they see you care. They see it is real with you. They see you going down there this afternoon and sorting out their clothes so they do not have to, ladies that do not have to come in on Monday morning and they can get to their job and you get to work for them. They see that. Richard stands down there, watches you guys work. He is amazed. He sees you guys doing this. He sees Darren. He sees John Busquette. He sees Bob Gregg. He sees Steve Bracken. He sees these guys down here and they are working with these guys and these guys responding to them and now they come to us. In what, less than a year? Now they come to us and they say, "We want you, your men and your women. You. We want you guys." And yes, we are going to have women teach those guys down there with those girls. We are going to let them see what this church is all about. You know why they want that? But you know why they want you? Because they see in your life that it is real. There is no greater testimony than that. Do people seek you out when they want wisdom from you or do they seek you out when they want to hear what the latest gossip is? See how it works? I mean, do people seek you out because they know that you have the answers from God? It says, "obtain favor in the sight of man." People will seek you out because they see God in your life, in your family, in your marriage. This is why I preach so hard on principles in the family. Christian families are supposed to be different than unsaved families. The greatest witness that we have as a church is not the Bible we carry, but it is your life and your family in a world where everything is totally in a mess and broken down. People want something that is real. They do not listen to what you say. They do not listen to what you tell them. They look beyond that and look to see if what you live lines up with what you say. I have had people, I think this is probably the greatest single compliment that I could ever give some of you guys and gals. We have people come into this church and I work with them and help them and

bring them to a point and sometimes they get saved. Sometimes they are already saved. They just have to get some things down and they will come over to my house and I will talk about getting them into the next level. You know what they will do? It has happened a hundred times. You know what they will do? I will say, "Well, you need to be disciplined and let me think about somebody that I can put into your life." And they will say, "How about so and so? Can he do it? Is she available?" They have watched your life. I do not know of a greater compliment in the world than somebody looking at your life, seeing the difference and then when they have got problems and they want to learn, you are the one they want to learn from. Favor with man. I am telling you. They watch your life. They see how you handle circumstances. They say, "Well, you are perfect," and you all do some stupid things. I do stupid things. But the consistency is there. They seek you for advice. They look at you. They see you. They know that you have a relationship with God and they want that. I cannot think of a greater compliment than that in a Christian's life. That was a great thing to have them ask for our guys to come down there and speak. It was a great thing for them to open up their doors and say, "You know what? We want you guys to come down. Hey, you are in charge. It is your group." "Yeah, but we want you guys to come down and teach life principles to these people." Why? "Because we see them in you." Well, just think what we could get done if we were a real church.

15. Number four. "Obtain good understanding in the sight of man." Now one was favored. This is understanding. That means you understand people, human nature. You understand the old nature. You understand why people do the things that they do, act the way they act and say the things they say. See, because you have understood yourself. You know where it starts with you. When you deal with somebody, you give them solid biblical advice. You give them sound doctrine because you have a sound mind, because you have a sound walk, because you have a sound lifestyle. When you deal with somebody, you give them solid biblical advice. They are not just saying it, but actually living it. See, you have got an understanding. You grasp the biblical principles, but along with that, you also have discretion, the ability to apply the principles because you have a good understanding of the problem, the cause and the effect. You have had done it in your own life first, then you did it in your family second, and then now you do it to others. The order of that is absolutely vital. Honestly, across Christianity today, many of God's people simply have no credibility when it comes to dealing with people. They really do not. They have no victory in their own life. By victory, I mean they do not have the ability to live above the circumstances. Everything that comes into their life just messes them up. They have got so many compounding problems in so many different other areas. It is unbelievable. "Obtain good understanding in the sight of man."
16. Then the fifth one, verse 4 also. "Obtain favor in the sight of God." Now this is a great one. But yet I will tell you before I get into this one, I cannot think of anything that will get you in more trouble with people than this one. People will get real jealous when God has His hand on your life and not on theirs. That is what this one is. Even favor in the sight of God, God's hand in your life, God's hand in the life of your family, God's hand in the life of your kids because you have done what is right. Oh, I am not saying there is not some rough time. I am not saying there is not time. You have got to kick them through the goalposts of life. I am not saying there is not time that you have got, but all I am saying is on the overall concept you

stayed with the biblical principles. I will tell you, the Bible is filled with great stories of men who had favor with God. Do you want some great studies for application to your own life? Boy, there is, Abraham is a great one. Genesis chapter 24, verse 6. I mean God singled him out to be the father of many nations. God singled him out to be the very beginning of the nation of Israel until this day they called him father Abraham. You see, it was a great thing. God had His hand, He had favor, He had great favor in the sight of God. But Ishmael did not like it, did he? See? Every time you get God's favor in your life, there are going to be people out there that do not like it. They do not like it, they do not have it. So the thing that they do is they start dragging you down so you do not look so good and because of the fact that they look terrible. You see it all the time. It is the way it works. You have got Jacob, Genesis chapter 32, verse 28. Here is a guy that God takes through his life and through a process and has to get some things done with him like many of you and myself included. Yet out of that thing comes the 12 tribes. But Esau did not like it. Esau develops into the Edomites to become Israel's enemies all down through there. In fact, God wrote a book, Obadiah, against one group of people, the Edomites from Ishmael. You go back to Abraham, Ishmael, Esmael, Edomites from Esau, excuse me. You go back to Abraham, Ishmael, that is where the Muslims come from. They trace their self back. You know what the Muslims are upset with the Jews about? Simple, real easy. They do not like the fact that God's hand of favor was on Abraham and his seed and not Esau in his seed, or excuse me, Ishmael in his seed. So you know what they do today? They take all the promises that were given to Abraham and Isaac and they stick them on Ishmael and his crowd with the Muslims. They cannot stand the fact that God gave them favor, not them. In your Christian life, when God puts His hand on your life and you start to do great things for God, let me tell you something. There are going to be some God's people not happy about it. I guarantee you, guarantee you, guarantee you. It is the way it goes. Jesus Himself, Luke chapter 2, verse 52, it says, Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. But the scribes and the Pharisees did not like it. I think one of the greatest examples that has got a lot of detail to it is the story of Joseph. You know the story of Joseph when he got his coat of many colors from his father. That is a great story. That coat of many colors is a picture that God was favoring him over the other boys. That coat of many colors was probably a lamb skin, goat skin, leather coat that had all kinds of colors into it, probably made by Calvin Klein or one of those great guys. God said, "Gary, this is yours. This is your special to me. I want to give you this." He put it on and walked out and all the other boys were saying, "Where did you get that at, Jake?" They said, "Well, you know what? It is a thing where my daddy gave me this. We did not get one. I do not know. He just gave it to me. Had a little box all wrapped up, said he loved me and he wanted me to have this and, you know, he hugged me and kissed me. I do not know. He probably got yours inside." All those boys one at a time went in, just stood around waiting for their coat. They did not get one. They did not like it. But God had His hand on him and God had favor with God. When everything else came to pass and it all fell apart, let me tell you something. It is a thing where Joseph was with God and God got him through. It is simple. When you do those four things and bring them into your family and into your life and into your personal life, then God preserves you and puts His hand on you. You will be some rough times. Yes, you will have some tough times.

Absolutely. He is going to be a bullet shield. He is going to have to be in and out. But He will be your shelter in a time of storm. We all know the story of the kid's story of King Midas. He is the guy that was the king that wanted to wish that he loved gold and whatever he wanted to touch, he turned to gold. So he got that wish and he touched the piano, turned to gold. He touched everything, turned to gold. But then he found out he could not eat anything because he picked it up and turned to gold. He had a problem. Now, that is a lame picture of what the Bible says your life ought to be like. You ought to have the Midas touch as a Christian. The Bible says that in Psalms chapter 1, Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. There it is. Now, for you and for me, touching everything turns to gold is a good thing. You know why? Because gold is going to wind up with the judgment seat of Christ. It is a good thing. Favor with God. Favor with God.

17. Now, the next thing he says down here is number six. This is the sixth thing. "Obtain good understanding in the sight of God." Now, this is to understand God. It would be hard for us to sit here and talk about we as mortal beings being able to understand a holy, infinite God. But yet the Bible does tell us in 1 Corinthians 2:14 and Philippians 2:5 that we do have the mind of Christ. Knowing what God thinks about things, knowing how God will do things, being able to tell when God is in something or when He is not, using discernment or discretion, that is absolutely invaluable. Also, almost completely non-existent today in most Christians' lives. Learning the patterns of God, being able to take those patterns and see when this pattern does not line up with that pattern. Taking the models that God gives you and then see how the models work down through life. There are models of everything. There is a model of the New Testament church. There is a model for a Christian. There is a model for a marriage. There is a model for everything in the Bible. That model shows you what God thinks about it and how God would handle it and then the principles. So, you learn the patterns, you learn the models, you learn the principles and you will find quite a bit about God. God has certain character traits that when we understand them and realize that they are there and these things are there that we need them in our lives to build our lives that make us like Him. There are certain things that we want to put in our lives. In fact, 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 5 tells us that there are seven things that after we get saved we should add to our faith. So when you get saved, you exercise faith, get saved by grace, get saved by faith, then after you are saved, 2 Peter 1:5 says, "Now add these seven things to it," and they are a process. But there are seven characteristics of God. First one, virtue. Most of God's people do not even know what virtue is. Virtue is. There is knowledge. There is temperance. There is patience. There is godliness. There is brotherly kindness. There is charity. You are going to find, and you hear me talk about all the time about the compounding effect. There are two compounding effects in the Bible. When you make bad choices and do dumb things and get things into your life with the evil man and evil woman, those things in a bad way compound in your life. But there is

another compounding effect and that is when you do the right thing. When you do the right thing and you do four, God does seven, you do five, God does eight and however the thing works out. When you start doing what is right with your life, you know what God does? He starts compounding the good things in your life. Our life is going to have a compounding effect about everything we do. The only thing you have got to ask yourself is it on the negative side or the positive side? Are you compounding your life in a negative way or compounding your life in a positive way? That is all. That is all it is. That is all it is.

18. But then the seventh thing, the last one here. He says, "obtain peace in your life." This is what real Christianity should be. Talk about the real deal. It is what it ought to be. But I have got to tell you, God's people today are emotional basket cases. They really are. They are just a mess. I mean, they are. It is all because they have forsaken what we preached about today. I mean, they have tremendous, God's people under tremendous stress. You know, last week we talked about the, you know, in the news it was the big shutdown of the government. It had been shut down for 17 days and we are coming to the deficit, you know, we are going to go over the physical cliff, you know, and where everything we are going to shut down. They were just fear mongering every place. You know, the 401ks were going to go out the window. You know, the government was going to shut down. The old folks are not going to get their checks, you know, and the veterans are not going to get paid and all this is going to happen. All that just because they have got an agenda they want to keep. I listened to that stuff and listened to that. All week long I heard guys, we walk around the track together at the thing, "What are we going to do? What are you going to do? What do you think?" I just keep my mouth shut because I do not want to get thrown out of the place. I just, I just, "What are we going to do? What do you think? Boy, this is terrible. I do not want, well, I do not want this. My 401ks in the tank. Well, listen to that. You know, I lost \$15,000 last this and all that." I thought to myself, "Really, really, what does any of that have to do with anything if you have favor with God?" Do you think that your favor with God has anything to do with your 401k? Do you really? Did you think your favor with God and the peace that you get from God has anything to do with how much money you have got in the bank? Do you really, do you think that your security and your peace that you have and the favor you have with God, you really think that the world situation of whether the government shuts down or keeps on going, somebody said, "What do you think about the government shut down last week?" I said, "I think the government shut down about 40 years ago." What was your point? Those things mean nothing if you have the favor of God. Do you think those boys that we talked about in the Bible did not go through some tough times? You see how Jacob and all them went through the famines of Egypt? Did God not provide for them? God provides everything for us. It is the fact is that we are so busy providing for ourselves. We are so busy hanging out with that evil man and that strange woman. We put all of our trust in the things of this world and when the things of this world go up in smoke, then you are lost. I do not care about them. You did not have it all. You did not have it all. "Obtain peace in your life." God's people today are just, I mean, all the emotional problems, all the physical problems, all the spiritual problems. I am telling you, the two of them greatest verses on this are two of the greatest promises in all the Bible for you and me. First one is Isaiah 26:3, Isaiah 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he

trusteth in thee. That will keep him in perfect peace, but notice the condition, "whose mind is stayed on thee." You have got your mind someplace else. Now that is my favorite verse, that will keep him in perfect peace. Now how come I am not in perfect peace? Because your mind is not stayed on Him. That is why, "because he trusteth in thee." Philippians 4:7, Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. You know, there are two kinds of peace in the Bible. The first time you kind of, the first peace you find is over there in Romans 5:1 and it says peace with God. When you find the peace with God in the Bible, that is your salvation. The day you got saved, you made peace with God. The Bible says you were reconciled to God. The Bible says that Jesus Christ was a propitiation for your sin. The Bible says that when you got saved, when you got saved, you made peace with God. That is the day you got saved, Romans 5:1. But Philippians 4:7 here says, "and the peace of God," that is different. Where the peace with God is the day you got saved, after you are saved, you have the peace of God. God supplying you with the peace to get you through everything in life. Peace that God gives you when you have favor with Him because you favor Him. We talked about Thursday night, I told you God has called us to peace, 1 Corinthians chapter 7. There should be peace in your family. There should be peace in your marriage. There should be peace in all that you do. Romans 12:18 says, Romans 12:18

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth within you, live peace with all men. Now you know, the truth of the matter is, sometimes you cannot do that. I will show you how this thing works. Sometimes you cannot do that. There have been times in my life that I wanted to make peace with somebody or be peaceful with somebody and they do not want it. Sometimes you cannot do that. There will be times in your life, in your ministry, in your family when turmoil and controversy comes up over something that you did. When it is the right thing, many times, you know, I have seen people in our church that had to take a stand for something in their family and got crucified for it. But it was the right stand. I have seen it all my life in ministry. There are things that I have had to take stands on and things that you will have to take stands on and there are things where you just have to clear up a spot and you say, "On these principles we stand." You know what? We always second guess ourselves as Christians. I had a girl call me this week, just one of the sweetest kids, and I love her to death and she is a right part of my life and I love her very much. But just like many Christians that are coming up in that intermediate stage, she found herself in a situation with a family member where she had witnessed on two occasions and this is what happened. This is what happened. She calls me on the phone and she is crying. She is crying on the phone and I am talking with her, you know, and she is telling me the situation. She says, "You know what? I do not think my dad is saved and I do not think he is going to make it and I do not think this and I do not think that." And she says, "I am just really upset." And I said, "And I witnessed to him two times." And I said, "Well, honey," I said, "What is the problem?" She says, "What if I did not do it right? What if I did not let something out? What if I did not, what if I left something out? What if I did not say," hey, let me tell you something. We could always look back in every

circumstance of life and second guess ourselves. I do not know of a situation I ever dealt with in life and I could not look back and say, "Could I have done that differently?" It is not a matter whether you could have done it differently or not. You know what matters? You did at that point what God called you to do and gave you the situation to do and you did what He told you to do. End it. There is the peace. There is the peace. You are going to find yourself in situations where you have to make some hard calls and not everybody is going to do it. You know I do not like Facebook. You did not know that? I think honestly there is a real dark side to the social media. But you watch Facebook sometimes. You just watch it. You will get somebody, you are on Facebook, are not you, Darren? No. Oh, okay. You watch it. You watch it. Now I am not arguing. If you are on it, God bless you. I love you to death. I do. But I am telling you, there is a dark side to that thing. You watch how it works. People will get on it. Why would somebody get on Facebook and lay out the stupidest, dumbest things they have done for all the world to see? Did you ever ask yourself that? Somebody gets on there and says, "Well, I got drunk and arrested and got four DWIs last night." Like he is proud of it. Somebody else says, "Well, I beat my wife and I am in jail now, you know, and I am here I am." If I had not done that, I would not tell anybody. Somebody gets on there and says, "Well, you know, I have not been to church for a while and I know my church has got snobby people in it and I do not like them, you know, and this things like that." Why would you say, you know why they do that? I am going to tell you why. You just watch. Fifteen minutes later, there will be 20 people that are going on and say, "Yeah, I agree with you." They are looking for support. They are looking for somebody else who has got as much trash and problems in their life to get on board with them so they do not feel so bad about where they are at. That is not peace. There will be times in your life when you have got to make a hard call. There will be times in your life when you have got to make a hard decision. Everybody will be against you. But you know where the peace comes in? You try to live peacefully with all men, but when you cannot, you know where the peace comes in, even in situations like that, when you make the right call and you know it was a call based on the biblical principle, you did what is right, it does not matter if the whole world does not like it, you have peace with God because you did what God told you to do. You know how many Christians cannot get there? Brother, if I know the call is right and I know the call is based on the book and I know it was the right thing to do based on what Jesus would do, you will have to put the whole world against me and say, "I do not like it." I could care less. You know why? I will take peace in the fact that I do not get my peace satisfaction from you. I get it from doing what the book tells me to do whether you like it or whether you do not. Now that is peace. That comes. That comes. That comes from you having to favor with God and you understanding the principles of God and you realize that at the very best you can, you make peace. But when you cannot make peace, it is impossible you take rest in the fact and you take peace in the fact that you did what the Bible told you to do. It may be the most controversial time in your life. It may be turmoil. All your family, all your friends may be upset with you, but you know what? If you did it biblically and you did the right thing and that is what was called for, then you take peace in that. But you see, we care so much today more about what people think about us than what God thinks about us. We just cannot get on with my friends being part of this. "Well, I was with these people for 20 years, 30 years.

What am I going to do?" You know what I do? I just stick with a book and God. How does that work for you? People are going to come and people are going to go. People are going to be your friends for 20 years and then dump you for the rest of your life. People are going to be with you for five years and then dump you. People are never going to treat you fair. Make sure you treat them as fair as you can. At the end of the day, do not worry about it because you have got a book and a God that will always treat you fair. Find a favor of God, not the favor of man.

VI. Conclusion: Compounding Effects and Choice

Now this is a great practical message for all of us. Understanding the actual process of cleaning up the mess in our lives. Understanding that we must begin the work. The work begins with an attitude change. Taking responsibility and being accountable to something or somebody and saying, "No more will somebody made me do this." "Well, it is your fault. You did not do this right. You did not do that right." No, no, no. End of the day, no matter what your situation is, it is still your choice. When you begin to do those four essentials, "My son, forget not thy law." And in your heart begin to keep His commandments and you let not mercy and then let not truth depart from you. You bind them around your heart and around your neck. When God goes to work and puts the things in your life to build you and clean up the mess. Remember two compounding effects in your life. There will be the compounding effect of your bad choices that you bring into your life. The evil man and the strange woman pile it on. They will bring in other evil men and other strange women before you know you did not take one bad choice. You made a hundred bad choices. Those hundred bad choices grow legs to become a thousand bad choices. Those thousand bad choices over the course of time grow legs and they become ten thousand bad choices. You are swallowed up and you are done. You make the right choice and you put the word of God in your life and you do what God wants you to do. You start making the right decisions. You start doing what God asks you to do. God compounds it back to you. He gives you more. The more good decisions you make. God takes those compounded and they get world legs and they get into better things. God puts people into your life. He puts this into your life. He gives you that. You get favor with God. You get favor with man. You get the peace of God. In both cases, you grow to the place where now nothing can stop you from God. Hey, it comes down to what I said early on. Either you are going to serve the evil man or the strange woman or you are going to serve God. There is no middle ground with this. Your life will be a direct result whether you are saved or whether you are lost. Your drive today is a direct result. You just look in the mirror and say, "Okay, this is my life. Look at this. Look at that. Look at this. Look at that, boy." It does not make long to find out what side I am on. But you can change that. Any time you want to. I cannot change it for you. Nobody in this room can change it for you. God cannot even change it for you until you yourself want to change it.

Every head bowed. There we are clothed. Father.