

Proverbs 13:20

Sunday 8/11/2013

You are an amazing bunch of people. Every church has got people in it, I understand that. I learned years ago, wherever you got light, you got bugs. But as a church, taking this guy in and loving him and all that you have done, picking him up for church every Sunday and just spending time with him, you guys do that for so many people in so many ways. I just thank you for that and I love you. It is what makes this church what it is, and I appreciate that, I really do.

I. The Biblical Outline of Proverbs

You remember the last time we were together, we began our study of the book of Proverbs. We did that after a week or a couple of weeks of a solid introduction of things about the book of Proverbs that you need to remember. I wanted to lay a good, solid foundation for you because when we get into this book, we want to build on some things. The last time I gave you probably the most important ingredient of this great book was the biblical outline or the breakdown.

Remember I told you that every book of the Bible has a breakdown or an outline associated with it. When you learn that outline and you learn that breakdown, it makes the books of the Bible a lot easier. A lot of people many, many times have said to me, "You know, I can't understand the Bible. I try to read it, I try to get into it." I guarantee you it is because you are not following the outline that God put in there that really makes the books a lot easier. I gave them to you:

1. Chapter 1 through Chapter 7: You will find that all of those chapters either deal with the heading of "my son" or "children." I told you that historically it is Solomon's son, doctrinally it is God's Son, and inspirationally it is you and me as God's son.
2. Second Section, Chapter 8 through Chapter 30: If I remember right, there are, I think, 630 proverbs in that section, all on the issues of life, telling you and me how to make good choices, showing us the problems that we will get into.
3. Third Section, Chapter 31: That is the finished product, the virtuous woman. The goal of every Christian should be Chapter 31 of the Book of Proverbs, the final phase of our Christian growth.

II. The Main Theme: Wise Man vs. Foolish Man

Then we talked about and defined the main theme of the Book of Proverbs. The main theme of Proverbs is about a wise man and a foolish man. I told you that in every aspect of your life, you will have to deal with these two elements. By the Bible defining these two aspects, wise man and a foolish man, I also told you that now you and I have the ability to be wiser than our enemies, as the Bible says, to be smarter than the problem that you hear me talk about so many times, to rise above the circumstances in life. The Bible talks about that when you get the wisdom of God, you have more understanding than all your teachers.

I gave you, if you remember, nine principles of what a wise man is according to the Book of Proverbs:

4. A wise man will win souls.
5. A wise man will inherit glory.
6. A wise man receives commandments.
7. A wise man hearkens to counsel.
8. A wise man guards his tongue.
9. A wise man seeks knowledge.
10. A wise man not only seeks knowledge but he disperses knowledge.
11. A wise man fears and departs from evil.
12. A wise man will hear and he will listen.

We talked about the influence of people and circumstances in our lives that we have to deal with every day, and how the Book of Proverbs shows us how to live above the circumstances of life. We talk about the victorious Christian life. Many Christians ask the question, "How do you ever get to that point or how do you maintain the victorious Christian life and the victory as a Christian?" The answer is simple: by the Word of God in the Book of Proverbs and the principles that we find.

Remember, I told you to make a list, a private list of course, not one that you want to pass around or show anybody. But I told you to make a private list for yourself personally, of people in whom you see these nine character qualities. Keep in mind, nobody is perfect. You are never going to find anybody on planet earth who is sinless and perfect and does not have some issues in their life. But you are going to find people who, even though they are human and even though they make mistakes, they work every day at being everything that God wants them to be. When you find those people who have these character qualities, then you make these people your role models if you are a young Christian. Make them your friends if you are an older Christian, and then you work with them and help them, let them allow them to make you better.

You remember I ended the last time we were together by giving you one of the simplest verses in all the Bible that simply really says everything that I am going to be talking about throughout the book of Proverbs. It makes the whole study very easy to grasp, and it was Proverbs 13:20.

Proverbs 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

This is where we are going to pick it up today. This is where we are going to start today, and we are going to move on from here.

III. The Root Cause of Life's Problems

I deal with people all the time. My week is filled with it, either by people coming over, the phone calls that I get, or all of the things that people come and talk to me about. I am basically asked, when people come in with issues in life, I am basically asked six or seven questions most of the time. The question that I am most asked when people come in is somebody will tell me their problems and lay it all out, and they will simply ask, "Why is my life such a mess?"

Many times they will ask me, "How come I cannot get ahead in anything I am trying to do?" Sometimes they will ask me, "Why am I so miserable and so depressed with everything in life?" They will ask me, "Why am I so unhappy?" They will ask me, "Why do I not feel what other Christians feel?" I get that a lot. They look at some of you who really have it pretty much together, and they look at you and they want that. They say to themselves, "Why can't I be like that? Why can't I feel what other Christians feel and do what they do? Why can't I get anything out of the Bible?" I hear that one all the time. Many times, because it goes on for many, many years, you find these same problems coming back into the families. Now you see the same issues with their children as they get older. The cycle just keeps on going and keeps on going and keeps on going.

The answer to every one of these questions is really very simple. If I have come to any conclusions of life, being 63 years old and living through some experiences about life, if I have learned anything at all, I have learned that life is not very complicated. Life is very simple. I totally understand why when God started it all in Genesis that He put it in a very simple, farm-like country setting where there were not a lot of complicated things to do. The first city in the Bible was not built by God. The first city in the Bible was built by a murderer. Along with that city came all the complexity of life.

It is no secret to anybody that farm people who love that lifestyle and like out there on a farm, their life is much simpler than ours is. You look back in the 1800s and you wonder why families were closer together back then and why people had greater character qualities about themselves back then. It is because they did not have all the complicated things that we have. They did not have smartphones and computers. When they sat down to eat, the family was together. They worked together on the farm. They did everything together. It is a whole different mindset than where we are at today. Life is not complicated. Life is pretty simple.

Truly the answer to every one of these questions is just as simple. You just simply look around you and see who you are hanging out with, see who you are spending time with, see who you are taking counsel from. As the last part of Proverbs 13:20 says, "but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." The reason why many people's lives are in a mess, the reason why they cannot get ahead, the reason why they are so miserable when they go through the times of depression and so unhappy, the reason why they envy what other Christians have and they seem like they cannot get anything out of the Bible, is because simply they have entered into that final phase of being destroyed.

They have hung out with people who have tainted their ideas. They have allowed themselves to be in circumstances that were non-edifying to them. They hang out with people who are totally negative. They hang out with people who do nothing for God. They hang out with foolish people who every other word out of their mouth tears something down instead of building something up. Because they have allowed that in their life, they are in the final phase of their life of being destroyed. Their life is being destroyed not only physically but spiritually. In time, you pass that right on to your children.

Exodus 20:5 is a great verse that bears out a lot of exploring in all of our lives as we think about it. That great verse, in fact, He says this phrase four or five times through the Old Testament about God visiting the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. That clearly tells me that the process of you and I being a fool, we simply pass that on to our children. We take a stand against God and God's principles. When we decide we are going to do it our way instead of God's way, when we decide we are going to put people in our lives who are negative, who are against the things of God—oh, they probably go to church all the time, but everything out of their mouth is negative. They do nothing for God. They do nothing for anybody with God. All they focus on and all they want to do is to be negative. When you allow yourself in that kind of scenario, in time, not only are you going to become like that—remember I showed you the process out of Psalms 1 a week ago—but you are going to pass that on to your children, and God will visit that iniquity to the third and fourth generation. That is an incredible, incredible verse.

A wise man does not have those issues. Now, a wise man has issues. We all got issues, but we do not have those issues. A wise man for the most part, he is happy. He is content. He is fulfilled. He is satisfied. A fool's life will be just one unfolding disaster after another. But a wise man, he is happy. He is content. He has all the things that a fool can never get to in life, but always wants to get to in his life.

When you make your list, look around you. Look around you at the people you work with. Look around at the people in your family. Look around at the people in this church. Look around and see those who are complete and fulfilled. Then look at the ones who struggle and are miserable and unhappy. They are unhappy in life now. They are unhappy in their marriage later. In time, they wind up being unhappy about everything.

IV. Two Keys to a Godly Life

I want to tell you something. If you do not get anything out of my sermon other than this next principle—and yet there are a lot of good principles here today—I want to give you this: When you look at people who do what God wants them to do, wise men, when you peel back the layers of their life, you are going to see two fundamental things. I told you, life is not complicated and life is not hard. When you peel back the layers, you see two things:

13. You see the ministry that they are in.
14. You see the people that they associate with.

It is very simple. Those of you who went down to Restart with us, or those who work in Turnaround, or even yesterday with the group that went down there to Children's Mercy, you can have the worst day of your life. You can have every problem in the world, and you can have people pulling on you in a negative way. Then you go down there and spend a little time with those folks who really have some issues. Then you get a text or an email back from somebody knowing that you touched them. I do not know what problems in life can compare to that. When you look at people who do what is right and people who are wise when it comes to the Word of God, you see the ministry they are involved in and the people they associate with.

I am telling you, we could fix any issue in your life by just changing those two areas right there. If you will just take those two areas and work on them in your life, eliminate those two things and put those two things in your life and eliminate the negative, you are on the path to solving every problem you have. In our prayer groups, we build them around a great principle in Proverbs 27:17, "iron sharpeneth iron." I told you, it does. Nothing will give you the completeness you are looking for in the fulfillment of your life like the wisdom of God. What helps that and sharpens that is putting yourself with other people who are like-minded toward the things of God. It makes you better. It makes you stronger. It makes you sharper. In the Bible, it is called edification. It edifies you in everything that you do.

V. Eight Principles of a Fool

Last time I defined for you a wise man and I gave you nine principles. Today I am going to give you the eight principles of a fool. I told you that the book of Proverbs is about comparison. This is why I told you to make a list of the wise men, and yes, I am going to encourage you to make a list of fools today.

Proverbs 14:33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.

You know a fool by what he does or what she does. If you have any inkling about the Bible at all and you are saved and you have any mindset at all about the things of God, you do not have to label somebody to be a fool. That person, according to Proverbs, will label themselves. You just have to look for some things. So now today you will want to make another list. You will want to make the list of fools you see in the world around you. Then you will make the decision, I hope, to stay away from them, and you go from there.

Another thing I have learned about life is the fact that life is about choices. We like to blame our problems on everybody else. That is just human nature. We do not want to take accountability for our own issues, and it is easier. It is just easier to blame everything that we go up against on somebody else. Yet I am going to tell you that for the most part, because I understand that there are certain things that come into your life that you do not have any control over. But the majority of it we do. The majority of the things that we do in life, we make choices on, determine the outcome of where we go and how it favors us or does not favor us in life. It is a thing where you want to get it down and understand it.

I told you August 28th, that Wednesday when I am going down to Turnaround. I think Turnaround is probably going to turn out for us to be one of the greatest things that God ever gave us. It is a thing where if you just look at it from the outside, it does not look like it, but once you see it from the inside and you see where they are at and what they are trying to do and how they look at us and how the doors are swinging wide open, I think that if we just play our cards right and be patient, this thing is going to develop into something that is going to be a major thing. I think the thing at Children's Mercy is going to go the same way. I really do. That is why I want as many of you as can to go down with me on the 28th, because I want to start having you

see that. I am going to talk to them that day about making choices. I want to show you how that thing works and try to help that.

But I want to talk today about eight principles that make a fool. Life is about choices. I know a lot of people, they want to help people that are foolish people. That is a good motive. I hear that a lot. You say, "Well, I know I have foolish people that I keep in my life and people who do not do right and people this and do that, and I want to help them." That is a good motive. I appreciate that. I really do. I hear that a lot. But when you see these eight areas, hopefully now you will understand also a great truth that you really cannot help them. You cannot. When you start to deal with people, you have to have wisdom in dealing with people. You realize that when you see these eight areas I am going to talk about, you cannot help a fool until that fool decides to help himself. You just cannot. One of the principles I give you in dealing with people is never want somebody to do right more than they do. Because when you do, you become vulnerable and you will wind up getting used.

Now I also need to explain this. When we talk about fools this morning, they come in two flavors. They come in two categories. You have unsaved fools and you have saved people who are fools. The Bible says in Psalms 14:1, we are talking about an unsaved fool.

Psalms 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

Now that is an unsaved fool. But saved people can also be fools. As far as I am concerned, dealing in this business for over 40 years, as far as I am concerned, as far as you ought to be concerned and your Christian life is concerned, saved fools are much more dangerous than unsaved fools. There is not a lot of difference between an unsaved man and a saved man. A saved man can do almost everything an unsaved person can do except one thing: they cannot go to hell. But you are going to find saved people who get into the same exact things. They have the same exact negative mindset. They get into the same sins. They do the same kind of stuff. They get into some of the most ungodly stuff you ever saw in your life, and they are saved. But they are fools. Like I said, as far as I am concerned, saved fools are much more dangerous.

A man asked me one time years ago, and I thought about this as I was home in Ohio. I always like to drive around my old neighborhood. I lived on the other side of the tracks back then, southwest part of Canton. Steel mills were right down there. Timken Roller Bearing was there and Republic Steel. Back then, there was a bar on every corner. I am not kidding you. There was a bar on every corner. There was Millie's bar, Charlie's bar, and it was a bar on every corner. I remember when I first got saved and I was out witnessing to somebody or talking to somebody, a guy asked me, and he was kind of a Pharisee guy and he was in a kind of a liberal church. He asked me the question, "Would you rather, in your neighborhood, would you rather have a bar or would you rather have a liberal church?" I remember telling him, without even thinking, "I would rather have the bar." He was kind of shocked at that, and taken back at that. He thought maybe I was for bars, and I am not for bars, and I am against bars, and I really am. But my point is this: I know what goes on in a bar. Liberal churches can deceive you. You know what happens

in a bar, but you go into a church that does not teach the Bible. You may think you are getting God. You may think you are getting the Word of God, and you will wind up in hell.

Foolish Christians can fool and deceive you too. I think they are much more dangerous. You know what you get from the world, no question about it. But a foolish Christian can and will hurt you, and you will get deceived, especially young Christians. They will draw you in. They come to church. I have known some of the foolish Christians I ever saw in my life who have been in church all their life. People looked at them and they think because they have been in church or because they are a deacon or because they are even a pastor or they are this, that that must be some guarantee that they are not a fool. That is not true. That is not true. I have seen some of you people hook up with somebody else in this church that I have to tell you, when I knew you were young, fresh, had all the potential. But I saw that hookup, and I want to tell you, I cringed. I never said anything, never would. I would never say anything to anybody because you know what, you just do not do that. But inside, I sure was praying. I was cringing because I knew that you had gotten side by side with somebody who was not in your young Christian life going to edify you, they were going to hurt you. In time, they are going to start dragging out all the dirt, all the trash. They were going to start talking about all the people they did not like. You cannot as a young Christian get bombarded with that every time you go and not have it affect you. They always have a hidden agenda, but it always is negative.

So I am going to give you eight concepts of a fool, and you make your list. You cannot help it, just like I did a wise man. I preached on a wise man. There were people that I thought were wise people going through my brain. You cannot listen to these nine things before these eight today. We all know people, you work with them, you have them in your world, they are all around you, you just cannot help putting a face to some of these principles. Now that is a good thing as long as you keep it to yourself. You do not want to show your list to somebody else. Now you are all going to want to see my list to see if you are on it. I do not have a list. Now we will see the principles on a fool today. He is found throughout the book of Proverbs and he is set in contrast, these eight in contrast to the nine I gave you before, to the wise man. So you want to make your list.

Let us pray. Father, help us today to come through this book and learn the great principles on what a fool is. Lord, we learned already what a wise man is, and we all know now that life is choices, and the Bible told us very clearly that if we hang out with wise people, we will be wise, but if we hang out with fools, we will be destroyed. It does not get any simpler than that, and so help these good people today who I know love You and love the Word, help them to get it all set, help me to preach it clearly, help me always to be there to help anybody that wants to do what is right. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now the first one we are going to go to is Proverbs 1:7.

➤ A Fool Despises Wisdom and Instruction

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The first thing we are going to look at is a fool despises wisdom and instruction. A fool has a literal hatred, a despising of anything that deals with God to do right. They do this not only by what they say but they do it by their action and their attitude. You are going to see that many times they claim to be a Christian, they carry the right Bible to church, they sit in the front row, they sing in the choir, they do all the things visually that you are supposed to do, but when it comes down to taking the Word of God and doing something with it, brother, that is where they have a problem because fundamentally a fool is unteachable.

A fool can be proud and arrogant or he can be stupid and lazy. A fool can be a millionaire or he can be without a dime to his name. Foolishness knows no barriers in people's life and society. The Bible is filled with fools. Life is filled with fools. Churches are filled with fools, but they all carry the same brand, and you all can spot them. They reject any wisdom or instruction.

A lady one time, she came to see me and she said, "I want you to know I am leaving the church." I said, "Go on." She says, "No, I am leaving the church." I said, "No, finish what you are saying. You are not getting it all right." She said, "I do not understand." She said, "I am telling you I am leaving the church." I said, "No, finish that statement correctly." She says, "Well, maybe you better finish it." Getting a little defensive now. "Maybe you better finish it because I do not know what you are talking about." I said, "Okay, I will say it for you. Bob, I am leaving the church again." I said, "This is the fourth time you have left." I said, "You came way back here. You came for a year, got your nose bent out of joint about something, left. Then you came back, got your nose bent out of joint, so I left. Then you came back about two years later and you are back here. Oh, this is your church. Here we go. I put you with somebody to work with. You did not like what they told you, and then you left. Then you came back and you said, 'Oh, I missed this place. This is what I need. My life is a mess.' Yes, it is. You got all these things here. Now you have been here what, a year? Now you are upset about something else because somebody told you what you did not want to hear, and now you are leaving again." That is a fool. That is a fool. I do not know what to tell you.

It is hard to believe that any Christian could come to any church and know anything about the Bible and be saved and yet totally reject any instruction that would make their life better. See? I mean, but the answer is going to church is not the answer. I have known people that have been in churches 30 years and they go every Sunday, and their life is absolutely miserable because going to church and marking your attendance is not what does it. It is taking what you hear, the instruction and the wisdom, and applying it to your life. A fool will not do that. So a fool goes through the cycle. The fool deceives themselves that they actually think there is something wrong with the church that they keep coming back.

I asked her one time, I said, "Well, the last time you left, we were this, this, this, this, this." Now I got some news for you. We have not changed. In fact, we are probably worse now than we were when you left. The problem is in the church, probably never the church. The problem is the people that are there, they are fools, and they go for a while then they get their nose bent out of joint about something. It is always, as I said, somebody else's fault. I put people to be discipled with people, and they have come to me and said, "Well, that disciple person is a terrible person." I am thinking to myself, that person that you are talking about has discipled at least 40 people in

my church, and 30 of them have turned out to be stellar. You come in and you got all these problems in your life, and you want to tell me that the person who has a track record of turning out stellar Christian young men or young ladies is bad and you are good. It does not compute. That is a fool. That is somebody that will not receive instruction. That is somebody who will not take wisdom. They despise it. They talk about it, but then when push comes to shove, "I love the Bible until I got to change something about me." That was supposed to be a joke. "We love the Bible. I love going to church as long as the sermons do not step on my toes." You see? Now I got news for you. This book is painted black for one reason. It is the old black back 66, and it only does one thing. It steps on toes. You do not like that today. I do not want to tell you, but fools despise wisdom.

You ought to stand up here and preach sometime. I love to watch faces. Most pastors, they cannot. I think a good pastor, a good preacher anyhow, when he makes eye contact with his people, you see some guys, they watch the clock. They look up, they look around. They do not want to make eye contact with you. I think that is, I do not think you can preach well. I do not think you communicate well doing that. I think you got to look right into your little peepers and talk to you. We got a vet that I take my dogs to, and nice as vet, a good vet, but this lady has got some kind of problem where she cannot look anybody in the face when she talks to them. I am standing there talking to her about my dog, and I am standing here, here is my face, and she is looking over here. She will not look at you. When I first went in there, I thought she was, I would move over. She is a great vet, but it just annoys the fire out of me. I know she has got an issue, and I feel sorry for her. I am not being critical of her, but I am saying when you want to communicate to somebody, you got to look at them. You got to see some of your faces when I preach up here. That is good. It is good. There is nothing bad about it. Some of you glow, man.

1 Corinthians 8:3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

You see, it shows. It does not matter what I say, how hard it is, your face has got to glow on it. You do not care. You want to hear the truth, even if you got to change some things in your life.

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

That is what our prayer groups do. They are accountability groups, but they help sharpen you, and it shows.

Proverbs 16:15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

Moses is a great example. When he was with God, he came down and his face shined. It is obvious, it shows that some of you are with God. I do not know what to tell you. There are people who will get upset about that. They do not like the glow. What are you going to do? Put a bag over your head and cut eyes on it? The fact that you have a relationship with God and they do not, you should never feel bad about that. But fools will.

Proverbs 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

But yet, Proverbs 25:23 says,

Proverbs 25:23 The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

See, it shows. You ever see somebody who likes to backbite people? They always got an anger issue. It shows. They always have a problem. They do not ever smile. They are always miserable. Life is always a problem. You look at a glass of water and it is half full. They look at it and it is half empty. There is nothing good in their life. A wise man will receive knowledge and instruction, and a fool will not.

➤ A Fool Mocks at Sin

Proverbs 14:9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

The Bible says here that a fool will mock at sin. The thing I want you to notice here, you need to mark this in your Bible if you do not have it already. It does not say that he makes a mockery of sin. It says he makes a mock at sin. That is a big difference. How many times I have heard somebody say to me, "Well, I do not want to be a Christian because if you are a Christian, you cannot really have any fun." That is because we spell fun differently. I spell it F-U-N. You spell it S-I-N. See, that is how that works.

In the Bible you find four kinds of laughter. We will get to it at some point when we get through the book of Proverbs. But one of those laughter is the laughter of sinful merriment. That is America laughing itself to hell. It happens all the time in the unsaved world, and unfortunately many times in the Christian world. They tell dirty jokes. They use God's name in vain at playing sports or gambling, or they listen to it and laugh at Saturday night laughs. They make fun of God.

Rio is one of the most filthiest places on this planet. Yet you might know that right there, and I have been in Rio, and right down there or up there in the Bay of Rio, you know what they got? They got about an 800-foot statue of Christ with His arms outstretched. It is the most filthiest city on this planet. The Pope goes down there and gets up there, and a couple of weeks ago he made the olive branch to gay and lesbian priests and nuns, saying that it is coming to the place where this Pope is going to make it okay. He was up there and he talked about how we ought to be tolerant of that lifestyle. He never said a word about pedophile priests. But boy, he opened up the arms to all the gay community and said we ought to be more tolerant and allow them to be priests and lay workers and sisters or brothers or whatever and bring them in and be more tolerant to them. If he is not careful, we are going to have to change his name from Pope to Poperia.

But you see it in Christianity. It just is not in things like that. You see it by God's people's indifferent lifestyle. I mean, especially when you realize that God has called us to be holy.

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

We are saved, yet we mock God. We mock God. We mock His Son by the way we live. We mock His Son's death on the cross. He died for you and for me. Gave us eternal life that we might

serve Him. We take that eternal life and go right on doing what we want to do. In that we mock Him. We take the very death of Christ, the agony, the reproach, all the things that He did. We mock God in the sin of our complacency, in the sin of our laziness, in the sin of our indifference, in the sin of our unselfishness. I told you last week about the message that John R. Rice used to preach, "Sevenfold Sin of Not Being Burdened for Lost People." I told you that went through those things, and I bet you half of you had never even fazed.

➤ A Fool Will Be Meddling

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

This is going to be a good one. I was on my way to Ohio, I saw a bumper sticker. It said, "Make somebody happy today. Mind your own business." The Bible says it is honorable for a man to cease from strife. You see that is being smarter than the problem. But it also says a fool will always meddle. When you meddle, you cause strife. People in life, people in churches who just have to know everything about everybody. I call them vacuum cleaner Christians. "Who said what to who? What is really going on with so and so? Is so and so leaving the church? Well, we certainly hope so." I mean, I did not mean that part. "Is so and so leaving the church? Who is dating who?"

I have people come to me on a regular basis, and they are wanting my take on any given situation. I will tell you, I realize there are church issues that you have to talk about, and I realize that. Church probably have talked about. But I want to tell you, 90 percent of it, when people come to me and they say, "What do you think about this or what do you think about that?" I should be looking at them and say, "You know what I think? I do not think that is any of my business." There comes a time, there comes a time when we just need to mind our own business.

Proverbs 26:17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

You ever grab a big dog by the ears? He will bite you. When you start sticking your nose in somebody else's business, you are going to get bit. I mean, you see somebody like that, put them on your list, some busybody, put them on your list. They are a fool, and they will never be any good edification in it for you. Now that does not mean you be not nice to him, but it just means you know what, you do not want to be part of that. I understand, I realize that there are times when you have to deal with things and talk about things.

➤ A Fool Will Slander People

Proverbs 10:18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

The fourth one is a fool will slander people. Notice it says there in the first part of that verse, "He that hideth hatred with lying lips." That means somebody will say something to your face. They will tell you how much they love you. They will tell you how much you mean to them, and then they will slander you behind your back. That is exactly what that means. Talk nice to your face for slamming, and everybody can understand this. There is not anybody in this room who has not

been through this. Everybody at some point in your life has been slandered for something. That is just the way it goes.

Now let me help you with that. Do you know why people slander you? Do you really understand it? Let me give you a class on slander 101. Do you know why people slander you other than the fact that they are a fool? Very important, I think, to get this. The real fundamental root for slander is jealousy. That is what it is. Somebody will feel inferior to you in something. They will slander you to make themselves feel better. You will find it with people at work that maybe you are a new guy, and you go in and you have a great work ethic, and you want to do what is right, and you are a hard worker. There will be somebody that has been there longer than you, and you cannot wonder why they keep saying something to you or behind your back or keep cutting you down to everybody else. You say, "What am I doing?" You know what? You could even do what the Bible says and go to that person, and it will not change a thing because they are a fool. The reason why they are slandering you behind their back is because they envy what you are. When they have to slander you, it brings you down a couple of notches in their mindset to make themselves look better. That is how it works. They get jealous of what you have. So they slander you. They get jealous in the Bible of what you know. Some of you will grow in the Bible and get a handle on the Bible that you are doing well in the Bible. People will look at that and they want that. Because they are a fool and they do not want to do the work they got to do that you did, it is easier for them to make themselves feel better by slandering you. That is how it works.

They will slander your family. Your family grows up loving God, serving God, and you are in a ministry together doing what God wants you to do. There will be people who have failed in their families that cannot do a thing right, and their kids do not come to church. They do not do what is right. They are into drugs. They are into this or into that, and they feel inferior. They do not know anything they can do. They cannot deal with their problems, so they just slander you in your situation so they make themselves look better in their own mind. That works. Not hard to figure out. The way it always works. You will get slandered in your job. You will go do a good job, and you will be where you are working, and somebody will get threatened by you. You have never said a word to them. You just go there, do your job, and yet they are threatened by you. So you know what they do? They are chopping you down at the knees. That is how it works.

The case study for that, if you ever want to study it, is in Genesis 37, Joseph and his brethren. That is the case text for that. We will get into that in the people ministry. That is the base text for it. You remember briefly the story. They had 12 boys, and the daddy, he really liked Joseph, and so he gave him a coat of many colors. That ticked the other boys off. Now that coat of many colors is a picture of God blessing somebody here that He is not blessing over there. When you read those 11 boys that he had over there, they all had some problems. Joseph, greatest type of Christ in the New Testament. He stayed with the stuff, and his father Jacob gave him a coat of many colors because of what he did, not because he loved him anymore, but because he was everything that he was supposed to be. When you be everything to God that you can be and mostly you can supposed to be, God is going to bless you, and I guarantee you people are not going to like it. But in God, you do not get upset about it. Do not lose any sleep over it. They see

it all the time. I told you with people who do nothing for God, they always take cheap shots at those who are doing something for God. Put that down, just the way it works.

We had a guy leave the church here, way back when. He left our church because he was a black guy, and he left our church because of the fact that the church is racist and I am a racist, and slandered this all over the place. May I speak to you for a moment? Can we talk? I may be a lot of things. I am a lot of things, but a racist is not one of them. I grew up in the state of New York. I grew up on the south side of Canton, Ohio, on the other side of tracks. I grew up with black people. "Bob is a racist." I got two boys, one is in Wichita, who call me dad. Yeah, thank you. I mean, give me a break. I got a black man who is our youth pastor, who married a white gal who is just one of the sweetest women on the planet. I mean, at Memorial, we live in Raytown, and my neighborhood is all black. Do you see me moving? My neighbor right next to me is white, and she looks over and she says, "What are we going to do about all these black people coming into our neighborhood?" I said, "I got a phone number of a guy I want to give you. You will want to talk to him." I said, "I am not going to do anything about them." I said, "Man, a guy across the street, he is nice." We came back from Ohio. He came out when we went home 15 minutes. She says, "Hi Miss Barbara." She says, "I knew you were gone," and I saw your paper, so I just been throwing them up in that old truck up there. Memorial Day weekend, I cooked 500 pounds of ribs. You only got 425 pounds of them. You know what the other 75 pounds went? All of my black neighbors. My wife knows this. It was pouring down rain that morning. We had to have it here, remember? Now I had to be the goofiest guy in the world. I wrapped all these ribs up in plastic. I got a raincoat on. It is coming down cats and dogs. I am running from house. My wife is on the front porch going. I am running from house carrying this big cooler, running from house to house, knocking on the door saying, "I have got you some ribs. I cooked these for you." I mean, everybody down in the whole neighborhood. I have some of the sweetest, dearest people of my friends are black folks. When you are saved, there is no color. I mean, I do not know who wrote the song, "Black or yellow, red and white, they are all precious in His sight," but that is what it is. Where do you get the idea that once we are saved, you are black and I am white? I mean, I am using black and white for the illustration, but you are not black. I am not white. We are red. We are covered in the blood of Christ. Crazy. "Bob is a racist." Why do I not eat chocolate cake? "Bob is a racist." I drink my coffee black. People will slander you. I am telling you right now. Every week. They are on the website. Getting their Bible. Every week. Every week they are getting on that website, getting their Bible. So when you get this one, God bless you. I have had people get mad at me and leave and said, "I am not going to that church anymore." Then they call up one of my kids or they call up somebody else and says, "Would you pick up some books or Bob's over there for me?" You know what? He is another slanderous fool. Once you understand it, it does not matter, it can become like a little game, and you get to play it.

> A Fool Returns to His Folly

Proverbs 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

A fool, like a dog, keeps returning and eating his own vomit. Now I said it is going to be a little gross. I said it is going to be a little gross. I said it is going to be a little gross. But you see how plain the Bible is. Now this is why sophisticated people do not like the Bible. Who cannot get

that? But refined people, "That is just so gross." They will be not probably your crowd, but if I preach this message in most churches, there would be people going out of there at lunchtime saying, "Well, he is just so crude." That is what the Bible says.

Now in the Bible, in the Old Testament, Gentiles are like the dogs. I like dogs. I got two of the sweetest labs you ever saw in your life. I love them so much I just put them in a condo when I left for a week. A dog condo. Whatever happened to put them in a cage and said, "I will be back in a week. Do not eat all the food or drink all the water." No, no. We put them in a condo. We have love time, five dollars a day. That is what we do. We have love time, five dollars a day. Then I am not sure, then there is snuggle time at three dollars a day. I am not sure what all this is. You get frozen treats if you want to pay for them. I mean, I went back to get my, I missed my dogs all week. I called two times, wanted to know how they were. I went back, my dog did not even want to get in the car. They had it better where they were.

I like dogs. We are a dog family. My mom had dogs. My sisters got dogs. My sisters got right now she is only got two dogs, but there was a time she had six dogs. But she has got twenty-five cats. Oh yeah. She is animal crazy, but we get it honestly. But you know, but dogs can be gross. Let us face it. Dogs can be gross. Dogs have very, I mean, you give them some change their food, you are going to have problems. You give them the wrong kind of food, and you are going to have problems. I had dogs that have finicky stomachs, and you know you eat too much, and the next thing you know you hear, you look around, and there is a big pile of stuff. I used to get mad at it, you know, but I do not now because I use Bible principles in everything. I wait 10 minutes, come back, it is gone.

I am not going to tell you this. Two bums walking down a railroad track, had not eaten for days. One bum looked at it and says, "I am so hungry I cannot stand it." The other bum said, "Man, I am starving to death." One bum says, "I am going to eat the first thing I see." The other bum says, "Not me, brother, I am waiting out for a good old hot meal." He says, "Not me, I am starving." So they walked on down about a mile, and there was a dead possum laying alongside a railroad track. Been there for two or three days. I told you it was going to be gross. Did I not warn you? So he starts shouting down in that dead possum, eating that thing, you know, and the other says, he says, "I am not eating that." So they are walking on down around a little bit, but another 45 minutes, and the guy that ate the possum, until he starts getting sick. I mean, he starts getting on the side of the track, he starts throwing up spoiled possum all over the place. He says, "Man, I was so dumb, I never should have done that, I am so sick." The other guy stood back and said, "Well, I told you, but you know what else? I told you if I waited long enough, I would get a hot meal." You know what? You will be telling that story all day tomorrow. I do not even want to hear it. It will be on the web. It will be on your face page. Myspace. Myface. Or get out of the place or whatever it is.

You see, but it is your sin as a fool that makes you sick. I have seen guys, and most of you, I was never a drinker. I never had a beer in my life. I just did not go that way. I was never a drinker. But I know some of you were, and I know some of you have told me and heard your testimony. You talked to me that there were times when you were out there on the weekends that you were so drunk, and you came back and you just slept by the toilet. I mean, you were so sick, you were

so sick, you just threw up and you threw up and you threw up and you threw up. But you know what? The next Saturday night you are right back to it again. See how it works? That is the principle. It is plain. I mean, I would like for it to say regurgitate, but it does not.

Job 12:7But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

You want to learn about life, study the beast, they will teach you. You want to learn about that? Study dogs. Study dogs. The principle is simple. A fool never learns from his sin. He is a Gentile. He is a Gentile dog. As a dog returns to his vomit, we as Gentiles, unless there is a life-changing thing in our life, we just keep going back to our sin. We do not learn from it. We do not learn from the consequences. We do not learn from the lesson. We listen back to it.

Now in 2 Peter 2:22, here is an example where you get the Old Testament proverb, but it gets translated into a New Testament principle.

2 Peter 2:22But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Now there is pointed into a New Testament principle, male and female. See, the dog is an unsaved man, but the sow pig is an unsaved woman. You know, it is a thing where a man keeps going back to his vomit every weekend. The unsaved woman, the foolish woman, she is like a pig, it just wallows in the mire. She gets out of the mire, they clean her off, and she runs right back in it.

Now, the proverb that goes along with this is Proverbs 11:22.

Proverbs 11:22As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

At the bottom, what he is saying there is if it is an unsaved woman, and some of you guys who want to date cannot wait to get a wife and you are looking and not staying within the parameter of being a Christian, this is a good one for you. It is basically saying this, and I know it is gross, but this is the Bible, it is basically saying this: You can put a diamond necklace, you can put a gold earring, you can put, but it is still a pig at the end of the day. That is what he is saying. Pigs always go back to the mud. You can clean them off, take them to the state fair, put a ribbon on them, put a bow in her hair, call him or anything you want to do, and put her out there, and she will win first place. You are standing there with your pig, "You got my first place pig," and when you get back to the farm, first place she heads back to the mud. That is an unsaved woman. That is fools.

This is why I guess, I told you, fools come in both categories, saved and lost. This is why I guess saved people can come to church and go to the Bible study and then go right back to the drugs, right back to the booze, right back to the unsaved friends in the world in general. They are unteachable. They despise wisdom and instruction. They will not break with the old friends. They never learn from their mistakes, so they just keep on repeating them all their lives. Then they wonder why their children have problems. They wonder why my children have problem

with drugs, because you had problem with drugs all your life. They wonder why, "Well, my kid is getting into," well you did all these things. You fell a victim to that thing in Exodus that if you do not break that cycle, and there is a way that you break it, that God visited the iniquity to the third and fourth generation. I do not know what to tell you. I will tell you life is choices. That is what I am telling you.

➤ A Fool is Never Content

Proverbs 17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

That one says a fool's eyes are to the ends of the earth. It means a fool, saved or lost, is never content with what he has. Always wants more. Can never get enough. So it becomes the driving force of their life.

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

That is a great verse. Nothing will take the place of God in your life. I mean, guys get, and there is nothing wrong with some of this stuff. You get an expensive car, you get a boat, you get jet skis, you get bigger, better houses, you get more stuff and the things you think that will make you happy. There is nothing wrong with those things by themselves as long as they do not become the driving force in your life. But for a fool, they do.

Now I am going to tell you the second thing that you want to get out of here if you do not get anything else besides the bum joke. There are only three things in this life, folks, that are going to make you content. You can waste the rest of your life not listening to me because that is what fools do. You continue to go on the way you are going, but I am telling you right now, I do not care what your career is, I do not care what you want to do in life, I do not care who you are married to, I do not care what you are going to try to do in life. There are only three things that are going to bring the contentment that you are looking for:

15. Doing what God wants you to do.

16. Being what God wants you to be.

17. Having what God wants you to have.

You put those three things in your life, nothing will faze you. You will get through everything, you will be everything that God wants you to be. Notice he says the eyes of a fool. When Eve sinned in Genesis 3, the devil's attack not only on what God said, but he appealed to her on what she did not have. This is what happens to us every day of our lives. Every time you turn on the TV and a commercial comes on, they appeal to what you do not have. Every time you read a magazine in the ad, they appeal to what you do not have. Every time you listen to the radio, they appeal to what you do not have. Every time you go to the store at a mall and walk around, you say to yourself, "Where are you going?" "I am going to the mall to see what I do not have." The eyes.

Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Now, New Testament in 1 John 2:15-17 retranslates that over into a principle.

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Fool and a wise man. See that thing? The lust of the flesh leads to the lust of the eyes, and that leads to the pride of life. A fool's eyes will always be to the ends of the earth. He will never have enough no matter what. I have people all the time saying, "Boy, I wish I would give any world to win the lottery." You know what? You won the lottery, got 20 million dollars, it would not be enough for you. I remember the guy that won the first lottery in Canton, Ohio years ago, it was back in the 70s, he won a million dollars. Three years later, he was broke. You know why? Because there was no control. In most of our cases, the problems we have is not about the fact that we need more money. It is the fact that we do not do what is right with money we have. But we cannot get to that.

➤ A Fool Resents Reproof

Proverbs 17:10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

A fool resents reproof or correction. You see, a wise man understands that with responsibility comes accountability. A wise man knows and understands and accepts that there are times that we all need reproof in our lives. It starts with the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

You see, the first thing the Bible was given to you and me, after it was to be truth, was to straighten us out on some things. I love you all, and you are all to me, for the most part, you are all great people, and I could not do this without you. But you know as well as I do, we all need straightening out from time to time. We all need attitude adjustments. We all get our nose bent out of joint about little things sometimes that we do not need to. We all do that. We all do that. So that is just, you know, it says for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, then instruction in righteousness.

I will say this, and it is 100% on the money for us. I am going to say the folks in this church who really get the job done are the ones that you can correct, and they do not ever get their nose bent out of joint or get mad or leave the church or carry a grudge or get a bad spirit or get bitter. Those kind of people are fools. When I grew up, my father, Lord Mel Shabbat, he did everything in my life for me, and I recognized who God had put in my life and what he did. In my mind, I never told him this, but in my mind, I always took the position that because God put that man in my life and because I knew he was the Apostle Paul in my life, and at that point in my life, he was

the man that probably was closer to God than any of the men I ever met in my life. I submitted myself in my mindset, never told him this, but my attitude was, "You know what, that man can say anything he wants to say to me, however he wants to say it, I am never going to take it wrong. I am never going to take it bad because at the end of the day, that man loves me and he has got my best interest at heart." He said some things.

I asked a preacher one time someplace with 800 people there, and I got up there, and I was going to town. One of my first times I ever preached, and I am up there, you know, and I am really wailing on it, and I am getting a little bit too big for my britches. I know. I mean, I look back now, and I know back then I thought, "Look at me," and I quoted the verse out of Genesis, and I quoted it wrong. I am up there, 800 people, man, and I am just going there. I am the preacher up here, and right out of that thing, man, I said, "The Bible says that you work by the sweat of your brow," and boy, I do not know. I got that word out. I thought I am an expert, and I heard this big booming voice saying, "Book, chapter, verse." It was Mel, and 800 people one time looked at him, then looked at me, and I said, "Well, in Genesis 3," and I put it back there, and it says, "sweat of your brow," or "sweat of your face." I said, "brow," and I read it, and I read it, quoted it wrong. He looked up at me and said, "Son, if you are going to preach the Word of God, you preach it correctly."

Now, what would you do if you were down at Mission and I did that to you? Well, some of you would fall apart like a broken accordion, man. You would never come back to church. You would be on Facebook, Myspace, whatever your place is, and you would be just saying, "Well, Bob is so mean, so that he, so that that church is this or that church is that, he said that, that, you know what, you are a fool." You are a fool. You are a fool. Put them on your list. "I will get me a piece of paper. I am making me a list right now." You see the reproof is for your betterment, not for your demise, but you are a fool. There are some people you cannot correct in anything. They are never wrong. There are some people that when you do correct them, they do not say anything, you know, but countenance right away. I just caused the problem. I mean, a fool resents reproof and correction.

You know, you get the same issue with God.

Hebrews 12:5-11 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

God rebukes us. He chastens us. He does it, and He tells us, "Do not faint. Do not despise." He says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." He says, "If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons," and what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? What a great verse, verse 11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous. It does not, but grievous. It certainly does. Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." You see, it is for your good. It is not for your hurt.

I have had people all the time. I do not say this. I do not say it at all. But I think a lot of things I do not say. I have people come to me and they say, "Bob, I do not know what I am going to do with my kids. I cannot, my kid just will not listen to me." I say, "Well, you know what, a child book back there I guess or whatever." I do not know. Inside I am thinking, "Why would your kids listen to you? You have not listened to anything I have said in the last five years." That third and fourth generation thing. You cannot listen to the pastor or the priest, not listen to the preaching and apply it or the Bible and his principle and do something with it, and then scratch your head and say, "I wonder why my kids are not listening to me." It is a chain of command of authority. It starts with you and then transfers down to them. When they hear what the preacher preaches and you do not do it, then they hear what you say, and then they do not do it. How hard is that? Your bad attitude about reproof will get passed right on to them to the third and fourth generation.

➤ A Fool Trusts in His Own Heart

Proverbs 28:26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

The last one is the fact that a fool will trust in his own heart. You see this all the time. I will give you a great verse, and I should probably all of you have this one because most of you would have this verse down, but to me it is my favorite verse, Proverbs 3:5-6.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

You see a wise man who is wise will clearly walk in the clear principles of the wisdom of the Word of God. You see Christians, you see churches today that fall into the area of trusting in their own heart. They do not have the Bible. They do not believe the Bible, or they have the Bible. They want to come up with their own concept. That is what is going on today. Christianity and churches and pastors today are simply trying to reinvent the wheel, and there is no reinventing the process that God gave you in building a church. There just is not, and everybody wants to have something new. Everybody wants to be the one to coin this, and at the end of the day, brother, the only thing that works is the thing that has been working for the last 2000 years.

But you see it. You see Christians who trust in themselves. You see people in the world who trust in themselves. They do not have a Bible, or if they do have a Bible, they do not have a teacher or a preacher that teaches the Word of God. So they get caught up in a trap of following themselves or they follow somebody else. They get their advice out of this or that. They go around and ask 30 people what they should do about one situation, and then they pull it, and the one that sounds

the best to them, that is what they do. They get self-deluded and they get the wrong goals in life. They get deceived and self-deceived. They self-hypnotize themselves that the problem is not as bad as it really is. They mesmerize themselves and then they justify themselves. They trust in their feelings. They trust in their intuitions. They trust in their impulses. They trust in their motive. They trust in their homespun remedies. They trust in their goals. They trust in their ideas. They trust even in their superstitions instead of simply trusting God and His principles. They will trust their own heart. They will trust their own thoughts. They will put stock in their own abilities or their own talents, and many times they trust in their own cleverness to get them through. But when a man trusts his own heart instead of God's Word, he is a fool.

Now he is a fool for three things. These are the last three things I am going to give you today, but he is a fool for three things. There are three reasons why you never trust your heart:

18. Jeremiah 17:9 says, Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
19. Genesis 8:21. You do not trust your heart because the Bible says, Genesis 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done; The imagination of man's heart can be only evil continually.
20. Mark 7:21 gives you 13 abominations that come out of your heart. Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

This is why we as Christians need to get God's heart. The Word of God. This is why we need a new heart. When we talk about getting a new heart the day we got saved, we are not talking about God replacing this three-pound pump you got in here. We are talking about getting a new heart. We are talking about God giving you a book now that has principles in it that will show you God's thinking process about everything on this planet. When you make that book your heart, you have got a new heart. You can get saved all day long and not get in that book and do it, and you will never get a new heart. You will just operate as a Christian with the old one, and we know where that leads. That is why I push and push and push and keep it before you about getting that book. Getting those principles. Getting those things down. That is why a man needs to get a new heart. God's heart, and that heart is based on God's Word and God's principles, and that is the one he follows, and that is the one that makes us wise.

VI. Making Right Choices

This is our first of many comparisons in the book of Proverbs. I told you you have already seen in the wise man principles I have given you, the foolish principle, how they compare back and forth. We are going to have a great time with the comparisons here. Now we know what a wise man is, and we know what a fool is. The key to everything in life is based on those two things. Make your list. Think about it. Make your list. Do not show it to anybody. It is your own personal list. But I am going to tell you everything in your life of what you are going to do, where you are going to go, and what you are going to try to accomplish. If it is going to turn out good for God, it is going to come down to those things right there. You are going to either put a

wise man in your life or wise people in your life and follow your own personal life. People in your life and follow that, or are you going to put fools and negative people in your life, and you are going to follow them? Iron sharpeneth iron, but lead maketh dead, and you are going to follow one or the other. It is just that simple. Your life will simply be who you hang out with and who you take counsel from.

One last time, Proverbs 13:20. Proverbs 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Your question is today, where are you at with that? The other question you want to ask, where do you want to get with that? I tell people all the time, and I have people come over, and I spent a lot of time with them, and many of them when they come into church, a lot of people come into church, and they do not really have any issues. They just want to learn the Bible. They want to get to someplace where they are not beat up all the time, and they can get all you want in the Bible and have the freedom to be who you are and what you want to do and all that, and some people just enjoy that. Some people just want to get disciplined and get in and get involved or are looking for someplace to serve God or raise their family where their kids got everything that they want. I understand that, but you know as well as I do that in every church, there are people coming in who have serious issues, and they have problems, and I spent a lot of time with people like that, and I try to do the best I can to help them, but I also understand as I have said before, they have to decide what they want to do.

But I always tell them this. I know I will sit down in any given counseling scenario, and somebody will lay out the laundry list of all the problems that they have been dealing with and where they have come from and all the things, and sometimes I say it is quite lengthy, and it is obvious to see why their life is where they are at. I do not really think that they are looking for me to in one hour of a counseling session fix all of their problems because it is impossible. You cannot, and I will never lead them or allude them to think that we can. But I do tell them this. I tell them, "You know what, I cannot fix all of this today. But I am going to tell you what I can do that will fix this in time. You cannot go back and undo everything that you did. You cannot fix the problems right now that you are having in your marriage or with your kids. There is too much water under the bridge. Maybe in time you can, but right now you cannot, so let us not focus on the things that we cannot fix, but let us do focus on the one thing that we can do today. If we do this today, I guarantee you in time, we will fix everything else. I cannot go back and fix your marriage right now. I cannot get your wife to believe or your husband to believe that you really want to do right. I cannot talk your kids into coming back to church. I cannot do this. I cannot do that. But let me tell you what you can do right now today without anything else. If you start this and you let us help you with this, this is where we will go. The thing you can do right now immediately. I cannot go back and fix everything else. But right now, the one thing you can do immediately is to make it in your heart, in your mind, you are going to stop making bad choices. Start with that. Go out of here saying, 'I am not going to make any more bad choices,' because honestly, every problem you have got right now that we talked about goes back to that issue. You made a bad choice. You hung out with the wrong people. You got the wrong counsel. You got the wrong advice, or you just simply wanted to do it your way, and that is what puts you

in the mess you are in. We can go back in time and fix all that, but not tonight. But what we can do, and it really is the pathway to getting all of your life put in order, is to simply stop making bad choices in life." Then I try to help them do that.

That is what this church is about. That is what our discipleship is about. That is what the people in the people ministries are about. That is what you are doing with people down there at Turnaround or Restart or the people at Children's Mercy last night. That is what God does. We do not go out and design. We just put ourselves in a place for God to use us. We do not walk out and say, "Hey, we are all Baptist Baptist Church, you come here." We know that we have to go where they are at. We have to give them a cold drink of water or a hot dog to eat. We have to go down there and bring food because they are worried about their children in the hospital. We put ourselves in a place of being used of God at a time when people need, and then let the Holy Spirit of God reach down through that and do something in their life, and then at that point when they come in and they spill their guts and you see all the mistakes that they made, you do not jump in with both feet. We will simply say, "Hey, look, here is what we will do. Let us just start making the right choices from this point on, that will clear up 75% of it, and the rest of it, we will just deal with it as we have to, but the road out, the pathway out of your problems is to simply start by coming to the problem, coming to the place where you start making bad choices right now. Let me help you. Let our people help you, but you need to take the first step. I cannot do it for you. I have to do my own life. I have to do my own decision-making process, and so do you. I cannot make your decisions in life anymore than you can live on my spirituality on Sunday morning the rest of your life. There has to come a point where you have to open that book and get in and become the man or the woman God wants you to be. I can just help you and lead you and guide you.

So the Book of Proverbs now is set, wise man, foolish man. Every place we go in this, we are going to use that, and you got your list now. I hope you should keep them to yourself. Do not show anybody, but put yourself with wise men. Take that Proverbs 13:20, walk with the wise, and leave the companions of the fools out of your life. Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus.