

Proverbs 1:7-9

November 19, 2023

I like the old paths when moms were at home and dads were at work. Brothers went into the army and sisters got married before having children. Crime did not pay, but hard work did, and people knew the difference. Moms could cook, dads would work, children would behave. Husbands were loving, wives were supportive, and children were polite. Women wore the jewelry and the men wore the pants. Women looked like ladies, men looked like gentlemen, and children looked like children. People loved the truth and they hated a lie. They came to church to get in, not to get out. Hymns sounded godly, sermons sounded helpful, rejoicing sounded normal, and crying sounded sincere. Cursing was wicked, drugs were for illness. The flag was honored, America was beautiful, and God was welcome. We read the Bible in public, prayed in schools, and we preached to our families from house to house. To be called an American was worth dying for, to be called an American was also worth living for, to be called a traitor was a shame. I still like the old paths the best.

I think that is probably one of the best things I have ever heard. It really is where we need to get back to, not only as a country, obviously, but certainly as Christians.

I. Introduction to Proverbs

If you have your Bibles this morning, let us head back down that old path today. Let us turn back to Proverbs 1. Now, up to this point in our study in Proverbs, we have come up through chapter 1 and up through the first six verses. Really, Proverbs 1:1-6 is an introduction to this book. It gives you the things that you need to see and understand to really get the book down.

We have seen so far, just by way of remembrance, that the theme of the book is a wise man versus a foolish man. We have also seen, we defined from the Bible, what a wise man is. We have also defined from the Bible what a fool is. We also took last week Proverbs 1:1-6 and we really defined wisdom itself, the idea of being ten times better when it comes to the issues of life and the world system.

I took you back and showed you how that Daniel, when they were taken into Babylon, how that Nebuchadnezzar wanted to give them all of the things, all of the filth, all of the food, all of the meat that was represented by Babylon. But Daniel and the boys did not want to do that, and they made a deal with the king. They said, "You let us eat what we eat by being Hebrews. You let your people eat what you want them to have, and at the end of a period of time, you set us side by side and let us see who is better."

Well, I told you last week, at the end of that period of time, the Bible says that Daniel and the boys were ten times better than all that Babylon had to offer. I showed you right then that I was going to take you through Proverbs 1:1-6 and show you the ten qualities that make up the concept of wisdom. I told you that when you get these in your life, you become ten times better than the world system. You are smarter than the problem. You are wiser than your enemies. As we move through the book of Proverbs, you are going to see we are going to fall back on this all the time. All of the intro material that we talked about, we are going to be bringing up and

making associations and showing you how it dials back in. We will make mention time and time again of what we have learned from our introduction. It is very important.

You will also remember that the book of Proverbs, and I gave you this several weeks back, breaks down into three sections. I told you Proverbs 1:1-7, and then Proverbs 8-30, and then Proverbs 31 stands by itself. I told you that the first section is addressed in a personal sense to us as sons, and that is crucial to understand that. Historically, I told you that it is Solomon's son, which is Rehoboam, and Solomon wanted him to be wise like he was, but unfortunately, it did not work out that way, and Rehoboam became one of the biggest fools in the Bible. So, I told you historically, it is talking about Solomon's son. Doctrinally, prophetically, it is talking about Israel as God's son, but I also told you that in a practical way, in an inspirational application, when he writes these seven chapters to his son, it is God speaking to you and me as His child, you and me as His son.

In these first seven chapters, God takes, and I have always appreciated Him because it is almost like God is taking a personal interest in me, and He is taking a personal interest in His children. That personal instruction, much like you as parents ought to be giving your children, and I am sure many of you are, the personal instruction of sitting around the table, the personal instructions of sitting on the bed with them before they go to bed at night, the personal instruction of sitting them on your knee and explaining to them, taking the biblical principles, the instruction of life, and explaining to them the things that they should be aware of and the things that they should stay away from.

I do not know if you know this or not, I do not know if you have counted them up yet. In the first seven chapters, fifteen times, he uses the phrase "my son" in a personal way to give some kind of instruction. I think the word "instruction" in the book of Proverbs is the key word because it is what we all need. It is what Solomon was giving his son, it is what God is giving me as His son, and it is what you as a parent ought to be giving your children as your sons and daughters.

II. The Importance of Paragraph Marks

As I break this book down and I teach it to you, I am going to follow the natural order of how the Bible lays out, and that is we are going to take it as best we can. Sometimes it may not always be able to do it because of how we are going to do it, but in the Bible, you have what is called paragraph marks. Most people have no clue what the paragraph marks are in the Bible. By the way, the only Bible in the world that has the paragraph marks in them is the King James 1611 Authorized Version. There is a reason why the paragraph marks are in your Bible. You will find that they are invaluable in breaking down the Old Testament. You do not find any paragraph marks in your Bible after Acts 20. There is a reason for that, we will not get into it this morning, but all through the Old Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and up through the book of Acts to Acts 20, you will find paragraph marks.

Paragraph marks will divide your Bible up. Paragraph marks will show you when one subject he talks about, and then within those two paragraph marks, one at the beginning and one at the end, it will show you in the next section another thought, another concept, and it keeps you from

running your Bible all together and getting confused when he changes subjects on you. They are invaluable in the Bible. I must also tell you that for those of you who live on a deeper plane in the Bible, those paragraph marks that were put in there by God, they obviously many times, and I showed you this, I showed you many times Thursday night, but they will actually show you different dispensations in the Bible. They are just absolutely crucial and they are essential for us getting the context and separating all the material. So, as we come through the book of Proverbs, we do not want to run all of our concepts together. So, as best we can, we are going to stay within the paragraph marks and take that thought, develop it, and try to work within that. Sometimes, maybe a few times, we cannot do that because of the extents of the material, but we are going to do that to the best of our ability and follow that program.

III. The Fear of the Lord and Bad Company

Let us begin here, and I want to read for you Proverbs 1:7-9. Yes, there is a paragraph mark in verse 7, and we are going to read up to verse 9. If we would have verse 10 in your Bible, you will see there is a paragraph mark in verse 10. So, we are taking this section.

Proverbs 1:7-9

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

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Now, Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and we do love You so much, and I thank You for the people in this church and the ones that have come today. Lord, they are good people. They would not be here if they were not. I know that some of them have issues they are still trying to solve and work through in their life, we all do, but Lord, on a basic concept, most of them want to do what is right, if not all of them. They may not do it, they may not make it, but I believe that they are here today because they want to. Father, we need Your help today. I do not have anything to give them, nothing that I could ever get out of the Bible on my own would be of value to anybody. But Lord, only as Your Holy Spirit of God takes the people sitting here that You have given to me, take my heart and me that You have given to them, and then take the Holy Spirit of God if You have given to both of us, and then knit it all together and bring out of this great book the things that You want us to see today. Lord, we thank You now and we will praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

Now, Proverbs 1:7, and here again I want you to see this, the first warning in the book after the intro is again about bad company. The book of Proverbs keeps driving the issue home: you are who you hang out with. It keeps putting that issue, and I am glad you kids are here today being kids, Shandi, because I want you to understand some things today, and the book of Proverbs where we are at is going to be of great value to you. I am glad your parents are here with you, sitting by your side, because if you listen today, when you leave here, there should be no misunderstanding of how this thing is supposed to work for you.

The first warning in the book is about bad company. I always looked at it as the New Testament version of what is found in 1 Corinthians 15:33, where Paul tells us that we are not to be deceived, that evil communication corrupts good manners. Now, when we think of the word "manners," we think of sitting at the table, not belching. We are sitting at the table and not eating like a pig. Sitting at the table, you know, all these things I am guilty of. We think about sitting down and using some etiquette when you eat, and we call that manners. When I was in grade school, where some of you were at, we had a woman on TV that tried to help the kids, and also you found it in the early *Leave It to Beaver* scenes where he went to school. What was his teacher's name? Miss Manners, you see. Now, that was suggestive of the fact that a school teacher was going to teach the kid manners. So, we think of the word "manners" like being good and being respectful and all that, and I am not saying that is not what it is, but that is not what it is talking about here. What it is talking about here, that evil communication corrupts good manners, it means that evil communication and the people you hang out with corrupt the manner of person that you are. It changes you from who God wants you to be to who the world wants you to be, and that is the first thing he says in Proverbs 1:7.

Proverbs 1:7 says plainly that fools despise wisdom and instruction because there is no fear of God in their life, which really the fear of God, the beginning of knowledge, starts the learning process of our relationship with God. I am sure a lot of what I am saying today, many of you are already well aware of, but as a Christian, there should be some things a Christian should be afraid to do. Now, I live in a, we live in a world today where it is seemingly like sin has lost everything that the Bible ever says it was, and that God's people today live their lives like there is no such thing as sin anymore, but I am telling you, when you get on the old path, you are going to find that as a Christian, there should be things as a Christian should be afraid to do based on what God says about it and then how God deals with it.

I will give you a great example. In Proverbs 6, and we will get to Proverbs 6 as we move on through this, and we will spend a lot of time here, but in Proverbs 6:1-6, it tells you the six things that God hates, and then it also tells you that there is a seventh that makes like the capstone of it, tops the thing off, and the seventh thing that God hates is, He calls it an abomination. Now, when you look at that and you would think of that when you would say, "Go on, God is holy, six things that God hates, and the seventh one must be really bad." Boy, I will tell you, what could that seventh one be? Oh, it must be murder, it must be rape, it must be suicide, it must be child molesters, it must be incest, it must be, you know what it is? Slandering your brother. The thing that sets the capstone of what God hates is slander, it is gossip. The Bible calls it showing discord among the brethren, and yet, and we will see it when we get there, if you list all of those six things down and put the seventh on them, those six things, the seventh making an abomination, are what God's people do all the time. They are the seven favorite sins that God's people get into. They have nothing to do with murder, nothing to do with rape, nothing to do with incest, nothing to do with child molestation. They are just basic common sins that God's people get into all the time. Now, why do they do that? I will tell you why, because there is no fear of God in people's hearts today about what the Word of God says. We just take the Bible, we use it where it is convenient for us, we will believe the Bible and apply the Bible where it helps us, but when it is

something that is against us, then we rationalize our situation and put it over here. That is the way we do it. That happens all the time today.

IV. The Family Structure: Father, Mother, and Son

Now, look at Proverbs 1:8, "My son." I want to tell you this, you cannot study Proverbs and not see and get into the family structure because it is about a father, it is about a son, and it is about a mother, all through this book. There is some incredible material for you young couples with kids. Our church is unique in many aspects, but one of the greatest aspects of it is you go to most churches today and 90% of the people are over 70 years of age, and you have very few young couples. Those churches are going to just die by regression, they are just going to bury them one at a time, nobody new comes in, it only gets older, it gets more stale, it gets more stagnant, and nothing ever happens. Our church is just the opposite. Our church is 90% young couples and then 10% of the older people, but even the older people we have are not stagnant people. So, it is a good thing. Now, there is a reason for that, we do not have time to get in that this morning, but someday if you ever go out and start a church and want to get into ministry, I will explain to you why that is.

You cannot come through the book of Proverbs and not see the family structure. It talks about a mother, it talks about a father, and it talks about a son. Ignoring that and glossing over that and not seeing the practical application of that, you are going to miss some incredible truths, and it starts in this verse right here. Now, he says, "My son," Proverbs 1:8, "hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Now, let us look at this for a moment and this put it into a, this is a great principle, this put it into a practical everyday life situation. Now, this thing here in Proverbs 1:8 should be the model of every family that is going to be a solid family.

I told you earlier, and I am going to say it again, and I am going to make references to it all the way through our sermon today and probably as we come through the book of Proverbs. We live in a day of Christianity where the families are fractured. We live in a day and age where Christianity, where the families are gone. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago on Thursday night Bible study, the fracture of the family. Now, you would expect the world families to fall apart. You would expect that because we know the world is a mess. But God's people are supposed to be Daniel 1, ten times smarter than the world. And yet you see it every day. I deal with it all the time. Many of you work with me in dealing with people. You see it all the time. There has never been a time on a global scale in Christianity where the family has been more broken and fractured and more messed up by the very ones who hold the Word of God, who should be smarter than the world. I am telling you, you are going to begin to see the model here today if you want to have a solid family. We have a lot of young couples here today that I am glad are hearing, getting a chance to hear this because you all have young kids, you all have babies, and some of you on a continual basis are going to keep on having babies. It just goes with the water fountain out there. I saw a couple of guys drinking from it the other day, so we may be your first there too. I do not know. But anyway, you have got to get this. You have got to get a handle on this. You have got to understand these principles here that are being taught here as an instruction from a father and a mother to a son.

V. The Roles of Father and Mother

Let us look at this for a minute, the practical situation. Now, he says this. He says the father, he says the instructions of a father. Let us put it in a practical application. The father, we know, is to be the spiritual leader of the home. We know that. He leads by example. He takes the things that God teaches him, his spiritual growth, and he puts that into his family. We know that. The father is the head of the house. We understand that. He sets the rules of his house. He has to have some rules that he instructs his family. He sets down the instruction that his house will run by. That is very important. The instructions of the father here will be a picture of us as fathers taking our family and laying down the rules, giving the family instruction, saying to them, "This is how it is going to be." Saying to them, "This is the way our house is going to run and operate." Joshua said it better than any other thing I could ever say when he said back there in Joshua,

Joshua 24:15

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

See, that was instruction. He was shutting down. "I do not care what anybody else does, but in this house, we are going to follow what the Word of God says." That is vital to see and understand that.

Then he says this. Now the mother. He says, "forsake not the law thy mother." Now, you know as well as I do, and this is true, in many cases, especially in the early years, the mother spends more time or has more influence with the kids than dad does. It is not always true, but it is true in a general sense if your life is just a normal life the way it goes. The mother, now her job, remember the instructions of the father, he sets down the rules, but then it says, "forsake not the law thy mother." The mother holds the line of the father's instructions. The mother takes the instructions of the father and enforces the law, enforces the rules that the father puts down in the family.

Now, and let me say this. You young couples that are raising your kids and your kids are coming to the place where they are coming up and you are going to have a family at some point, I am going to tell you right now. The fallacy of having rules in your family but you not enforcing those rules in your family, you do not have any rules in your family. It is an illusion. No, no, rules without enforcement, instruction without enforcement, setting down the law without enforcing it is the biggest mistake you will ever make. It takes both parents to do it. He says the instructions of thy father and he says the law of thy mother. It takes the father laying down the law of the rules, and then while he is away or at work or mom is with the kid, she enforces the instructions of the father, and side by side they do it.

Now, in a practical everyday way, that shows you what we talked about last week when we talked about having a balance in your life. Many families are out of balance. Many families are out of balance. You have got to have a balance in everything in your life. That is what the right balance is for your family. It is the father recognizing that he is the leader. He sets down the

instruction. He lays down the rules. Mom does not go behind him and undo the rules. Mom realizes that that is the law and she enforces the instructions, and that is a balanced family when you get to that point in your life.

I am going to say it again. The dad, the father, sets the course for the family by example. He lays down the instructions based on the Word of God by which his family will operate. The mother, as his help meet, will take those instructions, those rules, and make them the law of the house, enforcing them with the children. It is a lot like this example. State laws are put into effect by state legislators. They get together in Jeff City or wherever and they say, "Okay, these are going to be the laws of Missouri." But the legislature does not enforce those laws. The legislature is a lot like the father. He lays down the rules. The enforcement of it is the police officers. The police officers take the instruction from the legislators and they reinforce that by holding you accountable when you go 75 in a 55 mile an hour zone. You see, it is that kind of concept. Maybe that is why your mother understood it without ever understanding it when she used to catch you and say, "You are busted." Maybe it goes along with that. I do not know. But it is a thing where this sets the biblical model for a good balance. What it does, it shuts down the kids, what they are famous for, playing one end against the other. That is what they do all the time. When that balance is in your life, when you follow what Proverbs is saying in a book filled with moms, dad, a father, a mother, and son, when that thing is laid out that way and dad leads the family by the instructions of the father and mom enforces the law that they are going by, it leaves the children with no option. It does not give them any wiggle room. It does not give them any latitude. It does not allow them to circumvent whatever issue you are dealing with because mom and dad are there on the same page. Dad is the spiritual head laying down the instructions. Mom is enforcing the instructions, taking that law and holding them accountable with it.

VI. The Consequences of Imbalance

Now, this is where you get to use your imagination for a little bit, which is always helpful. We have all seen incredible bad examples of out of balance families. I mean, I see them all the time. In the ministry, it is probably the number one thing I deal with. I have got to be honest with you, I have my major goal in ministry. My major goal in ministry is to have as many of you young couples lose your kids, not lose your kids as possible. I put a parenthetical there because some of you, I want you to lose those kids, but no, I am just kidding. That is my main goal. My main goal with everything I do is to not have you in this church lose your kids. There is absolutely no reason for it. Absolutely none. Absolutely none. You see it all the time. I see it all the time. Unafraidly, the breakdown of the family today is the number one plague in Christianity. It is the number one problem we face. More and more we see Christian families, not the world, Christian families disintegrating.

In 40 years of ministry, you know, many families have come through my life where the balance is bad. I mean, I was thinking as I was putting this together Monday and Tuesday, you know, man, I mean, a flood of memories came back with people that had issues and have problems that basically had them because they were out of balance. In most cases, and I was thinking of it, you talk about an out of balance family. In most cases, you are going to find it is where the wife runs

the family. She runs the show. I mean, and the father is a wuss. I am not sure what "wuss" means, but I hear somebody use it on TV and it sounds like an excellent word to put into my sermon. I have seen it where the father was weak and then his wife got completely out of control and then she runs the family. I understand how it is. I have seen many, many. I talked to a guy one time, and he is a pastor. I talked to a guy one time whose kids were just absolutely in the world. I asked him one time, "Why do not you do something?" He said, "Well, you know, Bob," he says, "every time I try to step in, my wife steps in and undoes what I do." I understand it. When you get a wife like that that is completely out of control and you are such a spineless, gutless guy, you cannot deal with it and you will not lay down the instructions because you are afraid she is going to look at you wrong.

I will give you this story. I had a guy one time said, "My wife was giving me problems, problems, problems, problems. And I told her that if she did not get off my back, she was not going to see me for three days," and she did not get off my back. And he had first day, she did not see me. Second day, she did not see me. The third day, she could just see me a little bit out of that one eye. I am not suggesting that at all. Some of you dear people who are so sanctimonious now, you know, you will be telling that story tomorrow all day at work and taking credit for it. But I asked this guy, I said, "You are a pastor. Your kids live like hell. There is no difference between them and the world. Your church is a mess." He said, "You know what, Bob," he says, "I know." He says, "But every time I try to step in and do something," he says, "my wife just gives me problems." I know how it works. After years of that and years of that, you wear out. When you cannot get control of it and somebody else has control of it, it is just a constant battle. After a while, you know what you do? Human nature does it. After a while, you just give up on it. After a while, you let it be the status quo. After a while, you just kind of divorce yourself from all of that. You go fishing or you go hunting or you go do this or you go do that. And you just check out from it. I understand. But then what happens, the pattern always is the same. The out of balance relationship between the mom and the dad, instructions of the father, law of the mother, will go right into the rest of the family.

I have seen it in churches that I preached at. I preached at a church one time out in western Kansas. I was going to ask you, Chris, I cannot remember the place it was. It was not Iola's down south. Where was the Wayfar Place out there? It was not Coldwater either. I forget where it was. This has been years ago. They asked me to come out and preach. I said I would be glad to. So I went out there, you know, way out in western Kansas on place. I got there and I had to, you know, back in those little towns, they do not have motels, so you have to stay with the preacher, which is cool. I like it. So I am there. You know, we had dinner that night and the pastor, you know, he got a phone call and he is on the phone. His wife pulled me aside. For the next 30 minutes, she told me who was bad in the church. She told me who did not treat her family right. She told me, "You need to say this in your sermon because some people need it." She gave me the rundown on everybody in that church. I mean, she pulled me aside and she told me, I mean, she told me this person is bad and this person is no good. "You need to preach on this and you need to, you need to say this." I mean, she, boy, she, you talk about getting your instructions. Now, I found out after I left, because I did not do any of those things, of course. Then I found out after I left, I had somebody wrote me, you know, we did not have email back then. Somebody

called me, wrote me and said that she undid everything I did, you know, and then slandered me and everything else. But it was clear to me 15 minutes into this conversation that this was a wicked woman. I mean, that this whole church was out of balance because the pastor's, the whole thing was screwed up.

Now, you know, I always tell you everything rises and falls on leadership. I mean, the kids were a mess. I mean, they always are. This was one of the biggest messes I ever did, ever did in my life. You talk about Kansas, the wicked witch of the West, this was her. Somebody, about four years after I had been there, and this has probably been 20 some years ago, somebody called me or wrote me and said that she had passed away. I do not know what, I did not go to the funeral, do not know anything about that. But if one of the songs at the funeral was not "Ding-dong the witch is dead," they missed a great opportunity, I am telling you. I mean, this woman was something else. The pastor was not the pastor. Oh, he was allowed to get up on a Sunday morning and Sunday night and Wednesday night, but brother, the wicked witch of the West was in charge and she called the shots. I am telling you, man, I have been in those situations. I was so glad to get out of there. He asked me to come back. In fact, the next year he says, he called me up the next year and he says, and I loved it. He said nothing new, because he said, and he did not say, "We would love to have you back." He did not say, "We really want you to come back." He said, "I guess you would not consider coming back next year, would you?" I said, "You know what? I am really busy. I have a lot of things going on," and I just said it, but I will tell you what. Now, see, this is what the Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:5.

1 Timothy 3:5

For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?

The answer is you will not, she will. Boy, I will tell you what, it was a mess. Now, father, dads, this verse shows you what you were supposed to be: our leadership role in our family. You set down the rules, the instructions, and the wife, the law of the mother, enforces and reinforces what you set down. The young couples need to get it. I mean, you do.

VII. Doctrinal Application of Father and Mother

Now, at the same time, I want you to see this. Now, also in this verse, there is a great doctrinal application. He says the instructions of the father, that will be a reference doctrinally to the New Testament in your Bible, Matthew to Revelation. He says the instructions given to us by the father, that is the Holy Spirit of God in the Word of God who begot us in Christ by incorruptible seed and the sealing us in Ephesians 4 and sealing the Word of God in us, and then we get into the New Testament and get the instructions of a father. The law of our mother will be the Old Testament, law of Moses, Genesis, and Malachi. You see, in a practical sense, we all come from the nation of Israel anyhow. John 4:22 says salvation is of the Jews. You go to Romans 11, you only find out that you and I got New Testament Christianity based on what God gave the Jews. When they abdicated what they had, God gave it to us, but it came from them. Your salvation is you got in Christ Jesus. He was a Jew.

Now, here is the application. We will see the same thing here that I showed you in a practical way about a father and a mother. Now, where the father lays down the instructions in a family and the mother supports and enforces that, what the father says, for the New Testament, the church age, it is the same concept only in a doctrinal sense. So, the Old Testament, the law of the mother, will support the principles found in the New Testament that the father wrote to his children, us, you, and me. The law will always support the Old Testament, the law of the mother, will support what the father's instructions are to you and me. That is why you have to have an understanding of both.

Now, watch this. The New Testament is, and I have told you this many, many times, the New Testament is revealed through the Old Testament because the Old Testament is a support system by its stories and types and principles for the New Testament writings. Now, you look at the Old Testament. I am telling you right now the New Testament is contained in the Old Testament. You have got 39 books in the Old Testament, 39 books in the Old Testament. We call it the Old Testament. Old has three letters. Testament has nine letters, 39. Now, if the New Testament is contained in that, then you ought to be able to see that somehow, and you can. 39 books in the Old Testament. The New Testament contained in the Old Testament? Okay. You take the three and the nine and you multiply three times nine, the Old Testament, you know what you get? 27. There are your New Testament books in the Bible. The New Testament is contained in the Old Testament. When instructions of the father was given to you and me in the New Testament, it is the Old Testament that supports the New Testament given to us as instruction by the father. That is how it works all the way down the line.

Now, along with that, it shows you again how important the Old Testament and New Testament are. You see, I mean, this is why in the Old Testament, it is all about stories. I have taught you many, many times how the Old Testament is broken down by stories. That story started in Genesis and they ran all the way up through the book of Acts, really. But you ever notice that after the book of Acts, there are no stories in the Bible? Oh, you have Paul's missionary journeys and all that stuff. But there are no stories like there is in the Old Testament. There are no stories like there is in Matthew. There are no parables, no nothing given, no great long lengthy stories about this guy or that guy. It is just all principles. The reason for that is, is that when the instructions of the father, the New Testament, were given to you and me, it is the law of our mother, the pictures, the stories that we see, the illustration of the New Testament principles. The two go together just like a husband and wife should go together. The New Testament is the instructions of my father to me in the church age. The instructions of my father or the New Testament principles written to me. When I want to understand those, when I want to use those, or I want to give them to you or enforce those, you know what I do? I go to the Old Testament, my mother, the law, and I find a story in the Old Testament that supports the New Testament principle. That is how it works. It is incredible. If you are going to have the right balance in your life with the Word of God, then you need to have a good working understanding of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. I mean, you do.

Some of you, you know, you have these little Bible reading schedules, and that is great, but they will follow the same pattern. I have seen many of you, that you know, you will read 10 chapters a

week or 10 chapters a day, and five will be in the Old Testament, and then five will be in the New Testament. You will read the first five chapters of Genesis, and then you will read the first five chapters of Matthew. See, it is following the same idea, trying to get you introduced to both books. Some people are really good in the New Testament, and they are very shallow in the Old Testament. Some people are really good in the Old Testament, and they are shallow in the New Testament. In both cases, you are out of balance. You have got to be able to use both. You have to look at it. The New Testament is the instructions to you from your father, but the law of your motherly Old Testament contains the support, the stories that you get that illustrate those New Testament principles. You have to have a balance in your life of both, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The one will reveal and support the other. You use the study of the Old Testament to lay out the principles of the New Testament and show them how it works when you deal with people. The Old Testament stories support the New Testament principles.

VIII. The Ornament of Grace and Chains About Thy Neck

Now, look at Proverbs 1:9. Here is another aspect to it.

Proverbs 1:9

For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Now, the "they" of Proverbs 1:9 is the instructions of the father and the law of thy mother in Proverbs 1:8. I want you to see that. Now, that ornament of grace to your head and chain about your neck deal with something that you wear that brings honor to you in a practical personal sense. Given the context of a father, a mother, and a son, the ornament of grace is to your head, and the father should be the head of his family. So then what we are talking about here, young couples, is the fact that the ornaments of grace and the crowns to your head that brings honor and glory to you in Christ is your family. What your family does, note the ornament of grace is to your head. The father is to be the head of his family, chains about your neck. We will talk about them a little bit. That is your will. This thing is a reference to your family, to your kids, and how they turn out your family at the judgment seat of Christ.

You know, I think that is part of the problem with all of us. Because we are too short-sighted to the judgment seat of Christ in everything in our life, but truly in our families. That verse and what we are getting ready to look at here says that every time you know you look at your kids when you understand the principles involved, every time you look at your family, fathers, every time you see your family, you ought to see the judgment seat of Christ. But we do not look at it that way. We ought to look at that in everything we do, every relationship we allow ourselves in, every circumstance we put ourselves in. We ought to view it in how it is going to play out when we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. But we do not. I am guilty of it too. We do not. But we should. When you see this thing, it goes right back to our context, the instruction of the father and the law of the mother.

Now, let me show you something. Proverbs says, Proverbs 17:6, now you want to get this down. We will deal with this when we get to it, but it fits right here. We need to look at it today in what we are talking about here of this crown to your head and this thing around your neck.

Proverbs 17:6

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

That is one of the most profound verses in the Bible dealing with the judgment seat of Christ. Now, I know what it is talking about in a practical sense. I understand all that, but brother, you better not miss the application here to the judgment seat of Christ. Because in a doctrinal sense, that verse in Proverbs 17:6 is saying simply this, that your children and your grandchildren are going to make up your crowns at the judgment seat of Christ, whether you get them or not, by what you do. The ongoing cycle of the family for God's glory.

I have told you before and I will say it again. My main burden for you in this church and all the young couples is that you do not show up at the judgment seat of Christ without your kids. That you do not lose them in the process because the world certainly wants to take them. That you do not, some of you that have gotten, I encourage you all the time about how good your kids are, but I will be honest with you, and I am sure many of you do. Some of you ought to get down on your knees and thank God for the kids that God has given you. But he is saying there that your children and your grandchildren are going to be the crown. That is what he says. He says, "Children's children," that is your children and your grandchildren, "are the crown of old men." That crown is the judgment seat of Christ. My main burden for you young couples that have little kids or babies or want to start your family, that you will see the absolute necessity of this. The family unit, talked about it a couple of Thursday nights ago. It is the main aspect of your millennial reward.

Stop and think about this for a minute. In ministry, and most of you are in ministry, you work somewhere here doing something, not all of you, but many of you, just put it that way. In ministry, we deal with a lot of people who come in and we try to help them, do we not? Sure we do. We also know that in that endeavor of love, some make it and some do not. We understand that. But we do not have total control over them to tell them or make them do what is right. Not that we should. What we have to do is we preach to them. We try to get them to come to church, come to get them to come to Thursday night Bible study, let the Holy Spirit of God work on them. We teach them. Some of them get into discipleship and you work with them as a disciple or you work with them in marital counseling or many things that we have done. We have seen a host of them get their life turned around, get their marriages put back together and all those good things. We pray for them. We hold them accountable. We try to help them the best we can. But you know as well as I do, we cannot make or mold them into what God wants them to be. It is impossible. We have limited contact and control over them. We do not have that kind of control. We should not have that kind of control, but we certainly do not.

But think about it. In light of what I am giving you, the only ones you have a hundred percent complete control over, the only ones you have a hundred percent complete control over in your life, are our kids, totally incomplete.

Psalms 127:4

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

A father by his instructions or the lack of his instructions, a mother by her enforcing the law or not enforcing the law, a father and a mother by having rules that they hold accountable or having no rules. Either way, they take those children and just as an archer can take an arrow and hit a bull's eye at a hundred feet, you launch your kids in a path in life. They are the only thing in our world, guys, with all the people that we work with, with all the circumstances that we deal with, they are the only ones we have as parents, a hundred percent complete control over. That is why he says children's children should be the glory of old men. That is what he is saying. Your family, listen to me for a moment, your family are for you to be by your side in ministry. Bible says they are a heritage unto the Lord. You hear it all the time. "Well, the children are a heritage or your heritage." No, they are not. They are God's heritage. They are not your heritage, but what they are for you is to ensure that your millennial rewards and crowns never end. They work side by side with you. They learn the ministry from you. They get involved with you. They grow with you. And then when you cannot do it anymore, they continue on with what you can no longer do. If you rule your family and set down the instructions, if the mother enforces those with the law of the mother, father says, "This is the way it is going to be in our house." Mom says, "That is a hundred percent right." And then you keep them accountable and you train them up in that mindset.

Now, failing to do that and allowing your children to have somebody else or something else to have more influence in their life will do two things. First of all, it will take away your crowns, "children are the crown of old men." Your kids will keep your ministry alive after you cannot do it anymore in your place. The second thing is it says, "and the glory of the children are their fathers." Now, here is the leader of the father's responsibility, not the mother's. Listen to me now, fathers. Not only are the children's children the glory of old men, but it says, "and the glory of the children are their fathers." Listen to me. The glory your kids will receive or not receive with the judgment seat of Christ is based on the foundation that you have built in their life and the father and how you have instructed them and how he will set the rules for the family and kept them accountable. The most tremendous responsibility on this planet, greater than the presidency, greater than any five-star general, greater than Alexander the Great and all the great men down through history, the greatest responsibility on this planet is the responsibility of a father. Your kids at the judgment seat of Christ will get what you build into their life now. The glory of your kids, what they receive with the judgment seat of Christ, is based on what you do. When a kid defies your authority at 20, it is simply because you failed him at four or five.

When I had to come down on my kids growing up, and brother I did, when I had to drop the hammer on them, and brother I did, when I had to deal with them and issues, and brother I did, when I had to deal with that every time, not one single time, the thing that kept me from being a wuss, the thing that kept me from slacking back when my emotion said, "Do not do that," the thing that kept me and my finger on the trigger was the fact of that verse that at the judgment seat of Christ, they will thank me for what I did even if they do not understand it now. Some of you do not get that. You do not get it. You do not get it. You do not get it.

The Bible says in Proverbs 10:1, and oh how true these verses are,

Proverbs 10:1

A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Boy, there is no, I have had him sit in my office and I have had him just weep with a broken heart. I have had him just weep and cry with a broken heart. Boy, that is so true.

The Bible says in Proverbs 15:20,

Proverbs 15:20

A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Now, there is a good verse. Look at that one. See if you catch that one. "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man," he is grown up now. See, he is grown up now. Boy, I will tell you for the last all the years in my ministry, I have seen him. I have seen kids get to say some of the most ungodly, filthy things to their moms and their dads. I have seen them cuss them out. I have seen moms and dads do it to their kids too. But I will tell you what, I have seen kids get to that point where they are in their 20s and mom and dad try to do something with them or do not give them what they want. You know, as long as you give them everything, you are their friend, but the moment you try to hold something back, they cuss you out like a sailor. They call you everything in the book. I have had situations where the woman would call me on the phone and she would just be heartbroken. She just had a fight with her son who would not do what is right. And the son just called her everything in the book, words I had not heard for 30 years. And she is all upset and wanting me to do something. And the wuss husband is right in the family and he will not do a thing.

There are some really bad things going on in families today in the world, Christian families. I know a lot of you, I understand. A lot of you got into this after your kids, you never really got into the Bible the way you should. When you really dialed into it, I mean, your kids were already teenagers and they already had their problems. So, I mean, to a certain degree, I understand where you are coming from. I have got to say, in just about most cases, every parent that found themselves on that, you did exactly what the Bible needs to do. Therefore, absolving yourself of that guilt. Because it is an easy thing to hear their sermon if you have got kids, you know, that you have tried to do everything right. And I do not explain it and you go out of here and beat yourself up. I am not talking about that. I have watched some of you parents take the hard line. I have watched some of you parents drop the hammer. I have watched some of you parents and I just stood back and looked up and smiled at you and I said, "If that kid has got any chance, it is because of that parent what they did right there." And maybe they will, maybe they will not, but they will never point their finger at you and tell them. You are going to see Wednesday night down at Turnaround how it is a hellfire sermon without ever bringing up God in the Bible and no prayer for or aft. But boy, you are going to talk about dropping the hammer.

I dealt with a couple about two months ago. I do not understand a lot of things. I mean, I am an old school. I do not, I do not, there is a lot of things I look at and I just say to myself, "I do not know how in the world, I do not even know how to explain that." How in the world does two composedly saved people produce a homosexual son? I am open. If you ask that question on Thursday night, I am going to sit down and let somebody else answer it. How does that happen?

How does that happen? I mean, two people are supposed to be saved. How do you raise a gay child? How do you do that? I do not know. I want to know. Not that I want to do that, but I want to know. I look at that and I scratch my head. I do not understand how that happens. We look at situations around us and because we really do not care about what the Bible says, we just look at it and then we just blow it off and say, "Oh well, you know." I am telling you there is some, the family is fractured today. It is fractured today. It is fractured today. And it does not mean if you ever found yourself in that situation that you cannot work out of it. I have seen many situations where they have done what is right and God has blessed them. I mean, come on, but that is the key doing what the Bible says.

I have seen men want to get into the ministry and they have no business being in ministry because of the principle in 1 Timothy 3:5. Yet they go and do it anyhow. All they do is take all of the garbage that is in their family and it just infiltrates down through their church. I have seen kids fail in life, not want to do anything with God, church, or the Bible. I have seen them get to 20 and 30 years old and they do not want to do what is right. They will use their parents. They will abuse their parents. They will take from them. They will come to them when they need something, usually money. But behind the scenes, they mock them. They make fun of them. They cuss them. They talk about them. And the parents' reaction, I understand it seems like the natural thing to do, but it is not. You think the natural thing to do is, "Well, if I love him more, if I love her more, she will love me more." No, you are wrong. They disrespect you more. It is a green light to take more from you. At some point in your life, you have got to drop the hammer. I do not understand it. One of my two girls ever disrespected my wife and said something about her. We got two stories. We built out. We put two stories. The second story was for that purpose, throwing her little rear ends out the window. Yes, and both you girls do realize I have made those windows larger in the last couple of years.

Now, let me clean this up. It goes without saying, no kids are perfect. It goes without saying, no fathers are perfect. No mothers are perfect. No families are perfect. Every child, every kid, as they grow up, will at some point try to challenge your authority at some point. They all do. There will never be a child that any parent will have that will not fail. There will never be a child that anybody's world that will not make bad choices. There will not be a child in anybody's family that at some point or the other will not cause you some embarrassment. But hey, dad, you are in charge, not them. Do not abdicate your power to them. Do not put them in charge of your family. Do not allow them to tell you in your home what they are going to do and what they are not. At that point, the moment of crisis, it is the instruction of the father, the rules reinforced by the mother supporting those rules that stop it dead in its tracks. Some of you had to break off complete relationships with your children. Hardest thing you will ever do. Hardest thing you will ever do. When I look at somebody like that that does that, I cannot tell you. I have in a world that we live in, that I have more respect for you than anything else on this planet for you have the courage to do that. That has to be, it is, I can guarantee you, it is the hardest thing you will ever do. But there may come a time in your life that that is the only thing you can do. It may come to the point of your life that that is all you have got left.

As I said, some of God's people I have dealt with over my years, they have come in late. They got into the Bible late. They got in, their kids were already a problem. Nobody ever instructed them. They went to a goofy church someplace or got no instruction. Nobody took any time with them. And here they are, they are in a mess. I do not care where you have been in the mess you are in. All I care about is what are you going to do to fix that mess today? Are you going to do what the book says? All I care about? When you do, God bless you. I respect you more than anything else on this planet.

IX. The Head and the Neck: Mind and Will

Now, he says the ornament of grace to thy head and chains about thy neck. Now, from a practical standpoint or a personal standpoint to you and me as a son in Proverbs 1:8, not only are you as a father and a mother in a family or your kids, your crown at the judgment seat of Christ, but you not only are their crown by which you teach them, but in a practical sense, I want you to see this, the ornament of grace to thy head and chains about thy neck. Those crowns and chains are our reward at the judgment seat of Christ. For us as a child of God, forget the father and mother thing. Now, that was a doctrinal side to it. This is the personal practical side. For us as a child of God, taking the New Testament instruction of our father, God, in the New Testament and then taking the Old Testament law of my mother and reinforcing doing something with it in my life, starting with your family and going down the road from there.

Now, again, the two aspects of our body here that it references to is very important. He says the head, the head. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says,

1 Corinthians 11:3

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

That is your head. It is real simple. Listen, Dad, Christ will be the head of your family only when he is the head of your life. It is not simple. It is not hard. It is not complicated. It does not require Greek or Hebrew. It does not require anything. It is just simply that way. To see if that is true, just look at two things. Look at the wife and look at the kids. It is not simple. We want to make it so complicated. The reason why it gets so complicated, because so many people want to mask the real problems. They want to hide behind. I call them politician Christians. Every time a politician gets in a real mess, if he just come before the people and say, "You know what, I screwed up. I did this and I did that and I should not have done it. I know better. And I just had a weak moment and I am sorry. And I have come to the American people to fess up and tell you I did wrong and I want you to forgive me." It would be over. It would be done. America is one of the most forgiving nations on the planet. People want to forgive. They want to forgive you. They are drawn to something they perceive as real, whether it is or not. But oh no, the politician has got to get up and say, "I never had sex with that woman." Okay. It blows it all away. Nothing works better than just being honest.

Hey, it starts and I have watched you families who have had kids, you know, you sat down with them and you said simply, "You know what, we have not done what is right. We have not done

this right. We got into this late. We have not done what we should have done, but we are going to do right here from now. And there is a new sheriff in town and this is the way it is going to be." Now they may adhere to that or they may not, but either way, you did what was right. From that point on, you lay down the instructions and you hold the accountability of the law. So you can do. The book has to stop with you.

But here again, we see these two aspects, the head. To see if that is, it is just, you know, we see if it is just true, you know, on all those areas, the head will be the reference to you getting God's mind. When I started this year, I will tell you, when I, every year we have a theme and we have come to, we have come to a place where, you know, we have been now 10 years. This was a 10 year anniversary and I have built this on little plateaus, up the thing to get you as a church where we needed to be. And God has graciously given us everything we need. And we came last year, Joe Christensen and Zach, we are going to put on the first camp for our kids. We, we, we had come to a level and, and, uh, at New Year's Eve, we had a great time and I, uh, we talked about it. I preached a couple of sermons on it that we were going to dedicate this year to, to the family, that this was going to be the year of the family that we were going to take now, everything that we did, try to get all you couples to get your family involved with you in ministries. I had two families come to me and tell me that if I would do that, they are probably going to leave the church. Now, the reason why they told me that is because their kids were not in ministry, would never be in ministry and want nothing to do with them in ministry. And it was an embarrassment for me to get up here and them to sit here every Sunday. In other words, what they wanted me to do is let all your kids and dad and go to hell so they could feel good about themselves. I have something I want to say, but I am a Christian. I cannot say it. Read my mind. It is not going to happen. It is not going to happen. You think I am going to sacrifice all you young couples because some idiot over here that did not do right with his family is going to get embarrassed because he is not man enough to stand up and say, "I blew it." You think I am going to sacrifice the rest of you for that? You do not know me very well. And I did not go to happen. It did not happen. Yes, they left the church. We need your seat. Thank you very much.

You see, you have to preach the truth no matter who likes it or who does not like it. I am not going to sacrifice young families because some older family that cannot get it together, refuses to get it together, cannot get it together. And I am not going to do that. I would not sleep at night. I would not be able to look myself in the mirror knowing that every time I stood up here, I had to pull back to say something that you needed that somebody else may get offended because I say it because it would embarrass them. Almost said at that time. You know, when Christ is your head and he leads you, then you will simply be a leader of others, including your family by example of your life, not as some title that you have or being a pastor.

You know, in the world itself, the head of man is used all the time in every situation to show success or failure. Chiefs last night, I watched the Chiefs. I really liked it. They did good last night. But I was listening to the commentators and they use it all the time. The guy said, "Now that was a heads up play." He used it all the time. Somebody said, "Well, that young man has got a real got a head on his shoulder there." See somebody said, "All right, get up. We are going to head out." Lead the way. I have heard people say to young men that they used to work on them,

"Son, you need to get your head on straight." Head. I have seen some of some of the wives say to your husband, "You give me a headache." I have looked at people and thought to myself, "You are out of your head." Head. So bumper sticker today says, "You want to lose 20 pounds ugly fat. Cut off your head." Your head. And how many times have they all been told to get your head out of your ass? There are no questions and I will tell you no lies. Someday you are going to get some crowns and you will wear those crowns on your head. Those crowns will show the assembled universe that you made Christ the head of your life. And you should stand there with your family because the Bible says children, children are the crown of old men and the father of glory to their children. They ought to have their crowns as you have their crown because you work together as a team. Only ones you have control over. The fact that you made Christ the head of your life and you did something with it. See how practical that is? I mean who could not get that?

Then he says chains about thy neck. Now in the Bible, the neck will always stand for the will of man. We find that in the Bible called stiff-necked. Stephen in Acts 7:51 preaching to the nation of Israel said to them,

Acts 7:51

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

They were not bent to his preaching.

Deuteronomy 9:6

Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Now, to be stiff-necked is to be proud. To be stiff-necked is to be arrogant. To be stiff-necked is to be unforgiving, unyielding. We call it to be bullheaded. We also call it to be stubborn. All those are words that mean stiff-necked. To be stiff-necked is that you impose your will over what God wants you to do for him. I mean you see it all the time. All my life I have seen Christians who I thought they had great potential and yet they took everything that God gave. You do realize that everything you have you have because God gave you. You do know that. I do not have to tell you that today do I? You have the job you have because God gave you that. You have the ability to go to work and you have the hand to do it and the feet to walk and the brain to think because God gave that to you. You do understand that and yet at the same time He gave you all that. He also gave it to you for the main purpose that you might do something for Him and yet I have seen God's people all the time. All my life I have seen Him take all those things that God has given Him and keep them for themselves. I have seen Him take the abilities that they had for guys to be good preachers or good Bible teachers keep it to themselves. I have seen women take the things that God gave them and the personality they had and the ability they had and they kept it all to themselves. Instead of taking what they have and give it to the Lord they took all those things to make money. Instead of giving those things to the things of the Lord they took those things to get things for themselves. I mean I have seen it all my life. You have to.

You know I have seen many of God's people do with their life just like that and then I watched them get into bad situations. I want them to get into cancer. I want them to get heart problems. I want them to get into hospitals. I want them to get into divorces. I want them to get into drugs, alcohol, failed businesses, failed churches, failed marriage and they still will not let that break their neck. They are a fool right up to the casket.

Long time ago there was a guy who was dying in St. Luke Baptist Hospital and this was 30 years ago and the family called me. He had never been to church and he was lost. The family had come to church on a kind of a regular basis and they called me and wanted me to come over because he only had hours to live and I will never forget. I went over there it must have been about 10 o'clock at night. The hospital was dark and quiet and I walked down that hall and you know I could hear the echoes of my shoes banging on the walls. It was a very lonely place. I walked down to that room and the wife was there and the boy was there and the family was there and they were they were all upset and they came to me and they said, "Bob, he is not going to live through the night and he is dead. He is dying and he is not going to make it and he says he is not saved and we said we want you to try to win him to Christ." Well the guy is comatose just about you know I mean why did not we think about this a little earlier in life you know but that is the way it goes. He could not speak, he could not open his eyes but he was conscious of what was around him that he would talk to you by squeezing your hand once for yes and two for no. And you know I went in there and I asked everybody to stay out because I did not want it any more confusing because when you are in a situation like this I was not going to pull any punches. This is not a time that you you play you know the card where you just say, "Well how are you doing today?" You know what you know you have got to get down to the line this guy has got hours to live and I some of the things I had to say I did not want the family to hear just I did not want them to remember it that way. So I got down there and I and I only met the guy one other time and I took his hand and I told him who I was and I asked him if he recognized my voice you know once for yes two for no squeeze my hand yes he did and I did not pull any punches. I said I remember some saying something like you know what I do not remember his name say it was Tom. I said, "You know what Tom," I said, "I am here because you are going to die tonight. The doctors have said you are not going to live through the night. I know you cannot speak and I know you cannot open your eyes but I know you can hear me and I said Tom I said there is no time to to play around with this there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun Tom and if you do not trust Christ as your own personal savior you are going to die and go to hell tonight." I said, "I do not know what else to tell you." I said, "I would like to say we could do this next week or we could do it later or come back to church and we could talk we do not have that Tom we have tonight and the doctors say you are not going to live through tonight." Now I said, "Tom, let me ask you," I said, "squeeze your hand if you mean yes and I said Tom do you know that you are a sinner?" He squeezed my hand. I said, "Tom, do you know that right now if you die without Christ you are going to die and go to hell. Do you know that?" He squeezed my hand once he knew that and I said, "Tom," I said, "I have come up here for one thing," I said, "that is to bring your soul into Christ and I said the Bible says this this this this went through the whole line." I said, "Do you understand that?" He squeezed my hand he understood it and I said, "Tom," I said, "you have squeezed my hand you understand everything I have said right one more time," and he squeezed my hand yes. I said, "All right now Tom right now the best way you know how with

hours to live and death walking down that corridor were you the best way you know how ask Christ to come into your heart and save you right now and if you will squeeze my hand." A sucker would not squeeze my hand. He was at the point of death in fact he died four hours later he understood everything I said he understood he was a sinner he understood that there was an eternity of hell without God waiting for him but he had his will all of his life it was his will over God's will right up till we stepped out into eternity and went to the lake of fire. The will is a powerful thing and I have seen it all the time in God's people God saves you God gives you everything that you need and all the things that he provides for you that you can give back to him and you know what you too will not squeeze his hand you will not do what you need to do.

So now when it comes down to your life with God in the book of Proverbs it is really for for for you and me in a practical sense as my son and it simply comes down to two things it comes down to your head where you are going to be and what you are going to think about and your neck what will it take to break your will against God taking the instructions of your father and forsaking not the law of thy mother. You see in dealing with people we always look at the outward symptoms that the person is going through and we have a we have a way of diagnosing that as that is their problem. "Well the problem is drugs the problem is alcohol the problem is this the problem is that." And as long as we look at our lives or somebody else's life and we look at it that way I have seen it before where somebody says, "Well you know what I do not go to church because something happened bad to me a long time ago and I just never went back to church and I am not going back to church." And we have a tendency because of what they say and we are so shallow in the Bible that we actually think that is really the problem. The problem really was somebody hurt your feelings at some point the problem really is drugs the problem really is alcohol the problem really is this or the problem really is that no that is not it at all that is the symptom of the problem but you see when you look through the problem and you get down to the Bible instructions of the father-in-law the mother you see that in every case the problem is not the symptom the problem is the real problem and a real problem is simply this your will versus God's will. That is all it comes down to folks do not try to blame it on somebody else do not try to blame it on this circumstance do not try to blame it on your upbringing do not try to blame it on this I guarantee you in everybody's life here today at some point in your life maybe it was your parents maybe it was a coach maybe it was a friend maybe it was a pastor maybe it was a youth worker somebody saw the road of life that you were on and tried to tell you that was the wrong road and you simply would not listen.

I had a friend of mine years ago years ago was the warden down in a prison in Georgia and years and years and years ago I was preaching down there in a in a church and he he had me over to preach a service at the prison and it was a great opportunity and I went and preached and the place was packed and he went out to lunch afterwards and he was a Christian man he was a great guy he is dead now but he was a great guy and we went out to lunch and I said, "How many people do you have in prison?" He says, "Well," he says, "we have over 2,000 in prison." I am saying, "Wow," I said, "that is incredible." He says, "Yep," and he says, "and they are all here for the same reason." I let that slip for a second and and and I thought about it and what he his answer to me and that I have never forgotten all these years I let it go for a little bit and I am thinking to myself, "Oh here for the same thing there is got to be 5,000 different crimes that a

guy can do I mean they are all just this is a prison for one crime or whatever you know." So I asked him I says I says I says, "Let me ask him," I says, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "There are 2,000 people in here," I said, "in my mind there is probably over a thousand different crimes on the books how in the world can they all be here for one reason?" And I never forgot the answer he gave me he says, "2,000 plus guys are in here for all the same thing they all made the wrong choice and now this is the consequences of it." And I am telling you life is choices and you are either going to be a wise man or you are going to be a foolish man you are either going to see these principles and you are going to do something with them or you are going to keep your neck stiff stiff neck and you are going to go your same old way you are either going to put Christ ahead of your life and break your will and say, "God I will be whatever you want me to be," or you are going to do your own thing.

X. Invitation to Salvation

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Now, let me say this to you. Maybe you are here this morning and you have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal savior. This day needs to be a deal breaker for you. Maybe you have been on the fence back and forth of where you are at and what you should do and maybe it just took the accumulation of today to hear what we have talked about in the Word of God that you now know that your life without Christ is a dead end street. You are either going to take Christ as your personal savior and have a life of endless hope or you are going to stay the way you are and have a life that is a hopeless end, but it is your choice. But today after what I have said, I feel led to ask you if you are here today and you have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal savior. You say, "What do you mean by that, Bob?" I have been to church lots of time. Not talking about that. I am talking about simply this right now if you would die do you know 100% for sure that you would go to heaven? If you do not, that is what I am talking about. You need to make sure.

With every head bowed and every eye closed and no one looking around, I am not going to take long. We will be on our way here in just a moment. But if you are here today and you would say, "Bob, I do not know for sure if I would die right now if I would go to heaven." While our heads are bowed and we are praying for you, if you are here and you find yourself in that state and you want to do something about it, would you simply with every head bowed and every eye closed and no one looking around, would just lift your hand up so I could pray for you? God bless your sweetheart, I see it. Anybody else? Anybody else? I am not sure that if I died today, God bless your son, God bless your son. Anybody else? I am not sure, I am not sure, here is my hand. Three or four hands went off. Anybody else? I am not sure, here is my hand, Bob. God bless you in the back, I see it sweetheart. Anybody else? It is going to wait for a few moments. I heard what the man said today and I believe the Bible is the Word of God and I come to the conclusion right now Bob in my heart in my life that if I stepped out into eternity like that man at that Baptist Research Baptist Hospital I would never be able to meet God. Anybody else? It is always your choice.

Before I pray now, Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ and we do love You and we thank You Father for today and for the folks that have come and for the message that

You have given us and truly the book of Proverbs is just a it is an amazing book Lord it has so many great concepts and principles in it and help us Lord to to glean from it help us to learn from the instruction of our father and and Lord the law of our mother help us to realize that that what we do for God comes out on the other end with the crowns on our head and change about our necks Lord I ask You today to touch the hearts of these young couples that have kids that not another family in this church would lose their kids that Father that You would do in their life help them to see it help the fathers to see their awesome responsibility the mothers to see their awesome responsibility and in situations where it is already out of control there is always something You can do give people the courage to do the right thing that needs to be done and Father we will just thank You now and praise You for all that You do we love You and I pray for these hands that were raised for these men and women that do not know for sure where they would go if they died today and I pray Father Your mercy and Your grace upon them and Your love extended to them that they do what needs to be done and we will thank You in Jesus name and sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Hey, look simple. If you raise your hand and you are not sure you are saved right now, here is what I want you to do. I have women and men in the back and I have people up here that will take the Bible, open the Bible and show you how you can know for sure that you have you can be saved right now, right now. With every head bowed, we are not looking around, we are praying for you right now. If you raise your hand or maybe you did not raise your hand but now you know you need to do that, just stand up wherever you are at and I will have a lady if you are a lady come to you. I will have one of my guys if you are a guy come to you. If you want to, you understand up and we will have to take care of it. Stand up down. Okay. All right. Anybody else? Anybody else? Now is the time. Now is the time. If you raise your hand and God wants to do that in your work in your life, allow him to do it. Break that will, break that stiff neck right now, bend it to him. Anybody else? Just stand up wherever you are at and we will take the Word of God and show you how to open up the Bible and know for sure you can be saved. Anybody? Anybody else join this one brave girl? Anybody? It is your time right now. It is your time. God bless you Pam. If your mother is with her, take her mother with her. Okay, right there. Anybody else? Okay, good deal.

Let us pray. Father, we do thank You today for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You Father for the Word of God that makes things so clear. Lord, we try to make it so complicated many times. We want to make it complicated because we do not want to think about it. We do not want to deal with it. But in reality, that is the greatest thing the Word of God does. It cuts right through everything and just puts it right on the table. Thank You for doing that today. Take these young couples and and help us to help them and help them to give them the vision of being everything they are so great. We have a great host of young couples that that have a great foundation and they will make great moms and dads but help us make them better and Lord we will just thank You now and praise You for all that You do. We love You. Thank You for today and thank You for Lord our church and what You have given us here and we will be careful to give You all the honor and the glory and praise in Jesus name for a sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you.