

# Proverbs 10:14-17

Sunday 12/14/2014

I think it is probably one of the greatest studies that we ever took. It is going to be a long study. From where our church is at, we have our people ministry and our counseling ministry up and running. So many of you are working with people, and all the young couples, and the moms and dads, and the folks that come into our church through discipleship and all of the different areas that we have. I think it is where we need to be. There is so much each week, and obviously I can move through it a lot faster, but I do not want to do that because I want all of you to glean exactly what we need to have. I think that is vital for us to do that.

You remember that last week we started Proverbs 10:14-16. I defined for you one of the most important concepts in all of life in the aspect of learning: how to lay up knowledge. That is what we talked about last week; it was the only verse we got to. Today, I want to lay out some more great, simple, practical lessons in life throughout the Proverbs.

Last week, we talked about building your own library of biblical principles in your own heart and mind. We likened it to a lawyer who has a law library with all the case laws. Whenever he goes to trial, he has the ability to pull out those books to find out exactly what the law says about it as he builds his case. That is exactly what we ought to be doing with the Word of God. We ought to get so familiar with it and hide the Word of God in our heart and do all of the principles that we put so much emphasis on around here, so that you actually form for yourself that library. Then, in any given situation or scenario, you are able to have total access to biblical solutions that you can give people exactly what the Bible says. We talked about God's mind and God's viewpoint becoming our mind and our viewpoint. We had fun with last week's message on laying up knowledge.

I showed you the seven absolutely vital classes that we should have in every church when you go to God's school to lay up knowledge.

1. A math class, how everything in life is a mathematical formula.
2. A biology class, understanding that you are body, soul, and spirit, and understanding each one of them.
3. A history class, knowing your heritage and where you have come from.
4. A government class, realizing that when Christ comes back at the Second Coming, He is establishing His government.
5. An English class, the Word of God was written to you in English, the last universal language of the world.
6. A music class, and how music developed and how it all rises and falls on the Word of God.
7. A science class, showing you how the Bible is the most scientific book the world has ever seen.

## I. Laying Up Knowledge and Its Consequences

Today, we will pick it up where we left off last week, and I want to read Proverbs 10:14-17.

*Proverbs 10:14-17*

*Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.*

*The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.*

*The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.*

*He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.*

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, we love You so much and thank You for all that You do for us, and for what You have given us, and for the good folks that have come out today. Lord, I thank You for the giving spirit of these folks that every other week they are down at Restart and Turnaround, helping out people who are less fortunate, giving them water, giving them food, and giving them the Gospel. It warms my heart to see the people of this church gravitate to ministry. It is wrong for a church to keep putting the Word of God into the people, but then those people and the church as a church not going back out and doing something with it. Lord, help us Father in all that we do, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. Amen.

## II. The Mouth of the Foolish is Near Destruction

Last week, I ended in Proverbs 10:14, "but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction." From a practical standpoint, as we would see that in everyday life, a man who refuses to learn God's Word and who will not lay up wisdom will find himself in a whirlwind cycle of problems. In time, it will completely engulf him. Things only get worse; they never get better. One of the things that you want to remember when you do not deal with issues in your own life is that the longer you let them go, the worse they get. No problem ever fixes itself; you have to be proactive in getting it done.

For an unsaved man, that means death and dying, going to hell. For an unsaved man, death can lie around any corner. There is no rhyme or reason to his life. The book of Ecclesiastes makes it very clear that he is like the animal; he has a chance at dying. There is no protection for him whatsoever. I am not saying that somebody could not be praying for him and God intervene in that way, but just your garden-variety unsaved person has absolutely no control over his destiny. Death can come at any time, as you see it many, many times. The verse says that he will always be near destruction, right around the corner, around the next turn, one unfolding disaster after another.

But for a saved man, a Christian who now refuses the instruction of God's Word and lives his life his way, it is going to be one disaster after another. All of us, if you have been saved for any length of time, have seen disasters unfolding in God's people's lives simply because they will not do what they need to do. Around every turn in life, there will be an issue waiting to unfold. After a life of 20 or 30 years of making bad choices and the compacting effect, it will literally destroy a person.

I have seen the complete breakdown and total destruction of families. I have talked to you before about the cycle of families in crisis, how every generation will get worse if God does not inject Himself or is not brought into the family. Many times we see families that just get continually worse and worse. I have seen families that started out where a long time ago they believed in God, they went to church, they had a Bible, they believed the Bible, but then something went wrong. They did not deal with their kids the way that they should, and their kids grew up less involved in church, wanting nothing to do with the Bible. They raised their family, and their kids are even farther away from it. By the time you get four or five generations down the road, you have a family that has no concept of God. The thing that I love about so many of you is that many of you came into this church in that kind of scenario. You have come from families that did not care about the Bible; you have come from families that did not care about church or anything. What you have done is broken that cycle. You have put an end in your family to that ever happening, and from this point on, you are going to ensure that in your family, the next generations stay with God. That is a commendable thing, and that is exactly what needs to happen.

Last week, in our seven classes, in the history class and the music class, I told you how in Europe you cannot separate the Bible and God from history, no matter where you go. In European history, all of Europe's successes and failures, all of their high points and low points, were always built around what they did with the Word of God. When the Reformation broke loose in the 1500s with Martin Luther, it swept across Europe. In the next hundred years, the Gospel, which was once repressed by the Roman Catholic Church, now had its shackles off, and the Gospel went across Europe. Czechoslovakia, under Jan Hus, almost the whole nation, without exception, had come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It was true in Europe, in France, in Germany under Martin Luther, in Scotland, and in England. You found that across Europe, when the Bible broke free and the Gospel was displayed, and the Word of God had come into fruition and was everywhere and people could read it, a revival broke across Europe. It was a time when the Gospel penetrated Europe in an incredible way, and you see that in every country all down through history.

Then we find the entering of what we call in church history the Counter-Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church may have been down, but she was not out. What took place after that period of time was the Counter-Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church coming back to reclaim and break that chain in the lives of families. She did it a number of ways; she did it through the Jesuit movement, but one of the ways that she did it was what is called in history the Oxford Movement.

The Oxford Movement was a plan by which Jesuit Roman Catholic priests actually went into Protestant seminaries in Europe and began to take the courses, even though they were under the disguise of the Roman Catholic Jesuit system. They went into Cambridge, went into Oxford, and went into all of the Protestant Bible colleges in Europe. They graduated and pastored Protestant churches. Then they began the destruction of undoing what God had done. After one hundred or two hundred years of doing that, it really brought Europe to her knees. It was an incredible thing

that had happened, and what they did slowly, very slowly over time, was destroy the great Reformation and the great churches. It is one of the most remarkable things.

After three or four generations, you find that with the rise of the Roman Catholic philosophers like Augustine, Alcuin, and Thomas Aquinas, it moves into, once the Counter-Reformation takes place and they begin to get away from God and get away from the Bible, it gave birth to the humanist movement in Europe. You found guys like Thomas Hobbes, George Berkeley, David Hume, Christian Wolff, Voltaire, Kant, and Feuerbach. It winds up in about 1844 and 1900 with a guy by the name of Nietzsche. Nietzsche puts the icing on the cake because this great philosopher, after Europe had just went through one of the greatest absolute revivals of the Word of God, bringing forth salvation to the continent of Europe, now because of the generation slowly eroding, we come where Nietzsche shows up and he makes a grand illusion statement to all of Europe that God is now dead.

If you go to Europe today, Europe is totally and completely amoral. They have no concept of God. They have great churches, but the pastors in those churches are all atheists. Every one of their churches is now a humanistic church. In our country, when you talk about your church, you ask the question, "Does your church use the King James Bible?" That is always the question you ask in America. But if you were in Europe today and you talked to somebody who was a Lutheran or Presbyterian in England, France, or Czechoslovakia, and you asked them about their church, you would not ask them what Bible they believe. You would not even ask them if they believe in salvation. You know what you would ask them? You would ask them if their pastor believes in God, or if your pastor is an atheist. Who in the world could pastor a church being an atheist? But it happens in Europe today simply because of those generations getting away from the Word of God.

It happens in families. It can happen in your family. That same process of very slowly getting away from the Word of God means that your kids will always do less than you do unless you stay on top of them. Every generation will get farther away from God unless that family unit is held together by the ministry and the principles and the things that we preach to you out of the Bible here. Families go the same way that Europe went. Where you can find Europe now, countries that once were teeming with the Word of God, you can find families in America that once stood on the Word of God that no longer believe anything about the Word of God.

### III. The Rich Man's Wealth is His Strong City

Look at Proverbs 10:15: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty." It says the rich man's wealth is a strong city. In a worldly sense, that is true about a man with riches, an unsaved man, because a rich man can hide behind his money. A rich man can use it as a lever in life. A rich man can use it to manipulate circumstances and people. A rich man can protect himself from poverty, want, and needs if he has a lot of money; he can buy whatever he wants. A rich man's wealth is a strong city because he can defend himself. He can buy the best lawyer. I think of when O.J. Simpson got caught killing his wife and that other guy way back when; he had the lawyer group called the "Dream Team." It was five, six, or seven of the greatest lawyers the world had ever seen, but it probably cost him two million dollars a day.

If he has the money, your money can become a strong city, and you can defend yourself with it. A rich man trusts in his money to get him through, and it becomes a strong city, really a stronghold in his life.

I think back to the Great Depression. I know most of you young kids do not know what the Great Depression was. You think that was the day you were born and your mom was greatly depressed because of you, but it was more than that. The Great Depression was the fall of the stock market in 1929. I know nobody here was probably born in 1929. Erwin, were you born? [Audience: 1934] You probably remember the Great Depression a little bit, do you not? He was born in 1934. The stock market broke in 1929, and almost overnight, almost every millionaire in America, and then it spread across the world, every millionaire who on Tuesday had millions of dollars in the bank, was flat busted broke on Wednesday. The suicide rate was unbelievable; it was horrific. Rich people who had lost their strong city, who had lost every dime, who had to go to work, had lost everything. They could not face the reality that what they trusted in was now gone, and they killed themselves. The Hudson River in New York looked like 55-gallon drums floating down the river; there were so many that jumped off the bridge. But there is a biblical application to it.

We know that in life, there are two kinds of riches: the world's riches, and then the true riches found in Luke 16:11 and 1 Corinthians 3. When you talk about a Christian's strong city, in the Old Testament, we see great examples of this. The Old Testament had as their main defense around their cities, a wall. In many cases, if you study history, those walls were one hundred feet high and forty to fifty feet thick. They could get whole Roman legions marching down the causeways on top of those walls; they were incredibly huge.

When you go back to Ezra and Nehemiah after the seventy years of captivity, the Jews, when they go back to Jerusalem, Jerusalem has now been sacked by Nebuchadnezzar seventy years before. He burned the city, tore down the walls, and decimated the city of God. The first thing they begin to do in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, when they begin to rebuild, is build the wall back up. In a Bible format, the walls of our city, the Bible says that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Each one of you is likened to a house. When we put all of our people together this morning, we have a fair-sized little city. If each of you is a house, then around our city, spiritually speaking, there has to be some protection. We do not look at these walls as protection because they are physical walls. We know from Ephesians 6 that our battle is a spiritual battle. So our wall is a spiritual wall. The wall that supports and keeps this church safe is the same wall that keeps you safe, and that is the Bible doctrine that we believe and the doctrine that we hold onto as a church that keeps all the talkers at bay, so that they cannot penetrate your life. This is why I am such a stickler on you learning the principles. This is why I stay on you all the time, and I am sure some of you wish I would change the format, but I am not going to because the only thing that is going to get you through life is learning that book, living that book, and keeping that book, because in those principles, those doctrines, are the walls.

A great example is in Matthew 4. You remember in Matthew 4, when the devil came to Christ and tried to tempt Him to do some things? The devil comes up the first time and says, "You need to do this. If you are really God, do this." Instead of Christ falling for the temptation, He simply

said, "It is written." The devil came at Him three times, and three times the Lord said back, "It is written." The Bible says that after that, the devil went his way. Do you know why? Because the devil knew that as long as you are going to the Book and you are going to counter whatever temptation he throws at you with "It is written," he has nowhere to go. You want the devil to leave you alone? You want the unclean spirits or the forces of this world that sometimes give you a tough time to vamoose? You know what you do: "It is written." The devil can get in every... Let me tell you something: if a vampire ever comes your way, forget the crucifix. If a werewolf comes your way, forget the silver bullets. You do not need any holy water. If anything in the demonic world ever comes your way, all you need is the Scriptures because they cannot stand that Book. That is why, if you have not figured it out already, the devil has been on a crusade for the last couple of hundred years to take that Book out of your hand. Because when he does that, you have no wall, you have no defense, and down you will go. Nothing will stop the devil in his tracks quicker than the Word of God.

It is the wall that makes a strong city. It is not the people in the city; it is not how many houses you have, or how big they are, or how nice they are. It is the wall around that city. When it comes to a church, it is not how big it is, or how grandiose, or that you have a restaurant and a spa over here, or a \$90 million sound system. That is not what makes it strong. It is not even the fact that you may have two thousand, three thousand, or four thousand people. That is not what makes it strong. What makes the church strong is what made the city strong, and that is the wall that is around it, and that is Bible doctrine.

When we started our church eleven and a half years ago, some of you were here back then, and you will remember the first sermon and the first lessons that I preached were out of Ezra and Nehemiah on building the wall around the city. We actually went back and showed how Jerusalem was in a great heap of rubble, completely destroyed by the world system. I likened that to the world that we live in today, where the world has really destroyed the church. They began to build the wall, and that wall was the beginning of them getting it back where it needed to be because that wall represented their protection and their strength in a physical sense. I told you way back then when we started our church, the first thing we were going to do was build a wall. We started to teach Bible doctrine. We started to take the people that were saved on that foundation, 1 Corinthians 3. We began to teach you the Bible doctrines, and here we are today. A church of two hundred fifty people or so like this one can be a formidable offense when it wants to go out and do the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, when everybody has built the wall. The wall is the doctrine that we believe. Our only real protection, and this church will only be as strong as it is, is as you build the wall.

Then I remember I showed you that there were nine gates in that wall, and the gates were where people went in and people came out. You remember I likened that you had the Sheep Gate, the Fish Gate, the Old Gate, the Valley Gate, the Dung Gate, the Fountain Gate, the Water Gate, the Horse Gate, and the East Gate. I went through and showed you how each one of them was an entrance into that city, and every one of those was going to match up to a ministry we wanted to have to bring people into this church.

- The Sheep Gate: If you ever want to build a strong church and have a relationship with God, it starts with you understanding the sacrifice that God made for you.
- The Fish Gate: Winning people to Christ.
- The Old Gate: Our heritage. We have probably taught church history three or four times in the eleven years.
- The Valley Gate: Our compassion for people.

And on and on it went through all of those gates. We talked about it in Bible study just a couple of weeks ago.

Last week in our history class, I told you about the seven Baptist distinctives that the true Bible line has held all the way down through history. I know that there are a lot of goofy Baptist churches out there. I understand that there are goofy people wherever you go. You are never going to find a denomination or a group of people or any church where you do not have somebody who is not where they need to be; that is just the way it is. But overall, you found that those churches held to seven major Bible doctrines. Last Thursday night, we talked about why we do not compromise, why we do not drop our standards so we can reach more people. I told you that I am not interested in reaching people; I am interested in preaching the truth and letting the truth reach the people. That is the way you have to do it.

Those seven Baptist distinctives, as they have been called down through church history, are:

8. Eternal security: Understanding what really happened the day you got saved. When you understand that, you can never doubt the fact that you could lose your salvation.
9. The pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ: We are not amillennial; we are not post-millennial. We do not believe that the Lord is going to come back after man makes it good. We believe the Lord is going to come back, kick the fire at everybody, and then make it right. That is what we believe.
10. Salvation is for adults or anybody over the age of accountability.
11. Salvation is through the blood of Christ, not through being baptized. We believe that power is in the blood, not in the tub. We believe that you get saved by the blood of Christ.
12. Our relationship to the nation of Israel: In Romans 9 and Romans 11, the great book that is written to the church defines what the church is to believe. We know where we come from.
13. The deity of Christ: We do not believe that He was a begotten God; we believe that He was the only begotten Son. We believe that Jesus Christ was everything that God was.
14. The Word of God is the Word of God: We do not believe we have it in some mystical, magical manuscripts. We believe that we have the inherent, perfect Word of God in your lap this morning.

These were the things that they believed. These form the wall around the church, the foundation of the church, to make it a strong one.

## IV. The Destruction of the Poor is Their Poverty

The last part of Proverbs 10:15 says, "the destruction of the poor is their poverty." In a spiritual sense, this is easy to see. A fool gets destroyed because he has absolutely no defenses against the world system. That is why he gets destroyed. He cannot make good choices because he has no understanding, so he just keeps making bad choices. Then his pride gets involved when somebody tries to show him something different, and off he goes. Of course, with each bad choice comes a consequence, a payday. It is called the law of sowing and reaping in the Bible. People say all the time, "Crime does not pay," or "Sin does not pay." Yes, it does. The Bible says, "the wages of sin is death." There is a payday for sin. Do not mislead anybody. "Crime does not pay"? Sure it does. "Sin does not pay"? Oh, yes, it does. There is a payday coming. R. G. Lee, an old Southern Baptist fire preacher, used to preach a great message, "Payday Someday." It was a great message. He is long gone home to be with the Lord. But there is a payday coming, and you need to see this. Do you know what absolutely destroys a person in his own poverty? It is what he brought about by his own choices. We love to blame our problems on somebody else. We lose everything we have; we have this problem or that problem. We like to blame our scenario on everybody else out there. But the truth of the matter is what absolutely destroys anybody is our own poverty, which we have chosen to put into our life. I want to say this: dumb, stupid choices that we all make, you need to limit them as much as you can, because dumb, stupid choices will get you killed.

Last Sunday night, I could not believe it. That idiot man who put on that idiot suit to have a thirty-foot anaconda snake eat him alive so he could document it. There is something wrong with a guy that would do that. He had this skin diver suit on with a helmet. That was the biggest snake I have ever seen in my life. It was on National Geographic. He had been bragging about how he was going to have this snake eat him alive. I asked myself, "What then?" He explained that if you stare at the snake, it regurgitates and throws up. "Oh, I am really going to bank on that!" Let me tell you something: if a snake has enough guts to eat me in front of twenty people with TV cameras, not much is going to scare him. It took twenty people to pick up this snake. It was as long as from here to where Danny is sitting. It was that big around in some places. It was a big snake. He was sticking his head around the snake's mouth. He had to prove something here. That is stupid.

Snakes, anacondas, can eat something a lot bigger than what they are, can they not? They dislocate their jaws so they can make their mouth a lot bigger. Their mouth may only be that big, but they can get a whole pig in or whatever because they dislocate their jaws, and then their jaws go back together again, like some of you. He is down there, honestly, laying in front of that snake, doing that with his head, and the snake tried to... But then, come on, what is this guy thinking? Snakes do not eat live animals; they kill them first. They are called constrictors. So this thirty-foot snake coils himself around this idiot in this suit. You cannot even see the guy, and it is squeezing him, and he has a two-way radio. You know what this conversation is all about. This guy is trying to be calm because he is on national television. He is trying to be calm, and he is saying, "Okay, I think you better get me out. He is really crushing me in here. I think he is going to break my arm." Twenty guys run in and unravel this snake. What did you think he was going

to do? Dumb choices get you killed. I am telling you, I watched it. He said, "My arm, my arm, he is going to break my arm." I wanted him to eat you. I watched that snake coil around that guy. For a while, when the snake was coiling around him, he thought he had something going. He was going like this, "Okay, we have to go." But that snake completely got him going, and then it was going to crack. If they would not have gotten him out, that snake would have broken him like a pretzel.

I know it was stupid. I know it was goofy, but I could not help but watch it and think to myself, "That is exactly what the world does." It coils itself around you. One or two coils do not look too bad, do they? Maybe three, you can survive. But pretty soon, that old world coils itself completely around you, and it crushes everything in you. That was a dumb, stupid choice; it got him killed.

I think of that Australian guy, Steve Irwin. He was the goofiest guy anyhow. He would always get in front of cobras, and they would stick up at him like that, and he would say, "Wow, mate, that was pretty close, wasn't it?" He went skin diving with a stingray. They are cousins to eels. He was down there playing with his stingray, and it swiped around with its stinger on the end and killed him. That is stupid. After I watched that snake down on the Amazon, I would not even go... I had some things I wanted to buy; I was not even going to go on Amazon.com. I wanted nothing to do with it.

Some choices you make will get you killed because they are stupid. Did you see the one about the lion whisperer where he goes into this jungle and stands on a path and starts calling, and a nine-hundred-pound lion runs up, jumps on him with his paws, knocks him down, and he is there playing with him, and the lion is licking him like they are good buddies? We get the idea that these wild animals have human tendencies. Who licks you today will eat you tomorrow. He was not licking you because he liked you; he was sizing you up, how you tasted. Making decisions like that will get you killed.

I remember last year, a year and a half ago, at SeaWorld, they had a five-ton killer whale who did tricks. This woman got in with the whale, rode around holding onto his dorsal fin. He would hold fish up; he would come up and grab the fish. She would get in there and swim around with him, and everybody would clap and all those things. Then one day, he decided to take her for a ride, and he killed her. Everybody says, "What a tragedy!" But he says, "What happened? What happened?" I do not know what happened. It is called a killer whale; it is not a latte whale. It is a killer whale. What do you mean, "What happened?" A killer whale did what a killer whale does: he killed her.

I see people all the time make some of the stupidest decisions, and it gets them killed spiritually, and then they are scratching their head, "I wonder what happened. I wonder what happened." I do not know if they were saved and lost. But either way, if they went to hell or they went to heaven, I will get you when they finally got into the pearly gates or went to hell before anything ever happened. Everybody there just died laughing. There are a lot of good ways to die. Being killed in a war is noble. Being killed in a car wreck is not always your fault. But I can just see when you get up to heaven, and Saint Peter asks you, "Well, how did you get here?" "Well, I had

a big snake trying to eat me." Peter says, "Get out of here. He does not even belong up here." The Bible says, "the destruction of the poor is their poverty."

Do you know that in life, in America anyhow, no matter how much poverty you are in, in most cases, you can work your way out of anything in time if you want to? One of the things I love about Restart down there is that you have all the levels of the families, and you see this on the street and the people that you work with. Many of those people have come there, went into that program, and are making their way back. There are a thousand organizations like that across this country. Some people will never get back. Do you know why? They stay in their poverty that they caused on their own all of their life. Do you know why? Because they will not work to get out of it. It takes work. In a spiritual sense, it is the same thing. I always say this: I understand that you are not always responsible for things that happen to you that are bad in life, but you are responsible in working your way out of it. The victim status only goes so far for me. I know that there are times that I have seen in people that I have worked with that they were truly victims. Something happened to them that gave them legitimate victim status. But you cannot stay in victim status the rest of your life. At some point, you have to realize and understand that maybe it was wrong that it happened to you. Maybe it was unfair that it happened to you. But I do not know what to tell you; life is not always fair. You know what you have to do? You have to get into the Bible, and you have to work your way out of it. You have to get back.

I suggest that people who want that victim status go back to that bookstore and buy a book called *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom. There was a lady who was a teenager in Haarlem, right down from Amsterdam. I have been to that place; it is a memorial now. Her dad was a watchmaker, and they hid Jews during the Nazi occupation of Holland. They got caught. Her dad was killed, her mother was killed, and her sister died in Auschwitz. She was sent to Auschwitz, almost died there. She was treated to some of the most inhumane brutality that you ever saw in your life: raped by the guards, beaten by the women guards, starved to death, almost killed, a hair's breadth from being gassed in gas chambers. When she got out of there, after all of that downtime in her life and all of that tragedy, she was a saved woman. She got in touch with Billy Graham at some point, and she went around this country talking about how great God was and how He delivered her. She never blamed one Nazi one time in her life. In fact, in one of her meetings years later, one of the concentration camp guard women came to that meeting, came down, and got saved. Let me ask you a question: if she had to go through all of that in the concentration camp for God to use that one woman to get saved, would it have been worth it? Yes. What is the value of an eternal soul? I guarantee you it was worth it, but I also guarantee you that was not the only one. God used her all through her life until she died and went home to be with the Lord.

God will give you salvation free, my friend; it is a gift. But from then on, you have to do the work. You have to be a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Changing your direction in life is about changing you: the way you think, the way you look at things, the way you apply yourself. If you are not willing to do that, you are going to stay in spiritual poverty all of your life. Do you know what most of God's people really are? We go down to the homeless every other week. But most of God's people that I meet today are

absolutely homeless. They have no job for God. They have no direction in their life from God, no purpose in life from God, no place they live spiritually in dwelling with God. They are homeless. They are broke spiritually and they are bankrupt spiritually. Though they may have a house, cars, and money, they are just like the people down there at Restart, only in a spiritual sense, they are flat busted broke spiritually.

## V. The Labor of the Righteous Tendeth to Life

Look at Proverbs 10:16: "The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin." That is a great proverb. By the time we get through Proverbs here, if you are doing what you need to be doing and getting your notes in there and getting it together, you are going to have this book down.

He says, "the labour of the righteous tendeth to life." There are two things here you want to mark down:

15. In a doctrinal sense, that is a reference to Christ's labor on the cross where the Bible says He finished the work, a righteous work, and it tended to life, you and me getting saved. John 19:30, when He was on the cross, right before He died, He said, "It is finished." What? The finished work of Christ. He had fulfilled the law; He had done everything He was going to do. Now that righteous work tended to life because you and I got saved through it.
16. In an inspirational application, it is you and me. It is my labor for God after I am saved. Get into the Word of God, build a righteous relationship with Him. Then, because I have God's righteousness inside of me, Jesus Christ, I can do a righteous work, and it tends to life. Other people get saved.

The verse says, "the labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin." Look at Romans 6. You want to put this reference in by this verse. Romans 6:20-23 is a great verse. Here is what it says:

*Romans 6:20-23*

*For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*

*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

You see that when we were unsaved, our fruit was sinful, and it produced sin. But now you are righteous, now you are saved; it tends to life, everlasting life, as Romans 6:22 states. We talk about a "fruitless Christian." No, that is not true from a Bible standpoint exactly, because every Christian bears fruit; it is just the kind of fruit you bear. In the Old Testament, they were told to bear the right kind of fruit, but they never did; they bore the wrong kind of fruit. The Bible says that you are going to bear fruit as a Christian one way or the other. You are either going to bear

fruit that is God's fruit, or you are going to bear the world's fruit. It is that simple. Proverbs 11:30 says, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

## VI. He That Refuseth Reproof Erreth

Proverbs 10:17 says, "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth." Notice "a way of life," a lifestyle of keeping God's principles and using them. The term "the way" is used all the way through the Bible; it is one of the most used terms in all the Scriptures.

- Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
- Proverbs 2:20 says that we are to walk in the way of good men. You ought to walk in the way of men who are good men who follow the Bible.
- Proverbs 4:11 says God teaches us in the way of wisdom.
- Proverbs 6:23 says, "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."
- Proverbs 8:20 says God leads in the way of righteousness.
- Proverbs 10:29 says "the way of the LORD is strength."
- Proverbs 23:19 says God's Word will guide our way.

From the book of Proverbs, this term "the way of God" has now been defined for us. It is not some spooky thing that you have to spend a lot of time meditating over. The way of God is simply to follow His instructions, to follow what He says.

The last part of Proverbs 10:17 says, "but he that refuseth reproof erreth." When my kids were growing up, we always had a funny verse that we always gave to each other when we wanted to get at each other. It is based on what Jesus said in Matthew 22:29. In that verse, Jesus said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures." Every time my kids would do something, I would always say, "You do greatly err, not knowing the scripture." To this day, we will throw it back and forth with each other.

Ecclesiastes 7:5 is a great verse; it is an incredible commentary on life. It says, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools." That is a great commentary on life. A fool will always sing about his problems. Just listen to country-western music. I have nothing against country-western music, but the verse is true. In the jazz era, we have what we call blues, and it is a thing where sad songs are sung because a fool will always put his feelings of what he is going through into a song. He will not take rebuke; otherwise, he will make a song out of it because he is a fool. A fool will always sing about his problem, but a wise man will always go to the Word of God and solve his problems. There is the difference.

People do not like rebuke. People do not like to be told against what they want to hear. The Bible says that he that refuses rebuke makes an error in life, another bad choice.

## *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:*

Reproof and correction are part of what the Book does for us. He does not just give us what is right; He does not just show us the right way to go. He shows us what is wrong with us, and then He shows us how to correct that. Proverbs 6:23, which I gave a minute ago, says, "reproofs of instruction are the way of life." A real Bible-based relationship with God is the ability to take reproof and correction and rebuke, realizing that it only makes you better, and it is just as much a part of the Christian life as any blessings of God are. They go hand in hand, negative and positive, in dealing with people.

I know it starts with you and me; you hear me say it all the time, but that has always been the key, whether they make it or not. You need to see this because many of you work with people. Many of you start working with people, and they go on for a while, and then they do not want to finish. They start to come to church, and then they do not go to any church. You meet them someplace; they come here; they start to get disciplined; they get all excited about it. But then something happens. Many of you ask yourself the question, "What happened?" You have asked me what happened. I am going to show you what happens. You hear me say all the time that in dealing with people, you have to go through probably ten or twelve people to keep one or two because you get so many people that do not want to do what the Bible says. In every case, this will be the issue; I have never seen it fail. They start out fine. They come to church; they get excited; they see all the fun things we do. They get disciplined. They come to Sunday morning, Thursday night. They come down to Restart to get all excited about the Bible and God and learning. Then at some point, they are going to set aside; they are going to go no farther. At some point, they are going to stop dead in their tracks. In time, they are going to back out and quit everything they did. There are a thousand excuses that they will give you, and I have heard them all. But the man of understanding will know why from the book of Proverbs.

Let me tell you something. I am glad that many of you have come to this church, and you new folks, you old folks, you are here, you are pretty much stuck with it. New ones that come in, all you young couples and singles and moms and dads, I am thrilled that you are here. You look around and you see, you come to Bible study, we talk about exciting things, we laugh and have fun. We have a good time. We do not take too many things seriously in life. We laugh at ourselves; we laugh at everything around us. We just have a good time. I watch that. That is all good, and we are not going to stop that because that is part of who we are. But I want you to understand something. Here is the problem: the more you begin to get into your Bible, the more that Bible begins to get in you. When Christ comes into your life and dwells inside you, He wants a dwelling place that is comfortable. So He comes in and looks around and says, "We have to do a little house cleaning here. This is not where I can be comfortable." So He says, "This has

got to go. This has got to go. You can keep that. This has got to go. This has got to go." The real bottom line is, we do not want to let it go.

There is one thing my wife and I never do together, and that is clean out the garage. It is World War III. The fact that you walk in my garage and it is all scattered everywhere, I know where everything is at. She will go in there and start throwing away stuff that is invaluable, I mean, nothing to her. She does not trap raccoons. She will say, "You do not need that. Get rid of that." I am not getting rid of that; I have had that for twenty years. "Well, you do not use it." "I will someday." She stays out of the garage, better for her, because it is always a knockdown, drag-out. That is the way it is with God in your life. When He comes in, He says, "This has got to go." You cannot keep this, and you want to keep it, and you want to hang onto it. So in the midst of all the fun things, once you start getting into the Bible and you start growing in the Bible, God starts cleaning out the house. There becomes the point of your resistance. You will go so far, but you will refuse reproof as it gets a little deeper, as you get deeper in the Bible. You can get through discipleship; it is not offensive. But I will tell you what, you start coming to Thursday night Bible study on a regular basis, you start getting into the upper levels of teaching, and you start coming on Sunday morning on a regular basis. When we start to get into the Bible, that Holy Spirit of God starts walking up and down these aisles and looking in your garage door and saying, "That has got to go. This has got to go." You know it needs to go because I know what she is saying is true. I have not caught a raccoon in twenty years, but who knows, when the apocalypse of zombies comes, that may be all we have to eat. I am keeping them, but I know they are no good. I have stuff in there that I do not even understand why it is there. There are wheels on big... I do not even know where they came from, but they are there, and you never know when you may have to have wheels to put on something. So I will not get rid of it. How many times do we have that lame, stupid, ridiculous argument with God? God says it has got to go. The difference is, I will tell her to stay out of the garage, and she will. You tell God to stay out of the house, He will not. He will not. There is the point of resistance.

The Bible is a magnifier. The Bible is like a telescope. I never forget, astronomy was always part of my life, but I got my first telescope when I was probably thirteen or fourteen years old. It was no magnificent thing; it was not a nice tripod. But I will never forget it. I had trouble getting it to work, and I could not find it. It did not have any viewfinder on it. I could not find the moon, and I just cranked it. I will never forget. One time, it just all hit me. When I was looking across there, I saw the moon, and it looked open. But I went and just hit it, and I thought, "Golly!" When you look at the moon with the naked eye, it looks wonderful. But you start putting the magnification on it through a telescope, it looks like a pile of rocks. You put 100X on it and look at it one hundred times closer. You keep going up to 200, to 400, and you get to about 500, and you look down in there, and you are looking down inside those craters. You see every imperfection on the moon that there is: rills, craters, broken beer bottles, chewing gum wrappers, the whole nine yards. That is what the Bible does. When you look at yourself, and I look at myself, we look pretty good. But when you put the magnification of the Word of God on you, it shows you the cracks and the crevices, the imperfections. This is where the resistance comes from. That is what the Bible does; it turns up the magnification.

*James 1:22-25*

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

The Bible not only is like a magnifying glass, showing you up through magnification, but the Bible is likened to a looking glass. There is a strange thing, a funny thing about mirrors: mirrors never lie. If you want them to lie, you have to... Have you ever gone to the carnival where they have the mirrors that make you look real skinny or big-headed or huge? They are not normal mirrors; they are bent. They are kind of bent in the middle to give a false impression. When it comes to real mirrors, real mirrors always show you what you really are. When it comes to the Word of God, it always shows you what you really are. Many times, just like we do not like to look in a real mirror, we want to look in a convoluted mirror that is bent, that shows us what we really want to see versus what we really look like. Mirrors never lie.

When your wife comes in and says, "Honey, does this dress make me look fat?" she is asking you to override what the mirror just told her. I am just telling you, mirrors do not lie; it is that simple. When a Christian complains about a "hot message," saying, "It is too long," "It is too negative," "No love there," "Too harsh," "I did not feel the Spirit of God," he is asking you to override what the mirror of the Word of God just told him about himself. My advice when it comes to your wife: tell her the mirror is wrong. Learn to pick your battles. Like one guy said one time, "Honey, the mirror does not make you look fat; you are just fat." That was not the answer she wanted to hear. My advice is to tell your wife the mirror was wrong, and tell the other person that the mirror was right and they are wrong.

James 1:23 says, "he is like unto a man that beholdeth his natural face in a glass," who you really are, what you are really all about. It is like the old nursery rhyme with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" No matter what that old wicked witch tried to do, she was pretty crafty. She knew Snow White was beautiful and much more beautiful than her. So she dressed Snow White in all of these raggedy clothes to make her look terrible. Then she would go to the mirror, and she would put on her best clothes and say, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" Every time, no matter what she did to Snow White on the outside to make her look bad, that mirror did not look on what the outside was; it looked on the inside, and every time Snow White came out, because you cannot hide. Whatever you try to do on the outside, however you try to dress it up, or flower it up, when you go to the mirror, the Word of God, it will cut right through that and it will show you what is really on the inside. That is how it works. This is why people will not stay in a Bible-preaching

church who will not be honest with themselves. As the Bible says in James 1, "they deceive their own selves." They will not be part of it; they cannot keep looking at it and take the reproofs.

James 1:25 says, "For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." He went his own way; he was not going to go, and he straight away forgot what manner of man he was as fast as he could. Do you know how they do that? When you do not like a church that really puts the Word of God to you, you go to a church that you can hear whatever you want to hear. The second thing you do is you surround yourself with people who do not believe the Bible and hold you accountable. You surround yourself with people who are just like you; birds of a feather flock together, and you separate yourself from the Bible folks who love the Word of God.

James 1:25 says, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Here is the key: looking into the mirror and seeing who you really are, getting honest, and then continuing therein, you stay in the Book. You realize that rebuke is a good thing. If you want the blessings of God in your life, if you want the victories of God in your life, it only comes through the rebuke of God in your life. When you refuse that, you are a fool. Because he keeps the Word that he sees, all of it, the positive and the negative, the Bible says he becomes a hearer. I love this: he becomes a hearer of the Word in James 1:23. Then James 1:25 says, when he becomes a hearer of the Word, he also becomes a doer of the work. You cannot be a hearer of the Word without being a doer of the work; it is that simple.

The greatest example that I can think of in the Old Testament is in 1 Samuel 3:35, talking about Samuel. Samuel was the greatest prophet that Israel ever had. He was the last judge, and he was a great one. When you look at his life, there are six character qualities of his life. What a lesson it is; it is itself a great sermon. It is all in one verse in 1 Samuel 3:35. It starts out by saying that the first character quality that Samuel had was that he was a faithful priest. He did and stayed with the things that God gave him to do.

- The second thing about him is he had God's heart as his heart. (Psalms 119:11)
- The third thing: God's mind was his mind.
- The fourth thing: he built a sure house.
- The fifth thing: he walked before the Lord.
- The sixth thing: he was in ministry every day of his life.

The key to all of this is in 1 Samuel 3:19. It is the same key for you. If you are going to make it, if you are going to get to where God wants you to be, and you are going to be the wise man, and you are going to take the instruction, you are going to lay up wisdom, and you are going to get everything. You are going to take it, the good and the bad, the rebuke and the blessings. It comes down to the key in Samuel's life because he is such a model. It simply says this in 1 Samuel 3:19: "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." He took everything that God said, the good and the bad, the positive and the negative, because he realized that all of it was there for his good, not just the good things that he liked, but the things that he did not like. Our passage says that a wise man will lay up knowledge. It says

that when he is in God's way, he will take instruction: the good and the bad, the correction and the reproof, right along with the blessings and the honor; they go hand in hand.

I leave you with this: when you go home tonight from whatever you are doing tonight, and you walk into your dark house and you flip that light switch and the light comes on, and now you can see, and you have light to do whatever you need to do, remember one simple little thing: it was not just a positive wire to turn that light on; it was also the negative wire. You cannot do anything in life without a positive and a negative. You cannot even light your house, and you will never grow to be God's man or God's woman to have all that God wants you to have without the positive wire and the negative wire.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus today. We love You and we thank You.