

## I. The Importance of God's Wisdom and Understanding

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want you to turn to the book of Proverbs, to Proverbs chapter 4 again. Last week we were in verses 5, 6, and 7. We are going to finish that today. Last week we took verses 5 and 6, and I matched them up to a story in the Old Testament in 1 Samuel chapter 3. The purpose of that was to show you the biblical principles, the model, and the process of another concept of getting God's wisdom and God's understanding, and then keeping it.

We know from our past studies that the wisdom of God focuses on your ability to know the Bible. The understanding of God focuses on the aspect of you taking what you know and being able to use the Bible. That is vitally important. The real issue is the ability to hold on to what God gives you and not lose that wisdom and understanding. This happens quite frequently when you start getting into the real world and dealing with situations.

I showed you how God, in the life of Samuel, in time revealed Himself to Samuel as what He wanted him to do. That is exactly what God will do with you. Many of the problems and struggles we go through in life are simply because God saved us for a purpose, and we have never fulfilled that purpose. It is that simple. I wish there was some great theological answer to many people's problems, some great deep thing that we could look at, but the truth of the matter is simply this: most of the issues that we go through in life are issues that we put ourselves into. When we put ourselves into them, we quit growing. When we quit growing, that compounding effect that we have talked about so many times comes into our life, and this is where we wind up with all kinds of struggles.

I showed you last week the complete study that pictures how God will take you through a process. God has something He wants to accomplish in your life, and He knows how to get it done. What He wants to do is put a process in your life that actually brings you through. I showed you that process last week in 1 Samuel chapter 3, the spiritual growth in Samuel's life in a story dealing around the Tabernacle, and how in time God established him as He will establish you to be what God wants you to be. In Samuel's case, it was to be a prophet to Israel. As we know, Samuel became one of the greatest prophets that Israel ever had.

Our spiritual growth will lead to our spiritual maturity, but one feeds the other. There is no spiritual maturity in our lives without spiritual growth, and spiritual growth is the road that takes you to spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is simply your ability to not only know the Bible, but to know how to use the Bible. That is the key: that you can know God in every way through the Word of God.

The key to Samuel's life last week was his attitude toward the Word of God. It will be the same thing with you and with me. I showed you in 1 Samuel 3:19 that it simply said that Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. I cannot tell you how important that one concept is. If you did not hear anything else I said last week and just got that one piece of information, it is enough to change every aspect of your life.

Then I showed you the five qualities that God looks for in us and in people.

1. He was a faithful priest.
2. He was a man that would seek and get God's heart.
3. He was a man who would get God's mind.
4. He was a man that would let God build him a sure house.
5. He was a person who would desire to walk before God forever.

These are five great character qualities. You can take these five qualities and do character studies in the Bible. You will see these things in people's lives. This is what God saw in them, and this is what God sees in us. God wants to develop that if we will allow Him to do so.

Ezekiel 22:30 has always been a great passage for me, where it simply says that God is looking for a man. Of course, we know that He is also looking for a woman. He is looking for a man that will make up the hedge and stand in the gap before God. When God sees those character qualities in that person, and God calls that person, and when that person responds back to God, then God begins that process to add to them the things that they need to get them to the point where they become the vessels of honor that we talked about last week through the spiritual growth process.

## II. Wisdom as the Principal Thing

Today I want to focus on Proverbs 4:7. I want to show you how to develop in your life that wisdom and understanding of God on yet another level. This will pull a lot of things together that we have already talked about, and you will hopefully see some things even more clearly after today. Let us read Proverbs 4. I am going to go ahead and read verses 5 and 6 again, and then we will tie it back into verse 7.

Proverbs 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Proverbs 4:6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We thank You for all that You do for us and for the Word of God that You have given us. I pray, Father, today that You will help us to see and understand how clearly and how simply this thing really unfolds itself and lays itself out. So many pastors, so many churches, so many people want to make the Word of God so complicated. Lord, You made it such a simple book, but we have to do it Your way, the Bible way. When we approach it that way, Father, it gives us the insight into understanding what we need to have to get through the things in life we need to get through. We will thank You now and praise You today in Jesus' name. Amen.

Proverbs 4:7 says that the wisdom of God is the principal thing: "therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." I want to take that concept this morning for just a moment—

the concept of wisdom being the principal thing—and I want to show you how it all works in our lives today. Follow me through this. The Bible, as the Word of God, we know is truth. That truth has been defined for us in the book of Proverbs as God's wisdom. This Bible truth, this wisdom, when God puts it into specific teachings, we know those specific teachings are called doctrines. The Bible is filled with them.

When you get Bible doctrine—the teachings, the truth on any particular subject—then in time, as you build these doctrines in your life, these doctrines will form for you what we call principles that you live your life by. This is why it is saying that wisdom is the principal thing. Wisdom is the understanding, the knowledge, and the truth of the Word of God. When it forms into Bible doctrines, and you put those doctrines in your life, it becomes the principles by which you live your life. It becomes the principles by which you now have at your disposal to make every choice in life that you have to make. We know from our past studies that life is about choices. So, he says wisdom is the principal thing because it is that principle that the principles come from doctrine, or they come from wisdom.

A principle defined will simply be this: a rule of action in your life. A principle is a rule of action. It is a hard, fast rule that you can govern your life by. It is a rule of action that you live by. When you have principles in everything in your life from the Word of God, it forms for you a barrier of truth that allows no error to come in because you are always looking at it and always using it in every aspect of your life.

I have told you this before: we talk about principles, and then we talk about promises. There is a difference between principles and promises. Let me explain it to you. All promises in the Bible—and there are thousands of them, and I encourage you to make a notebook of promises that God has made to you over the years—all promises are principles. However, not all principles will be promises. Let me show you.

*Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

That is a principle in the Bible. That is a dead, rock-bottom, solid principle in the Bible. But it is not a promise. You go over to Philippians 4:19, where it says,

*Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

That is a principle, but it is also a promise. So, all promises are principles, but not all principles are promises that you can apply into your life as something personal to you. A principle defined will simply be a rule of action. Sometimes, when it is a promise to you, it will be a rule of action directly to you: "My God shall supply all of your need." When it is in a general sense about history, or what God has done through history, or what God is going to do in the future, like

Isaiah 9:6-7, it is still a principle. It is a truth, but it is not applied to my life in the sense of a promise. That is not going to get me through tomorrow when I come up short in some things in my life. But it will get me through and help me understand the Bible when I put it in its proper context. So, you want to understand that aspect.

I talk about you having goals in your life all the time. I have goals for this church that I want to accomplish. When I talk about accomplishing those goals in your life or the goals in our church, I am simply talking about you getting to the place where you get God's wisdom, which is the principal thing. When you get God's wisdom, you know the Bible. Then, you couple that with God's understanding, you learn how to use the Bible. Then you will get a rule of law in your life. You will get a final authority in your life, an absolute standard by which you can judge everything that comes into your life based on the absolute teachings in the form of a rule of action—the principles based on the doctrine which comes from the truth of the Word of God.

### III. The Process of Building Biblical Principles

Let me show you how you begin this process in your life. I am glad the kids are in here today because this is something that even now, kids, you can begin to do in your life, and your mom and dad can help you with it. This is a great aspect, so I am glad that you are here today. My whole style of ministry, my whole format of teaching, and even my preaching will follow this line of thought if you pay any attention to it. Ephesians 4:27 says,

*Ephesians 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.*

That is a great principle, and it is also a great promise. You and I should not give any place to the devil. But what does that verse really mean? How do you do that or not do that? When you have a principled life, and you operate your life and make your choices by principles, the devil has nowhere to go. We give place to the devil when we do not follow the principles in the Word of God and we start getting creative with our own decision-making process in life. We have all been there. We have all done that. Yet, we could all say today in one loud voice, we know how that all ends. That is the concept of a principled life.

When the Bible says, "give no place to the devil," you simply keep the principles in your life in everything that you do, every decision that you make, every choice that you make. You have to learn the principles first. I am going to show you that process in a minute. Once you get to that point, once you have accomplished the goal in your life that now you know the Bible and you know how to use the Bible—the wisdom of God and the understanding of God—now you come to the place where you have a principled life. The devil can do many things. It would be safe to say today that there is probably no one that knows the Bible better than the devil, other than the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of God. The devil's main sphere today and always has been religion. The devil knows that Bible inside and out better than anybody. Yet, the Bible teaches us that the devil can do many things. But I will tell you one thing the devil cannot do: he cannot get around the Scriptures. He simply cannot. We see a great example of that in Matthew 4, where we have the temptation of Christ. The Bible says that the devil comes to Christ and tries to tempt Him three times to get Him to do three different things. He comes the first time and tries to get

Him to do something; it does not work. He tries the second time to get Him to do something; it does not work. He tries the third time to do it; it does not work. Then the Bible says, "then the devil leaveth him." There was something about those three times and the door being shut every time that the devil just said, "Nothing I am going to do here." It was not the fact that he was up against God's Son. It was not the fact that Jesus was the eternal Son of God, which He was. That was not the issue that stopped the devil. The thing that stopped the devil is the same thing that you can use to stop him when he starts to tempt you in his life. Every time he came and tried to get the Lord to do something, the Lord simply said, "It is written." First time, "It is written." He comes back the second time, "It is written." He comes back the third time, "It is written." The Bible says the devil leaves Him. Why? Because when you use the principles of the Word of God, he has no place to go. It is when we get creative, when we get moving in our own little world and sphere of doing all the things that we think we do, and we get outside of those principles, that is where we give him place.

Turn over to Isaiah 28. I want to show you the actual process here because I believe that many of you here today really want this. I believe you all want it; I just do not know that you are all willing to do what you have to do to get it. Isaiah 28:9-10, I call this passage the great building block passage of learning Bible doctrine. Isaiah 28:9 says,

*Isaiah 28:9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

*Isaiah 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:*

There is the process, or the beginning of that process.

We all have one thing in common today: we all went to school. Our school experience, no matter where you went, is pretty much the same. Around kindergarten, first, or second grade, they start to teach you how to read and write. I remember two things about grade school: around the top of the class there was always the alphabet, and there was always a half-finished painting of George Washington. It started with the ABCs. You take those ABCs and you form little one-syllable words, like 'cat' or 'dog.' I remember the biggest day in school for us was when you learned how to spell your own name. The next level was to take the alphabet, form those little words, and then put them into a sentence: 'Cat saw the dog,' 'Dog saw the cat.' A little later on, we developed longer words, and the sentences got longer and more detailed. By the time you get two or three years under your belt, your teacher says, 'By Monday, write me a book report.' You read a book and you have to write a report, using all kinds of words. By the time you are a junior or a senior in high school, to graduate, they tell you, 'You have to do a term paper or do a thesis.' Now it is really in-depth. After three or four or five years, you now have a command of the English language to the degree that you can just about write anything, use any words you want. But it all started with the ABCs. It is the same way with the Bible. In time, you will get command of the Bible. You will learn how to use it just like you learned how to use words, just how you learned the right sentences. It is the same way with the Bible and the Bible doctrine of getting to the principles. The true doctrine is the ABCs of learning the Bible. It is that simple. When you get

into the Bible, it starts with the ABCs, and then you build precept upon precept. You build line upon line. Once you get to that point in your life where you really establish yourself as being able to use it, then you come to the place where you hear a little, there a little. You get some more on Thursday night. You get some more on Sunday morning. You get some more in your discipleship class. You get some more from your own personal study. Now you are building precept upon precept. You are line upon line. You keep adding to your faith the absolute principles of the Word of God.

I want you to see this. He says, "precept upon precept, line upon line." That is a plumb line, what they call when you build a wall. If you have ever seen a man lay bricks, he puts a plumb line or a chalk line on it, and it runs from one end to the other. When a man lays those bricks, he lines it up to that line to keep that wall from getting crooked, keeping it straight. That is what he does. The Bible says that your body and my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 says that the day you and I got saved, we laid a foundation in our life. Then we build on that foundation the rest of our lives. We build doctrine. We build precepts. We build principles. Just like a contractor will lay one block down at a time and then build on top of that, that is what we do. We start with the basic ABCs of the Bible. We go through the next level. We keep moving up levels. We keep adding a course, a principle upon principle, precept upon precept, line upon line. We keep moving the line up. When you get saved and the foundation in your life is Christ, then you build on that the rest of your life. What you build is Bible doctrine that leads to biblical principles that gives you the ability not only to know the Word of God, but the ability to use the Word of God. That is my goal for you.

In building a wall, you use bricks. In building your body spiritually for God, you use the principles and the precepts that come from the doctrine—spiritual bricks, if you want to call them that. Not only do you keep the line on it that keeps it straight, but here is the word we are going to add to our message this morning, and we are going to use this a lot: "interlock." If you were to tear this sheetrock off, you would see a row of bricks. The thing you would see about those bricks is that they are not just set on top of each other. Those bricks are set where they interlock with the other bricks. They do that for strength. If they just put them all up and all the seams were right together, it would not be strong at all. The thing that makes it strong is the interlocking of the bricks where the seam is here, and then it is here, and the bricks are interlocked with that seam. That is what you do with Bible doctrine. You are going to find that when you start to use the Bible and you start to learn principles and you start to get the Bible doctrine down, that is what they do. They interlock with the other doctrines. They tie themselves together, and the "line upon line" keeps you straight doctrinally. It keeps you from getting off into heresy and keeps you from teaching things or believing things that are wrong. When you get Bible doctrine down in your life, that is what they do. They interlock with all the other doctrines, and it keeps you straight and it makes you strong. That is exactly how it works.

I have told you this a thousand times since we started the book of Proverbs: life is all about the choices that we make. We make bad choices and bad decisions simply because we will not listen to what God is saying to us. It is that simple. I know there are people who have never had the advantage of learning the Bible, and they just get into a mess. I understand that. But that is not

true of you here today because now you are listening to it and hearing it, and most of you are here quite often, so you understand the Bible and have some kind of understanding about a principled life. But we refuse the process, or we have it for a while and then we depart from it. We let the words drop from our mouths, like Samuel was told not to do, and we never simply get the ability to make good, solid choices based on Bible principles. We refuse to build our wall straight. We will not interlock the bricks, the doctrines. So, we make terrible choices with terrible consequences in many cases. I have seen this over the years: God's people who have been the king and queen of bad choices. One hundred percent of the time, they always go back to this fundamental issue: the simple building blocks of the ABCs, building upon that foundation, getting it all interlocked, keeping the wall straight, and growing up. The higher you go and build, the stronger you become and the more mature you become, as long as your wall is interlocked with the other bricks and your line is kept straight. That is the key. It is that simple.

I will say it again: you can see in any church the difference between people who have a principled life and the ones that do not. We try to operate here as biblically close to the New Testament as we possibly can today. We try to build a principled life based on a principled ministry. But the problem is, in a Christian world that is filled with people who are undisciplined and totally unprincipled, that lifestyle and concept is not very popular today. But I have found that in spite of all of that, there are still many people who have, as I say, "the right stuff." We talked about it last week, who want a principled life.

I told you last week the story of Missy. She wanted to be disciplined. She went to her church she was attending back then and asked them four times to get disciplined. Every time the pastor said, "I will take care of her and get somebody with you," but he never did. Finally, they got somebody hooked up. That person went over there, knocked on the door, came in, and said, "Hey, we are here to disciple you. We brought the lessons over. You go ahead and read through them on your own. If you have any questions, call us." That is certainly not the way to disciple. If anybody in this church ever does that, you will be out of a job so fast you will not know what hits you. Do you know why God does things like that? God was seeing where she really was. Sometimes God will hold back what you want just to see if you are really earnest in what you want. That is why He will not just give it to you because you want it right now. Sometimes God holds back. You say to God, "Why are You not giving me this? Why are You not doing this for me? Why are You mad at me? God, do You hate me? God, are You angry?" God says, "No, absolutely not. I am just wanting to see if you really want what you want here." When God sees that, she could have just as easily gotten upset and said, "God, if You are not going to give me what I want, I went once, I went twice, I went three times, I went four times, and You got some bozo to come over here and threw the lessons down, and I do not understand them. If I understood the lessons, I would not need somebody to disciple me." She did not. She said, "Lord, I want it." God said, "You have the right stuff, girl. I will get you out of that mess over there, and I will get you some place where you will get what you need." Try to get her out of here now.

I had an 18-year-old kid last week, on his 18th birthday, who lives in Nebraska. His mom asked, "What do you want for your 18th birthday?" He wanted a 15-minute Bible study with "Bible Examiner" on the phone, down in Kansas City. So, I gave him his birthday, Christmas, and his

next birthday. We were on the phone for about an hour and 15 minutes. I know this kid and his family very well. He has "the right stuff." Show me an 18-year-old kid today who wants a Bible study for his birthday, not a Corvette, or a Camaro, or a Firebird, or a date with whoever. Something is going on there. All of you, if you are saved, are in a specific spiritual growth process on a scale from one to ten. Our goal should be to get to the place in our lives where we make every decision and every choice, and deal with every issue, based on biblical principles to the best of our ability. Spiritual maturity is nothing more than a life based on sound doctrine and your ability to use that doctrine in the form of biblical principles in everything that you do. Again, wisdom is the aspect of knowing the Bible. Understanding is the aspect of knowing how to use the Bible, and then learning how to keep it simply a principled lifestyle.

In a minute, I am going to take you through and show you some easy examples of what I am talking about. I am going to take things that I have said in the past and redefine them for you as a principle. Then I am going to show you where they came from. I want you to see it. I want today to show you some basic examples of what I mean and how to find them and apply them through this process. When you get saved in our church, it starts like this: we encourage you to get disciplined. As I have said a couple of weeks ago, these form the basic building blocks, the ABCs, in Bible doctrine. There are ten basic lessons.

6. Lesson 1 deals with what happened the day you got saved and how you can know you can never lose your salvation.
7. Lesson 2 deals with the two ordinances of the church that are in the Bible.
8. Lesson 3 deals with your relationship, now that you are saved, to the Holy Spirit of God.
9. Lesson 4 deals with your relationship to the Word of God.
10. Lesson 5 is your relationship to prayer.
11. Lesson 6 is your relationship to the will of God versus the plan of God.
12. Lesson 7 is your responsibility or relationship to the local church.
13. Lesson 8 is your relationship with other people: how do you look at them, how do you deal with them, both saved and lost.
14. Lesson 9 is the aspect of the difference between tithe and offering and sacrificial giving; what is your relationship and responsibility to giving to your church.
15. Lesson 10 is the crowning one, and that deals with the Judgment Seat of Christ.

These are the ten basic fundamental building blocks that after you get saved, we put on your life. We lay on that foundation. When you get those ten done, then we can build the next level of building blocks up another couple levels. That will interlock with the ones we just gave you.

The next step we have is the seven things that changed the day you got saved. That is a tremendous study. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says,

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

This takes you to the next level beyond discipleship. What you are doing is interlocking more bricks, spiritual bricks, on the foundational bricks that you already laid through discipleship. This one talks about when you got saved, what really changed about your soul? This one deals with

when you got saved, what really changed about your affections, your citizenship, the sealing of the Holy Spirit of God in your life? What really changed about your attitude? The Bible says that now that you are saved, you are an ambassador for Christ. What does that mean? What does it mean when the Bible says that now your conversation should be up in heaven when you are still living down here on the earth? That is the next level. When you learn these seven doctrines, then you will also see how they will develop into principles in your life. You will begin to see how you take these principles, and they begin to guide you in your life—a rule of authority, a rule that you can follow for living the Christian life.

I bet you could not find—and do not just take my word for it—you all work with Christians. Tomorrow when you go to work, just gingerly get into a conversation about that and ask them, "Do you know the seven things that changed the day you got saved?" Do not even get that deep; just say simply this: "When you got saved, what changed about your soul?" I bet ten Christians in the city would not understand that. The next option that you have that we build upon that course of level is Paul talks about the seven things that God's people are not supposed to be ignorant of, found in the Bible. Seven times the Bible says, "be not ignorant of this one thing," and it tells you what it is. Do you know what those seven things are in Christianity? They are the very things that Christians know nothing about. Why is it that we are saved, we are Christian, the Bible tells you seven things that we as Christians are not to be ignorant of, and those are the very things that we are ignorant of? I know some of you are young Christians; you have not gotten there yet, and you will. But it is an amazing thing to me. This is the problem.

In a couple of weeks on Thursday night, we are going to go through God's systematic theology. I am going to take you way up to some big, 500-pound building blocks. We are going to lay that Bible out from Genesis to Revelation. You are going to see how that thing puts together and comes together. No matter how young of a Christian you are, and you may just be in discipleship, if you have been around here long enough, you are already going to see how they begin to interlock together. That is our word today: "interlock," because that is what it does. Another level in the order of how we do things around here will be our prayer groups. I think the prayer groups are probably the single most vital area in our church. We have been doing it for four years now. Bob Greg has masterminded them into a solid doctrinal format that adds to the interlocking things in our church. A couple of rounds ago, he did "Wise Men Versus the Foolish Man," based on what we did in Proverbs. It adds to what we are doing "here a little, there a little." He focuses on where we are going and what we are doing. Each person gets the opportunity in that little group to actually teach a lesson to lay out a particular doctrine that will form a principle. You are getting the opportunity to put back out what you have done if you want to. I have watched some of you young Christians do that, and even some of you young ones have taken a prayer group this last round. This round, the guys are doing the book of Philippians. I do not know of a more solid book in the Bible. The book of Philippians is a great book. It is the only church that Paul wrote to that he had no issues with. That letter is the most intimate letter that Paul writes to all the seven churches that he writes to. It is obvious that this church understands some great things and is doing some great things, and they do not have any real problems or issues. So, you are going to find that Paul, instead of spending a lot of time correcting them, just spends all of his time giving them great principles and doctrines. In the book of Philippians, there

are great principles, but the whole book is built around ten solid doctrines that form ten of the greatest Christian principles in your life and my life you could ever want. If I did not have any other book in the New Testament and all I had was the book of Philippians, I could get through almost every problem in life based on those ten absolute solid Bible doctrines that you ladies and you guys are going to be studying. It is tremendous stuff. I see you guys doing that, and you are building it, and that is why I encourage you to get in a prayer group. You have to get here at 9:30. Do not stay out as late on Saturday night. Have a goal. It will change everything about you because it will add to everything that God is already doing.

I want to show you some things today. I give you these things all the time. In the last ten years, you have probably gotten hundreds of them if you are paying attention. These things that I give you and talk about are not just Bob's homespun remedy for problems in life. They are principles that work. They are principles that have worked for me, and they are based on Bible doctrine. I have a notebook at home that probably has five or six hundred of them in it, and I write them down when God gives them to me. I go over that book religiously, like I read my Bible. On Thursday night and on Sunday morning, we will continue to build you at the different levels. As Isaiah 28:9-10 says, we keep putting the foundation down. We keep putting precept upon precept, line upon line to keep it straight, and then we add to it "here a little, there a little." We keep building that wall, and week by week, you get the principles laid out that you can use in everyday life.

#### IV. Practical Principles for Christian Living

I am going to start with something I gave you last week that struck a nerve with many people. Many people talked about it, saying it was a great thing they got out of it. This is what principles do: they form concepts that you want to put into your life. Remember I gave you last week that I said that you do not go through issues in life; you grow through issues in life. That is a great principle. Everyone goes through tough times all the time. Many times it is things that we did that are stupid. Many times it is things that somebody is trying to stop you or hurt you. But we all go through tough times in life. Nobody goes through life without heartache or problems. The problem is, we go through it, but we never grow through it. That is one of the great principles. In the Christian life, there are going to be setbacks in your life; just get ready for it. There are going to be times in your life that you have a setback. I would like to tell you that it is not, but I would be lying to you. In the Christian life, if you have been saved for any length of time, you know there are going to be setbacks in your life. But I want to tell you as a Christian, God will never give you a setback without giving you a comeback. You have to be there to take it, and you take that comeback by growing through it. I heard a preacher last week, and I do not really like what he said, but he said one thing that I thought was so apropos for where we are talking about. He said, "Do not waste the hurt. Learn from it. Grow through it. Do not just go through the hurt. Do not waste the hurt. Grow through the hurt. Learn the principles that got you there and learn the principles that will get you out of it."

Last week I said you do not go through issues in life; you grow through issues, which is based on many places in the Bible. Philippians 1:12. Paul talks about the fact that he is in bonds, he is in

jail, and he says that being in jail only furthered the gospel. Most people would look at that as being in jail would end his ministry. But he grew through his adversity, and he saw the fact that there is nothing that will stop you except yourself. The devil cannot stop you unless you give him place in your life. Your enemies cannot stop you. The only people that can stop you are you. People walk around and say, "I am really having a tough time with things that happened. I had a bad thing here or a bad thing back here, and I struggled, and I am just struggling with it, and I just cannot get past it." When we focus on what is in the past and do not focus on what God is doing now, you are never going to get past it. You have to learn to grow through it. I dare say that most of the bad times in our life we went through them because we goofed up. If you want to get mad at somebody, do not get mad at the person that you want to focus it on. Focus it on yourself for not following the principles. But that is where we are at today.

James 1:3 says, "the trying of your faith worketh patience." Then in verse 4, he says, "let patience have her perfect work." You have to grow through the things you go through. You do not just go through them. A greater example of that would be in the book of Ezekiel and the book of Daniel when Daniel went into captivity. He grew through it; he did not just go through it. Think about Joseph when he was sold by his brethren down into Egypt. He goes down there and is totally taken from his family, never knowing if he is going to see them again. But he did not just go through it; he grew through it. When he finally met up with his brothers, he said, "You meant it for my evil, but God meant it for my good." There is a guy who did not just go through the experience in Egypt; he grew through the experience in Egypt. He understood the perception because he said, "to save many." Sometimes you have to go through things in life to get to the place where you need to be so God can use you to get you to somebody else.

Here is another principle I gave you a month or so ago: "If you live in the uttermost parts of the camp, you will never get to the uttermost part of the world." That is a principle. We were studying Numbers 4 and Numbers 11 and how the nation of Israel camped around the ark, the ark being the center of it all. You had the three families that worked around the ark, and they represent the families in any church that are dialed in and bought into the ministry. You had the twelve tribes out there that were good people, but they were farther out. Then you had the mixed multitude that were in the outer camp that always gave Moses problems. I showed you that the three inner people groups never had problems with Moses. They never got out of fellowship with God. They had invested their life in that ark and the ministry around that ark. But the other crowd that was farther out was always having problems because they were always hanging out with a mixed multitude. A great principle on association is that you will become who you hang out with. It is that simple. The great principle is, "If you live in the uttermost part of the camp, you will never get to the uttermost part of the world." I tied that into Acts 1, that our job is to take the gospel to the uttermost part of the world. But we never get there because we spend too much time in the uttermost part of the camp. That is a great principle on association: you are who you hang out with.

The third principle: Galatians 6:7 says,

*Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

That is the doctrine of sowing and reaping. We all know that. But the principle is not only do you reap what you sow, but you always reap more than you sow. This idea that you are going to sow your wild oats when you are 18, 19, or 20, and then when you get to 30, pray for crop failure, does not work very well. These principles answer many questions that I know they have answered for me growing up in my life, and I am sure they will answer questions that you have in your life. After 20 or 30 years of sin, you come to church and you want to do right, but you cannot. Have you ever met people like that? I have met people who, I believe, were as sincere as they could be in wanting to get sin out of their life. In their mind, they were done with sin. In their mind, they wanted to start coming to church. They did come to church, but they struggle. They struggle and they struggle. The reason why they struggle is a simple principle: you not only reap what you sow, you reap more than you sow. You have to realize that you do not just walk away from 20 years of sin. I have seen people who were into drugs, who had a terrible time getting out of drugs. They were into drugs for maybe 10 or 15 years of their life, and then maybe they got saved, or maybe they were saved along the line someplace. Many of them get saved in jail, and they get out, and they know that it is time to turn their life around. They get married. Now they have responsibility. They start to learn some things. They want to turn it around, but they have the hardest time in the world. I see it with alcoholism. I see it with people who drink and drink and drink and get to the point where it consumes everything that they do, and they want to do what is right. They try to get it out of their life. They try to get away from it, and yet they struggle and they struggle. I am not saying you cannot get the victory over it. There is a process to get the victory over it, but here is the principle: you not only reap what you sow, you reap more than you sow. Just because you have decided in your life after 20 years of sin that you are done with sin, that does not mean your sin is done with you. You do not allow those things in your flesh to take over your life, and then one day wake up and flex your spiritual muscles and snap it and walk away and say it is never going to bother me again. You do not do it that way. There is a way to get out of it, and there is a process, and there is a victory, and many of you have found victory. But I am telling you this right now, it is not a matter of when you get tired and say, "I am not going to do that anymore." It is in your flesh now. It is there in your life, and you may want out of it, you may want to get rid of it, but it is not ready to get rid of you. And you struggle. I know it. That is why I have the patience I have with people in those things. I have patience with them because I understand how hard it is. I realize, and I never look down on a person like that. By the grace of God, we all could be in that situation. The truth of the matter is, we all have a history somewhere down the line. It is a thing where you get self-righteous about that, and get so right about things in the Bible. You can get so right about things in the Bible, you can become wrong because you become self-righteous.

I understand it is a struggle. The doctrine on that is Ecclesiastes 4:12. I gave you the principle; here is the doctrine. It simply says,

*Ecclesiastes 4:12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

You can take a little piece of thread, something that you put a button on with or sew up a hem, and you can put that around your finger. You just snap that thing. Look at that little thread like a

sin. You wrap that thread around your two fingers 40, 50, 60 times, and you will die before you break it because "a threefold cord is not easily broken." The more you put things into your flesh and into your life, the harder it is to get out of it. I am here to help you, but you need to understand the principle involved. Just because you are done with it does not mean that it is done with you. Sin never leaves a man any better than it finds him. That is a principle.

Here is another principle I give you all the time: "If it starts wrong, it ends wrong." That is one of the greatest principles in all of the Bible. People do not like this one. I have had people who got mad and wanted to do their own thing, and they will sarcastically throw that back up: "Well, Bob says, if it starts wrong, it ends wrong. I will show him." How are you doing with that? That is one of the greatest principles in the Bible. Instead of giving you 500 references and wearing out your finger, let us make it simple. You just show me one time in the Bible that when a man or a woman went his way from God's way that it ever ended up right. How did it work for Cain? How did it work for Ishmael? How did it work for Esau? How did it work for Rehoboam? How did it work for Jeroboam? How did it work for Absalom? How did it work for Ahab? How did it work for Jezebel? It did not work for anybody. Job 9:4, the doctrine says,

*Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*

And the answer is nobody, absolutely nobody. When it starts wrong, and we do things outside of biblical principles, no matter what it may be, then it usually is going to end wrong if God does not get in the process and fix it someplace along the line.

The next principle: "Great Christians will see and understand great opportunities." In the Bible, doors are likened to opportunities. My point in all of that is that when you grow to the place in your life that you are aware of God in your life, when you not only have the Bible in your life—the wisdom of God—but you have the understanding of God—the ability to use the Word of God—then you see the opportunities that are around you. You may be just a young Christian here, trying to find your way around and getting into the Word of God, but let me just say something to you: everyone in this room has opportunities all around them. God will put people, circumstances, and places right in your jurisdiction, all around you, all day long. The problem is, we are so busy looking at everything else, we miss the opportunities. Hence, "great Christians will see and understand great opportunities." The doctrine: 1 Corinthians 16:9, Paul said a great door opened unto him. In 2 Corinthians 2:12, Paul said a door was opened by the Lord, opportunities. In Colossians 4:3, Paul said God gave us a door of utterance, an opportunity to preach the gospel. Revelation 3:7 talks about the great Philadelphia church age, which was the church of the open door. The problem is not the opportunities around us; the problem is we do not have the ability to see them. We do not have the ability to see them because we do not operate the principles. We are not building on our foundation those things that we need.

The next principle I harp on all the time: "Principles on leadership." I teach and believe with all my heart that everything rises and falls on leadership. I think that everything on this planet, certainly in Christianity, rises and falls on leadership. I also believe that real leadership is not about ability. I believe that real leadership is about accountability. I believe that real leadership is

about responsibility. I believe that real leadership is about making the hard calls when they are not the popular calls, but it is the right call. I believe real leadership is the steel in your backbone to face anybody, any crowd, any church, any time, any place when the Bible is a clear mandate on what the issue is, and you take that stand based on the biblical principle. Pastors today do not want to cause a stir. They do not want to cause a problem. Jesus was not on this planet 15 minutes, and He caused all kinds of problems. He came to tell you that Christianity would not put everybody together; it was going to divide. You do not read verses in that first chapter in Genesis that the Bible says that God divided the light from the darkness, and those two concepts have not gotten along all through the Bible. You have to understand that real leadership, biblical leadership, is to be able to make the tough call, the unpopular call, not to pull back from it. It does not have anything to do with somebody who just loves controversy or loves to cause a fight or cause a problem. It has to do with the fact that you may be the person who just hates controversy and you hate to get into a problem with people, but when it comes to the Word of God and right versus wrong, you do not have a choice. A real leader will step up to the plate, and he will make that call. He will make that choice. He will make that decision whether people like it or not, if it is the right choice based on the Bible. That is the principle. Where is the doctrine? We looked at it. Remember I showed you the great story: Moses compared with Aaron. Remember I showed you Moses' leadership skills compared to Aaron's no leadership skills. You want to see a little farther on a great example of it? Contrast David and Saul. David is a man after God's own heart. He is a great leader. The people loved him. His mighty men of valor were men that would stand in line to fight for him because they loved him, because he knew he was a man's man, and they knew he was the leader and would never leave them in a lurch. Saul, on the other hand, is one of the biggest cowards in the Bible. He is the one who should have gone out and fought Goliath. He was the king of Israel. God sent a shepherd boy out. He is the one that should have been dealing with all the issues in Israel. He is blaming all the other people for it. He is a coward from the get-go, and in everything in his life, he fails as a leader. You want to study two great leaders? You want to study in a midterm period? Study Joshua and study Caleb. Two of the greatest men in the Bible. Joshua was the right guy to take them over when they got into the land. Moses was a great leader, but Moses was not a warrior. Moses was a great leader, and he brought Israel so far, but what they needed on the other side of Jordan was a warrior leader. They needed somebody that understood battle tactics. They understood somebody that knew how to fight and knew that you did not pay for the same ground twice. They needed somebody to understand that you pick your own ground to fight your battles on. He understood all those things. And Caleb, what can I say about Caleb? The last time you find him in the Bible, he is probably 85 or 86 years old, and he is going up the mountain to get his inheritance, and that mountain is just chock full of giants. He is going all by himself, and he has a sword in his hand, and he has a Bible in his other hand, and he is going to go up there and clean off that mountain, and he looks at that thing and he says, "That is my inheritance. I want that mountain." It is tough stuff to claim things for God. It is something else to pull out that sword and hack your way through to get it. But that is what leaders do. That is the principle. That is the doctrine.

Principles on finding a spouse. How many times have we talked about this one? I know all you single guys want to get married, and all you single ladies want to get married too. How many times have I gone through Genesis 24? In that great chapter, you have the story of Eliezer, a type

of the Holy Spirit of God, sent out by Abraham, a type of God the Father, to find a bride, the church, for his son, Abraham's son Isaac, a type of Christ. You have a beautiful picture of your salvation. But more than that, you have a great picture of the principles of how to find the right spouse. When I am done with this morning, if you found yourself in a situation where you got the wrong one, that is not the answer. The answer is to understand where you are at, fix it from here, and move out. You can still turn the thing around if you want to. But these are great principles, 19 different principles on finding a biblical husband or wife based on that great story. When it all comes down, you get four great principles. I have given you this before, but I want to show you where these things come from. I do not want you to think I just sit at home and think these up watching "Walking Dead" or "Band of Brothers." There is a lot of good material in those, but that is not where I get it from. There are four great quality principles here that you have to follow, all based on this doctrinal study found in Genesis 24.

In Genesis 24, at least two or three times, he makes it clear that the person has to be saved. That is not even an option. One hundred percent has to be saved. Today, in the world we live in, where there is no Bible doctrine and nobody cares about anything in the Bible, that is all they care about. Many do not even care about that; it is your dance moves they are looking for. That is all people ever look for, if they even look for that. I have taught this for years. The next thing is, are they saved? Check that off. That is good. But the next thing you want to look for, and some people do get here, is, "Okay, they are saved, but are they in ministry?" I have had many girls and guys tell me over the years, "I came to church to find a spouse because you just do not find a husband or wife in the bars or on dating sites." Finding somebody in ministry that is saved is a good deal because that shows at least they want to give to other people, and that is a good deal. So, that is the second thing on your list. In marriage, there are things that both parties need. A man has emotional needs, spiritual needs, and physical needs. A woman has the same three needs. They are not met the same way. I was at a Raytown ball game years ago, watching it and playing up there in high school ball. I was sitting behind a mom and dad whose boy was playing out there. I guess they were mom and dad; they had his jersey on with his name on it, with flags with his name on it, and shooting fireworks up that had his name blown out. I think they were his parents. I watched him, and the kid was a good ball player, his quarterback. He was passing the ball, and he snapped the ball to him, and he goes back, and something happened. The whole line collapsed, and he got clobbered by about 20 guys that just piled on him big time. I will never forget, I was sitting right behind them. The dad stood up and said, "God, son, that is the way to hit him!" The woman stood up and said, "Oh, they are going to kill my son!" I thought, "Right there it is. There is the difference." This guy here says, "Get up and charge!" This guy here says, "Oh, my little baby boy, they are going to kill him!" There is the difference. They do not look at things the same way. They do not deal with things the same way. So, you want somebody that is saved, and then you want somebody that can minister to other people, but then you want to make sure they can minister to you. Nobody ever gets there. Some people, many people, get to the first one. Some people get to the second one. Not too many get to the third one. I do not know anybody who gets to the fourth one. It is good if he or she is saved. It is also good if they are involved in ministry. It is also really great if they are involved in ministry to you. But the real question is, Acts 13:12, on ministering to the Lord. There is the creed. You get those four lights

going on, and marry her! Those are principles based on a chapter that is a doctrinal chapter that lays that thing out through a process.

The next principle: "Time spent waiting on God is never time spent wasted." You have heard me say that many, many times. We are fast-food Christians. We do not want to go in and sit down and eat; we want to go through the drive-through when it comes to the Bible. We want to go to Burger King because when you go to Burger King, you can have it your way. That is the kind of mindset we are in Christianity today, and we get in a hurry. One of the things you better learn very quickly in your Christian life is that God never gets in a hurry. God coined a phrase a long time ago that I have heard many, many times: "Just because you have a lack of planning on your part does not necessitate an emergency on God's part." God never gets in a hurry. When you have to wait on God, it builds some things in your life. Time spent waiting on God is never time spent wasted, no matter what it is. God knows that the real key that we need to have in our Christian life, probably the greatest single aspect that everything else interlocks into, is the ability to wait on God. That is the hardest thing for you and I to do. I have been saved 45 years, and it is hard for me sometimes because we see things that we just do not understand why God does not see it the way we see it. "Lord, look at this situation over here. How do You let that go on? Why do You not just kill them, God? I do not understand it." God says, "I was going to get to them on Tuesday, but today is Monday. I was thinking of killing you today. Would that work for you?" God has to do things in His timing. Let me give you a great verse, great doctrine. We saw this in 1 Samuel 3 last week, where Samuel kept going back to sleep. But look at 1 Samuel 9:27.

*1 Samuel 9:27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid thy servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.*

Sometimes you get moving so fast and doing so many things, you just cannot see what God wants you to see or hear what He wants you to say. There is a process of growing in God's time and not your own time. If you want to write what I am about to tell you down—I have said it in other forms and other ways—spiritual maturity is the one thing you cannot do your own way. You may be able to do many things and still claim that it is Christian, but the one thing you cannot do your own way is spiritual maturity. You can fake many things in Christianity. You could be out fornicating last night, doing drugs, drinking booze, and show up today with a tie and a suit on, a Bible in your arm. Everyone says, "Look at that guy, he is just great." You could be in the dregs of sin all last week and show up here and clean yourself up, and everyone thinks you are just fine. There are many things we can fake in Christianity. I will tell you the one thing you can never fake: spiritual maturity. You cannot fake it because it has to be a process of waiting on God, and when you have to wait on God, that is when you learn some things.

The next principle: the choices in life that we make. There are two aspects to them and the decisions that we make. The principle is "short-term and long-term." There are some things that we can do short-term that we do not even think about, but there are long-term consequences. Because we are not paying attention to using the principles, we violate the principles. We get married when we are 18, 19, or 20 years old before we are ready to get married. We have kids long before we are ready to get married, or we get into a situation that we should not get into

before we get married. Then, because it is all forced upon us, and we do not have any church, do not have any Bible, do not have anything to help us get there, we wonder why five, six, seven, or eight years down the road the marriage does not work. We wonder why it splits up. We wonder why we have the problems we have. That is because in every decision that you and I make, there is going to be a short-term consequence, and there is going to be a long-term consequence. Not using the biblical principles in the short-term will always lead to a disaster in the long-term. It is that simple. The great doctrinal teaching on that is Abraham. When Sarah said, "Abraham, I am barren. I cannot have any kids. You take my handmaid Hagar, and you give me a child through her, and it will be just fine." That sounded great short-term. It did not work out too good long-term, did it? After the baby is born, and Sarah cannot have one, and Hagar, like any woman to woman, is going to hold the other baby over her and add a little thing, and Sarah gets out of control and she gets mad. Short-term, it split Abraham's family. Short-term, he cast out the bondswoman and cast out Ishmael, and they are gone from the family. Short-term, it ruined his family. But long-term, 4,300 years ago, we are facing the same long-term problem because from Isaac came the nation of Israel, and from Ishmael comes the nation of Islam. What we have going on in the Middle East right now, where the Muslim nations want to wipe out the Jewish nations, and all of those nations have lined up against the Jew, and leaders are getting up and saying, "We are going to wipe Israel off the map," goes right back to that decision that Abraham made. Your decisions you make are not only going to have short-term consequences; they are going to have long-term consequences unless God does something. You use these principles before you make choices. You get saved, you lay a foundation, and then you build the building blocks, the ABCs, and you interlock everything you learn and build upon that course, keeping it straight. You get to the point the higher you go, the more spiritually mature you become, and then you get to a principled life where you make your decisions and choices, and you look at circumstances based on principles.

Here is another principle, dealing with families. You hear me say this all the time, and this is based on many counseling experiences that I have had over the years: "Your children do not cause problems in the home; your children just reveal the problems that already are in the home." That is a great principle, and there is no truer principle anywhere on this planet. The example in the Bible is clear. We already looked at it: Abraham and Ishmael is one of them. How about Solomon and Rehoboam? How about David and Absalom? How about Jacob and Esau? All through the Old Testament with the leaders of the nation of Israel. One of my favorite examples that prove this point is Jacob. Remember Jacob? Remember how he deceived Isaac to get the blessing over his brother? He got a coat of skin, a lamb coat, because Esau was a hairy man, and Jacob was a plain man. So, he puts on this hairy coat. Isaac, his father, is almost blind. So, Isaac goes in, gets his mom involved in it, and gets a little stew because his daddy likes deer meat. He brings it to him, and his daddy is almost blind, and Isaac reaches up and feels the wool on the lamb, and he thinks it is the hair on his chest, and he is deceived. Jacob walked out and said, "I did all right on that. That was brilliant, was it not? That old lambskin boy put that thing on me, and I walked in there, and he could not tell it, and he reached up and felt that thing, and I got that deception off. I did really good." Thirty-five years later, Jacob has 12 boys. They hate Joseph. They take Joseph, and they are going to kill him, but then one of them says, "We cannot do that. Let us just sell him to the Midianites." So, they say, "What are we going to tell our daddy?" They

went and got a lamb and killed that lamb, put the blood all over Joseph's coat and clothes, and brought it back and said, "Daddy, some evil beast got him." He deceived his daddy with a lambskin. They deceived their daddy with a lambskin. Where do you think they learned that? Jacob is called Jacob because Jacob means "schemer." A child gets to be 18, 19, and 20. They get involved in the world. I have seen them in drugs, in booze, having two or three illegitimate kids, and they get all kinds of problems. The parents always throw a fit. The parents always have a heart attack. They always get mad. They get mad at the kid, they get mad at the circumstances. I have always asked myself why? Why, when we raise our children, and they turn out the way that we have raised them, when they go south and they cause all kinds of problems, why do we blame them? We train them to be what they are. There is a principle: a complete breakdown of biblical principles. No wisdom of God, no understanding with God. I understand that some people come in and they get into church, and they already have the issues going in their life. I am not talking about that. The people I am talking about I have seen all of my life. Almost every one of them have been in church Sunday, Wednesday night, and everything that goes on, and they still lose their kids. That is the mark of an unprincipled family, an unstructured family that produces unprincipled kids. In many cases, they have been in church all of their life. You simply ask yourself, "How does that happen?" Let me show you.

It is the same way when you and I went to school. When you and I went to grade school or high school, you had one man at the top who enforced all the rules and oversaw all the disciplinary action. He watched and he looked over the teaching, and the curriculum was taught by the teachers. He was called the principal. In a family, wisdom is the principal thing. The father, together with the mother, formed for their family what the principal did in our school system. My principal in grade school was Mr. Lowe. In high school, it was Mr. Mr. Wolford. They made sure that everything was done in compliance with the state of Ohio school system. Back then, following the rules was not an option. The greatest fear we all had in school was being called down to the principal's office. You knew you were in deep trouble when that loudspeaker came over and said, "Send Bob Alexander down to the principal's office." Back then, they had corporal punishment. They whacked you. We had big schools that were quiet, and when somebody went down to the principal's office, everybody tuned in for the whack. It sounded like a 30-06 going off. Some of those principals had thick ones, and then they got the bright idea that they drilled holes in them to make it even more educational. The thing that I feared when he went down there, he would say, "Bend over and grab your ankles." If it was just a not-so-bad offense, it was one crack. You got three cracks. Everyone in the rest of the school had their head down because you feared the principals. What is wrong with Christianity? No fear of the principals. No fear of getting whacked by the principals when you do not do it. You also know that is what is wrong with the school system today. I read last week on the news that Kansas was going to reinstate corporal punishment, and a whole nation went berserk, thinking of a bunch of redneck, backwoods people from Kansas that are going to start whipping kids in school. I do not think they ever will. But the problem is, there is no respect for the principals anymore. Back then, you had to follow the book. Not only for us as fathers, as principals in our family, we have to be in compliance with the Word of God, the doctrine that forms for our children the Bible principles. Then we have to enforce them. If you have kids, you have to make a book on biblical principles. You have to write down the principles that you learned. You have to sit down with your kids.

Have them make their own book of principles. In a Christian life and in raising your kids, there is one word that is absolutely vital: "documentation." So many times you have to discipline your children, and they look at you and are not sure, and you have to go through this whole process while you are doing it. We started the "People Ministry." I told the people right out of chute that this was something that anybody could have gotten into, but it was something that you were going to basically sign your soul away for what you were going to get. I actually wrote up a contract with about 20 things on the back that they had to adhere to. They had to sign that contract, date that contract, initial every one of those, and then turn it back into me. I did that for documentation because I know human nature. Down the line, when somebody did not do what is right, and I have to hold them accountable, they always say, "I did not know that." Every kid says that, "I did not know that." In the "People Ministry," there is no "I did not know that" because I pull out the contract and simply say, "What part of this did you not understand when you signed it?" Documentation. You take the principles that we are giving you and you put them in a book, make them your book, and then make them the book that your children sit down and you go through the principles. "Okay kids, this week we learned these principles." Then when your kids violate them, you do not have to go through this thing. You open the book and you simply say, "What part of this did you not understand?" You document. You document for them a principle of life that they have to follow.

## V. The Sure House: Building a Principled Life

These are some of the examples of how you do it and how we do it. All of that you have heard me say many times are basically the principles of learning based on the doctrines. As you learn here, you make a book of those principles. You study them. You use them. I cannot conceive of somebody being saved for five, ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty years and not having a book of principles. It is one of those things that documents what you are learning. Build on your foundation the day you got saved, the building blocks of Bible doctrine. Right teaching forms the plumb line that keeps us straight, and we interlock those concepts. Bible doctrine and spiritual maturity: the higher the wall goes up, the more spiritually mature you are. But the straighter the wall has to be, and the stronger the wall has to be. Bible doctrine will interlock like the bricks on a wall and form the strength for you, the spiritual stability that you will see in men and women who have a principled life. As you continue to grow and get into all the things here that help you grow, and you add to them on a daily basis "here a little, there a little," in time you come here, and God sees those five areas of character in your life, and it begins to develop them like Samuel had. In time, God then builds you a sure house.

- The first aspect of the sure house is your body, strong, spiritually fit for the things of the Lord.
- The second aspect of that sure house is your family, grounded in the Word of God. All the family following and understanding the principles together, the line keeping them straight just like it keeps you straight.

➤ Thirdly, the sure house is the church that God gives us. The house of God which is built and based with families. This church will only be as strong as the leadership of it and the people that are in it.

Then 1 Samuel 3:20, as we ended last week and where we end today, God will establish you in the ministry as a vital part of what He is doing. Not on your ability, but on the doctrine and the principles you focused on in your life, and you live by them, and you build them into your family. That is the key; that is how you do it. That is what you do with the principles that you take and you get. That is called the durable riches that we talked about the other night and Thursday night. That is how it all comes together. We will hold up there next week.