

I. The Book of Proverbs and the Mind of the Devil

Today, we are going to come to what I think is probably one of the most revealing passages in the Bible. There are a lot of neat things in the Bible, and we talk about them all the time on Thursday night Bible study. But this is one of the most revealing passages of Scripture that you are ever going to find.

The Book of Proverbs has always been one of my favorite books. I just love it. I have told you before, if there is any one single book I wish I could get my hands on and have total recall of, it would be the Book of Proverbs. One of the things that we have learned about Proverbs is its theme: a wise man and a foolish man. But then there is also a counter-theme in Proverbs, and that is a strange woman, which we know now represents false religion, and the evil man, which we have defined in our study as the world system, everything in the world out there.

The Book of Proverbs simply warns the man of Proverbs to stay away from both the evil man and the strange woman. In the Book of Proverbs, the end result is very simple: the wise man does, and the foolish man does not. A wise man takes the principles of God. He stays with God. He stays away from the things that are going to pull him down, and he keeps growing in the Lord and gets a handle on the issues of life. A foolish man, on the other hand, gets taken in her web, in her trap, and in the trap of the evil man, and they get swaddled up in it. We have seen it in almost every chapter, and we have not even officially gotten into the Book of Proverbs yet; it does not start officially until Chapter 7.

We know that from a doctrinal sense, the man in Proverbs is the nation of Israel. On Thursday night, when we went through our really in-depth dispensation study, I showed you how that in Matthew 25, you have ten virgins. Five were wise, and five were foolish. I showed you how those are tribulation Jews who were going through the tribulation. My point is, five were wise, five were foolish. That man in Proverbs that is told to be wise, or he is going to wind up a fool, doctrinally is the nation of Israel, and you should know that. The strange woman and the evil man, as I said, will be the false religion and the world system that the Antichrist during the Tribulation will use to destroy the nation of Israel.

From a practical standpoint, how it applies to you and me, we already understand that false religion abounds and the world system abounds. So, inspirationally for us, it is something else. I am going to tell you right now, this is going to be a hard message, but I am going to enjoy it. It is going to be a fun message. I have learned a long time ago how to preach to people, and I have been doing this for a long time. I know that when you have something really hard to say, you always kind of make people feel comfortable, like what I am doing right now. You get them feeling comfortable, make them laugh, and you get them off guard, and then you hit them. That is how it works. So, I am just telling you upfront, I like this message. If you do not, that is your problem, not mine. I do not know what to tell you, but I think it is a great one.

In Proverbs 6:16, we have an inside look at the mindset of the man of sin, as we commonly know him, the devil. This is one of the most incredible passages in the Bible on the devil and how he thinks. We have talked a lot about patterns of thought. You know as well as I do, in the military, in any war, you have a branch called military intelligence. Military intelligence, in its simplest form, is a group of people who try to find out what the enemy is thinking and how they are going to plan something. Honestly, if you can figure out your enemy's mindset and what they are thinking and what they are going to do, then you have an advantage over them. That is what Proverbs does here in this chapter.

You will remember in the book of Job 41, I told you that Job 40 and 41 were the greatest chapters in the Old Testament on the person of the devil. In the New Testament, it is Revelation 12 and 13. In Job 41:12, it says:

I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

Then he says, "Who can discover the face of his garment?" By that passage, it shows us that the devil likes to mask himself. He likes to present himself not as the devil. When he showed up with Eve in the garden, he did not show up in a red union suit with a long tail and a pitchfork. He showed up as an angel of light. He showed up quoting the Bible. That is how he works.

So, Proverbs really helps us understand that the Bible will expose every aspect of not just who he is or how he works, but most importantly, how he thinks. When the Bible gives you the mind of Christ, and we have talked about that many, many times, you better believe that it will also give you the mind of the devil. It is very important that you see that.

II. The Six Things God Hates and the Seventh Abomination

In Proverbs 6:16, you find the six things that God hates. If you were just coming through your Bible, that ought to be your first clue that something special is here. Proverbs 6:16, six things, six, six, six. So, right out of the chute, you know you have something going on because in Revelation 13:18, we know that is his number.

I want to lay this out in two formats. Today, I want to do it from a practical standpoint. I want to give it to you in a very practical way. Then next week, your Bible students are going to love next week. I am going to take you down underneath and really show you this thing. It is quite incredible how it dials itself into the whole Bible. But today, we are going to look at the practical side of it.

Let us read it. Let us all turn to Proverbs 6:16 and begin reading here. It says this:

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Now, Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We do love you. We ask you today, Father, to give us insight into this. This is such a great passage. Lord, it is a great passage for these great people that are here today because they are good people. Lord, most of them want to do what is right. Most of them want to grow. Most of them want to be everything that God wants them to be. So, help me today to meet that need from these great scriptures. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Bible says there are six things here that the Lord hates. Yet, when you read it, He says that He gets the seventh one into the passage, and you have six things that are totally against God. Yet, the seventh one makes it an abomination. As they stand in your Bible, they will form the seven unclean spirits of the unholy characteristics of the devil himself, his makeup, his mindset, the principles by which he operates, and, might I say, the principles by which he destroys man, whether man is saved or man is lost.

III. The Spirit of Man and the Lust of the Devil

For a moment, I want you to turn over to John 8:44. This is a very familiar passage, but I want to kind of lay this thing out for you here.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

The thing that I want you to see there is this: man in an unsaved state, spiritually speaking, is of his father the devil. I preached that message years ago, "Ye are of your father the devil," and a woman got upset with me afterwards. She came up and shook her little finger in my face and she said, "You know what, I really was offended that you said that my spiritual father is the devil." I said, "Well, ma'am, I did not mean to offend you, but I have to be honest with you. I heard the same message years ago, and I was offended. So, I will suggest to you that you do what I did when I got offended, and that was I changed families. I got saved, and now I am God's child. I left the old family, and now I am in a new family."

Spiritually speaking, when a person is unsaved, their spiritual family is the devil. The simple fact is that these things listed here are what unsaved people do. He says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." So, unsaved people do these because they are of their spiritual father the devil. When you and I get saved, we are supposed to be different. We are supposed to follow the things of God, not the things of the devil. But the simple fact is this: even though unsaved people do the lusts of their fathers, saved people can do these too. Let me show you how.

In Job 26:1-4, it talks about six questions that God asks. We have showed you how that probably there are six questions that He is going to ask us at some point in time. But the last question He asks, I think, fits right into where we are at today. He simply says, "Whose spirit came from thee?"

Man has a spirit. Man has a body, man has a soul, and man has a spirit. They are not the same. The body is different than the spirit. The spirit is different than the body, and the soul is different than the body. They are all different. They all stand for a function. You do not have to understand them today to grasp what I am about to say. Your spirit in you, man's spirit, is your determination of your will. It is what you are going to do in life. You have a guy who climbs Mount Everest without any oxygen. That is a pretty strong spirit that a guy wants to accomplish that. Most of God's people cannot go up four flights of stairs without an oxygen mask on. It is a thing where man's will is what drives us. Man's will is what gets us through and gets us to accomplish great things because we have that spirit of man.

You also realize that when we talk, and you hear me talk a lot about association, Proverbs has a lot to say about association. Association is simply who and what you allow into your life. But association, in its most basic simple form, is nothing more than you joining your spirit to something or somebody else. That is really what it is.

In the Bible, there are four different spirits that prevail on planet earth. You have the spirit of an animal, the Bible says in the book of Ecclesiastes. Your animals have spirit. Your animals do not have souls, but they have a spirit. You have the spirit of man; that is the spirit that is in you and me today that drives us. But then you also have the Spirit of God, and you also have unclean spirits or the spirit of antichrist, as the Bible says. The thing that you have to remember now in this aspect of association and your spirit, saved or lost, you can join your spirit to things. You cannot join your soul to the devil if you are saved. You cannot do that, but you can join your spirit. Your spirit is the influence in your life that you allow to control you, and they will either be good or they will be bad.

Watch how simple this is. When a saved man aligns his spirit with God's Spirit and he finds other Christians that are like-minded, love God, love the Word of God, who share those same characteristics, then he bears the character qualities of Christ. We have in our prayer groups that we talk about the reason why we do them that way because they are made up of good quality people, and they kind of sharpen each other. As the Bible says, "iron sharpeneth iron." You are in a group of people who share values. They share what you believe, what you love, and you only get stronger from that.

But when a saved man or person hangs out with a wrong crowd or aligns their spirit with the uncleanness of this world, then even though that person may be a child of God, they pick up the characteristics of their old father the devil, and pretty soon they fall right back into the lust of that. Proverbs 6:16-19 is a biblical record in the Old Testament of the lusts of your father the devil, and it tells us, saved or lost, whatever you align your spirit to, the lusts of your fathers you will do. You will either align your spirit to the things of God and follow His characteristics, or you are going to align your spirit to the things of the devil and follow his.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

There is the key. In other words, just as the Holy Spirit is an influence over our human spirit to build God's character qualities in your life, the unholy spirits in this world, the characteristics of

these six, seven things that we will allow in our lives, will be an influence on our lives to live in wickedness.

Pick your Bibles one more time and turn over to Matthew 12. I want to show you an exact picture of this.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

That is a great picture and illustration of the seven unclean spirits of the devil that take over a man's life and become the primary influence in his life instead of God. I am going to tell you right now, these seven here in Matthew 12 are the exact same ones we are about to look at in Proverbs 6:16. I guarantee you.

What we are about to look at are the seven influences of the devil, the way he thinks that make up his character, that make up his spirit. These things will be in any man's life that does not follow the things of God. When we cease to operate by God's principles and pick up the influence of the old father and his lusts, this is what happens: walking after the flesh and not after the spirit.

Let me say this before we jump into this thing. We are talking about association and influence in our lives here. Just as there are seven things that God hates, and we as God's people should stay away from them, we should stay away from the people that bring them into our world. But yes, there are seven things that God hates. There are also in the Bible seven things that God loves. You should know them and look for them in the people that you associate with or the situations you allow yourself to get into. I am just going to say it: if you have been saved five years or longer and you do not know what they are, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You will not be, but you should be. It is no wonder we have the issues in life we have. It is no wonder.

IV. The Importance of God's Handbook

I deal with marital problems most of my week, couples coming in. I want to tell you, 98% of them are just good people. They are just good people who have made one bottom-line common mistake, and it is an easy mistake to fix. When they come in, they are laying out mountains of problems. I always tell them, "You know what, these mountains that you just laid in my office here, they are not the real problem. They are the symptoms. I am going to simplify your whole issue by just showing you what the problem is."

I use the goofiest illustration on planet earth. It is so goofy and so simple, but yet it is so profound. I always let them go, and they tell me all their little deals, and I can see by listening to

them, they are great people. They are really good kids. But I also see they have got one fundamental problem, and if I can get them to fix this fundamental problem, all the things they think are problems just go in the air.

I always tell them this story. I always say, "You know what, let me tell you what your real problem is. The problem is that you have entered into something that God calls marriage that is clearly defined in the Bible by which it has to run. And now you wonder why you are having problems."

Here comes my goofy little illustration. I say, "You know what, it is a lot like if I would come home tomorrow and my wife would say that the dishwasher is broke. And she says, 'I am going to call the dishwasher guy and have him come out. It is out of warranty, but we will have to pay for it. But you have to wash the dishes.' No, I say, 'Honey, you have to wash the dishes.' And I tell her, 'Now, before you do that, let handyman Bob take a look at it.' Because they come with an owner's manual, and in the back, the last page, they always have troubleshooting if it will not work."

So, I go through the one thing that every married couple has in common: a drawer that we store all of the owner's manuals of everything we ever bought in the last 50 years of our lives. I am going through them. There is this one, there is the dryer, there is the microwave, there is the coffee pot, keep that one. There is this one, there is that one, there is that one. I go through the whole thing, and I cannot find for the life of me the handbook that guides me through fixing this dishwasher. But I found the one for the washing machine. I mean, this reason is out. They both use water, and they both clean things. From my standpoint, from a man's standpoint, it ought to work.

But how ridiculous is it to realize that the dishwasher has a completely different design and model and configuration and wiring and structure than my washer over here that I do our clothes in? How ludicrous would it be to think that I could fix the dishwasher with a handbook from the washing machine? This is the problem with couples because when you went into marriage, you got into something that God designed. It was not man coming out of the cave and deciding to quit hitting women over the head and dragging them into the cave, though that is an option. It is pretty good sometimes. It was not society got sophisticated and says, "Let us come up with marriage." Marriage is something that God designed. Any time you try to take something that God designed and then run it by another standard that God never intended it to run by, it is not going to work. In fact, I would have a better chance of fixing my dishwasher with a handbook from the washer than you were trying to run a marriage that you got into forsaking the handbook that God gave you that it has to go by.

I say that because Christianity is in the same boat. This is what is wrong with a lot of God's people. Just like young couples, bless their hearts, are good people, and they get into marriage without anybody ever helping them and explaining them and making it work for them, most of God's people get into Christianity and never get disciplined. Nobody ever shows them the fundamentals. So, just like a couple enters into something called marriage that God designed that they have no idea how to run it, God's people actually get into Christianity and have no idea how

they are supposed to run it because they forsake the handbook by which God gave them. So, they get into all kinds of bad associations. They get into all kinds of bad problems and all kinds of issues. It is a thing where that is the way it works. It is the craziest thing you ever saw. Now we have a non-Christian Christianity.

V. The Seven Unholy Characteristics of the Devil

Let us begin here and let us look at the six things, and then we will tie it into the seventh that makes it an abomination.

1.) A Proud Look

Now, that is the first thing listed, and it is the first thing listed simply because that will be the number one issue that we all have. It is our pride. I think it would be safe to say that all the other issues we have in life do not get solved because of pride. Probably most of them start because we do have pride. I guarantee your pride has sent more people to hell than all the combinations of sin that you can put together.

The Bible says a proud look. Pride may start in your heart, but it shows on your face. You can see it a mile away. Pride is what keeps an unsaved person from ever getting saved. They go to a religious church someplace, and they are religious. You try to talk to them about getting saved because they believe they have been baptized is going to get them to heaven, or they believe this, or they believe joining this particular church, or whatever good works they do. You try to show that person, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us," and it is only the blood of Christ that will save you. You see that old pride just coming up.

Pride, man. Pride is what keeps two Christians from working out a problem. I have dealt with problems between God's people all my life. Pride many times is what gets in the middle that both of them or one of them will not do what they need to do because they get prideful. I will tell you something else: pride is what keeps married couples from fixing the problems in their marriage. It really is. It is just the idea that it is all your fault. It is not my fault. It is all yours. It is not mine.

I am going to tell you something, man. Husbands and wives, they have to solve problems. They have to humble themselves to be able to solve their problems. I had a guy one time years ago, he said to me, "Well, my wife just this, my wife just that." I am not saying his wife did not have some problems, and she said, "Well, my wife is this and this and that, and she is so weak. I am really the strong one in my family." I said, "That is wonderful. We have our problems solved now, do not we?" He says, "What do you mean?" I said, "The Bible says Romans 15:1, 'You that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.'" He did not want to hear that.

Pride is why Christians and unsaved people lose their kids. I have a man in my life that he is dead now, his name was Mike Johnson. Mike Johnson will always be a hero in my life. I met Mike over 20 years ago, and Mike, he was like so many of God's people that he went to church all of his life, but he did not do what was right with his kids. He was a deacon, and he played the

organ and all that, and by the time his kids got to be 18 or 19 and 20, they did not want to go to church anymore. They did not want anything to do with God because they saw how foolish it was that their dad was one thing at home but something else out in front of everybody else.

Mike came in, and he was absolutely broken. I told Mike, "Mike, here is what you have to do if you ever want to have a chance to reach your kids. You are going to have to humble yourself with your children." To make a long story short, he did what I told him to do. He called his four kids to a meeting in his home, and he brought them down, and in front of them, he apologized for all of the things that he had not done. He did not make a lot of excuses. He humbled himself before his children. He wept. He asked each one of them individually to forgive him where he had failed them as a father. He wept. He asked them to forgive him. He said, "I cannot go back and change the damage I have done, but I have the truth now. I know where I was wrong," and he says, "I am willing."

You know what happened? The kids automatically, when Dad humbled himself, and Dad with tears running down his face, on his knees in front of his kids, begging them to forgive him for the stupid stuff that he has done and not done that kept them out of church, all the times he pretended he was this and he pretended he was that, he was a deacon and he was a leader, and yet he lost his kids. You know what the kids did? They started to defend him. They started to say, "Well, Dad, it is not all your fault." In fact, the oldest boy said to him, "Dad, it is not your fault I am a loser." The boy knew he was a loser. You know what God did? Before old Mike died, all four of those boys, all four of those kids, were back in church.

Parents make mistakes. I have made mistakes. There were many times that I have sat down with my kids and said, "This is not my fault, this is yours." No, many times I have sat down with my kids and I said, "I blew this, kid. I am sorry." But it is pride that will not let us do it. Somebody says, "Oh, I could not do that. I am a deacon. I am a pastor. I teach the Bible on this around that. I could not come off of my throne to lower myself to ever admit to my kids I was wrong." That is pride. You will never get them that way. You have to humble yourself. Pride is the biggest structural problem we have. Pride will keep us from doing what is right and the right thing when we know exactly what the right thing is we need to do. We just will not do it.

2.) A Lying Tongue

A preacher was walking down the street one day and saw four little boys with a little puppy, and they are running around in a circle, and they are kind of getting with each other. The preacher was worried they were going to hurt the dog, so he walks up and he says, "Hey, boys, what is going on here?" The boy said, "We found this puppy, and we are deciding who is going to take it by who tells the biggest whopping lies." The preacher looked at him, he says, "Well, you know, kids, it is not right to lie. Lying is not right with God. You do not want to lie." He said, "When I was a kid your age, I never would lie. You cannot do that." The kids got real quiet and looked at each other, and one of them finally said, "Okay, give him the dog."

Most Christians' favorite verse is in Hezekiah 67:38: "Lying is an abomination in the sight of God, but a very present help in a time of trouble." I know how it works. I am somewhat an expert on dealing with subjects of lying because I have been lied to all my life by people. People who

say, "I am going to do something," and of course, they never do. People who tell you half the story to keep their own side padded. Half-truths so they can position themselves in some situation. I have had people look me in the face and tell you the most unbelievable story that they could think of because they want you to hear it, that you have ever heard, and they do not even know that I am already ahead of the game, and I know the story, and I know you are lying to me when you tell me. I just want to see if you are going to be honest. I will never say a word.

Two reasons why people lie:

- They lie because they are afraid, and many times just go along with getting caught. They are afraid, so they simply do not want to tell the truth. I have had people say something to me that was not true, and later on, when it all blew up, and it always does, I said, "Why did not you tell me the truth?" They said, "Well, Bob, I just did not want you to think less or bad of me." I get that. I understand it. Sometimes they lie because they are just cowards and cannot stand for any truth or situation, but they want to portray to the others that they are a real strong Christian, so they lie. Some people are just weak of character, and they lie because of the fact that they just do not really have any character. They cannot stop, they cannot stand for anything, and yet they will fall for everything. To them, lying is better than confrontation. I have seen that. I have seen problems start in the church where somebody had to get really dealt with, and other Christians just could not. Outwardly they would. They pretend they were, but inwardly, cowards. You know why? Confrontation. I do not like confrontation, but you know what, there is a time when you are in charge and when you are the leader, and you have got to deal with things that confrontation is the only way, but it is truth, the bottom line.
- You have people who are just habitual liars. They lie about everything. You do not believe anything they say. Everything about them is a lie. I have known people that they told the most unbelievable stories about themselves because they had a bad self-image, or they wanted to portray themselves as somebody that they were not, and they lie about everything in their life. I am telling you. I have had them tell me some of the most unbelievable stories, lies that you could ever imagine. They lie about everything, and they are good at it. I guess they are professional liars, I guess. I do not know, but listen. You can lie so much that after a period of time, you lose the reality of truth, and you start believing your own lies. Over the years, I have had people in my life that I did not believe anything they told me. I just smile and shake my head like a guy said one time, "Do you know how to tell when old Joe is lying to you?" "No, how?" "His mouth is moving." A lot of people are just like that. That is a dying truth.

3.) Hands that Shed Innocent Blood

You know, in society, especially in history, but even in current events today, you can always tell the moral fiber of any society by the standard of how they view human life and their respect for it. America is just such a nation. America is a nation that has completely lost any respect for life, certainly any respect for authority. While we are told that all is well, I mean, you get to read the Kansas City Star and all the news things, and they will tell the bad thing, but they will tell you how quick it is all this, and they will tell you it is okay to do this and okay to do that, and you are

safe to go here. You are safe to go here. I will tell you something, folks. You are not safe to go anywhere in this whole world.

While we talk about cities being the murder capitals of the world, why, last year, the year before last, in Kansas City, a bunch of city workers got fired because they were having a betting thing if the homicide rate in Kansas City would bust 200. That is a weird deal, man. You live in a bad place, man. They put out things, the top 10 cities for murder. I mean, hey, today people will kill you for your Air Jordans or your Nikes. They will shoot you and kill you for your Chiefs' leather jacket. You are safe if you wear a Royals one, but do not wear Chiefs.

The guy told me this story the other day. He says, "You know what," he said, "I was going to go to the Royals game the other day, and we went in the house and came back out an hour later, and I left my tickets on the seat of the car, plain view, everybody." I said, "Uh-oh, I know where this is going." He says, "Yeah," he says, "somebody broke the window and threw in two more."

An interesting thing in the Bible, you are told in Luke 22:36 to buy a sword. Now, if you study that out, which we have been doing on Thursday night, watching different dispensations, before that, when the kingdom was still coming, Jesus told him, "You do not need a sword." He said, "Put away your sword." He said, "You do not need one," because they were going out under the guidelines of the kingdom of heaven, and the Lord had everything set up. Once the kingdom is not coming, and man now is going to have to figure it out for himself, and the Lord is going to go back to heaven, He tells him, "Sell your garment and buy a sword." He says, "You have to protect yourself now."

The shedding of innocent blood, people will kill you for anything today. I have all the respect for the police officers and law enforcement. I do, but they are not going to be any help to you. The average response time for a 911 call in Kansas City is like nine to ten minutes. A lot can happen in nine to ten minutes. We are getting back to the old West days. Concealed carry permits are going out the window, and the liberals are always driving nuts with that. They want to have gun-free zones where you cannot take a gun in, only the bad guys can take them in. That is like going into a game preserve where all the buffalo and the elk and the deer are tied to a stake. You can just shoot them. We are getting back to the old West day. I would love to see in the McDonald's when somebody got up and started to shoot somebody that they wound up having a hundred bullet holes in him, all by a hundred people who had guns to protect themselves. Now, the police carry a gun, but they carry the guns to protect them. They are not going to protect you. As I said, a 911 call, the average time is nine to ten minutes. A nine-millimeter response time is 1400 feet per second. You figure it out. Which one will get there faster?

You see, we live in a degenerating nation and society, and any time we get that, any nation then they forsake the principles of God, and when they do, unparalleled ungodliness sets in. From the millions and millions of innocent babies that are aborted every year to joggers in Raytown being shot in the morning at six o'clock when they are running, or just someone out for a Saturday night in a drive-by shooting, or you driving home from work on 435 or something, that case with a nine-millimeter just pops bullets in cars. There is no safe place. That is the mark of the society

that we are in. God hates those that are proud. God hates those that lie. God hates those that shed innocent blood.

4.) A Heart that Devises Wicked Imaginations

The Bible says, "The lusts of your fathers you shall do." Here they are. Here are the seven lusts in the devil's heart that unsaved people do all the time, and God's people do more time than they should. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Genesis 6 shows what happens when a world gives itself unto the devil and forsakes God.

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

That means it is ongoing. Let me just stop here for a minute and show you what that produced in Noah's time, and you see the same thing today because you do not want to forget Luke 17:26 says:

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

If you would be so kind, turn over to Job 21. Let me show you where it went in Genesis 6 because I will show you where it is going to go, where it went today.

Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.

Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

Now, come one chapter over, and let me show you the context of this.

Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overthrown with a flood:

Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

That is the end result of a society. That is the end result of a family, a father and a mother, who gets away from God and lets the spirit get from God and get back into that world system and build the seven wrong character qualities in their lives and also in their kids.

Now, I want you to look at Job 21:15. Here is the real issue today, and brother, this thing is right on the money.

Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

You notice they did not ask, "Who is the Almighty?" They have relegated God completely out of being a person. They are not saying, "Who is the Almighty?" They are saying, "What is the Almighty?" That is a generation of a breakdown, of a complete breakdown of a knowledge of anything about God, and it started with the parents in a time that the wickedness in their imagination of their heart was only continually evil. There it is right up there for you.

5.) Feet Swift in Running to Mischief

I always think it is a terrible thing to get into sin. I think the problems that we get into that wreck our lives are a terrible thing. Most of my life is spent trying to help people get out of a bad situation that they probably should not have got into, but they get into them, and sometimes you can help them, sometimes you cannot. But we all can fall for that trap. I mean, I never deal with somebody with a problem that I get judgmental with them because I know that I have my own issues and my own problems, and it happens to human beings.

But what I think is even more horrible is people who simply never learn from the lessons of their mistake. My wife teaches principles to the girls that come over. She has a whole group that comes over on a regular basis, and one of her favorite great principles about people who get into problems and never learn from the problems is she talks about the fact that they just, when you go through something, you go through a lot of pain. You go through a lot of things that hurt. Sometimes you hurt a lot of people. Sometimes you hurt yourself. Sometimes there is a lot of pain involved. The thing that most people, the principle she always brings up, is that most people waste the hurt. They never learn from the hurt. They will hurt their wives or they will hurt their husbands, and they will never feel the pain of that. They will never see that. They are so busy lying about themselves to cover their own self that they will say terrible things to their husband or terrible things to the wife instead of just coming clean and saying, "You know what?" Because of that, it is an endless cycle of just wasting the pain and wasting the hurt.

The Bible talks about in the book of Proverbs and also in the New Testament, it talks about a dog returning to his own vomit. It talks about a sow returning to her own mire, and that is so true of so many of God's people. I have seen Christians that get into a bad marriage and go through some terrible times, and when they finally get out of that thing, whether it works out good or bad, you know what they do? They turn right around and cannot wait to do it all over again. They did not learn a thing from the pain. They did not learn a thing from the hurt.

The pain that you and I go through, the hurt that we experience because of the dumb things that we do, I am not saying you do not want to drag it around and beat yourself over the head with it. I am not suggesting that, but I am suggesting that you do not forget it because it is that very pain that will keep you from going back into those same situations again. I have seen people go from one bad situation to another, never happy, never fulfilled, never satisfied, but they just run from one terrible ordeal to another and never learn a thing from the pain of their disobedience and their experience. You know why?

Proverbs 2, we studied it months ago. Proverbs 2:13-14, it talks about a group of people who leave the path of uprightness and walk in the ways of darkness, and it says, "who rejoice to do evil and delight in the frowardness of the wicked." That is why they enjoy it. They enjoy it. Their feet are swift to run to do what they want to do. They do not, they never experience the pain because they are too busy running to the next situation, but it will all catch up with you at some point in time. If you have kids, it will catch up to you when your kids do exactly what you do. You are a drug addict, they will be a drug addict. You are an alcoholic, they will be an alcoholic. It will all catch up to you at some time when you finally lose your marriage and you lose this and you lose everything, and then it comes down to the fact that you are left broken, busted, depressed. Instead of getting your daily dose of the Bible, you have to get your daily dose of Prozac to keep yourself moving.

God hates feet that are swift in running to mischief, rejoicing to do evil. Now, I have to tell you, it is hard to believe that a child of God could or even would do that, but they do. Not only do they do it, but they brag about it. They put their face up on Facebook showing them in their ungodliness and their sin. They brag about it. Their parents get behind them and say, "Well, you know what, he is my sweet little boy," or "She is my sweet little girl." "Oh, he is a good guy." I had one lady tell me one time when her husband, her boy, was the biggest fornicating drug drunk you ever met in your life, and she says, "Well, he is such a good boy." I said, "Compared to who? Freddy Krueger?" Craziest thing you ever saw. God hates feet that are swift in running to mischief. I have had people who could not get the Bible studied, but boy, if there is a ball game where beer is served, you are there.

6.) A False Witness that Speaketh Lies

Have you ever had anybody say something about you that was not true? I think of all the things that can hurt, that is probably the worst. You see this all the time in ministry and dealing with people. I have a group of people that, you will remember two or three years ago now, I cannot remember, we have been at it so long. I opened up anybody in the church that really wanted to get in on a level of working with me in the counseling ministry, and about 60 people signed up and really did, and we came through some really hard-line stuff. I mean, I give them the rules that they are to follow, and rule number one is that you learn never to take things personal. I have that class with those people, we are off for the summer now, but I have that class with the people for a number of reasons to build them up, but one of the reasons I do it, and the people are in it, you know this is true, is to build a hardness in them to be able to go through these kinds of things.

When people do not want to do what is right and already have these other five qualities of no character in their life, and they are faced with biblical options, many times they will do what they always have done. They will blame their problems on you instead of dealing with the issue as they should. You will become the scapegoat. They will fabricate something about you that is not true, or a half-truth, or twist something to give themselves a reason to justify for not doing right. I have seen it all my life.

Years ago, we all buy Dr. Ruckman's books, and some of our kids were down at his church here a couple weeks ago. Years ago, when I was doing Bible conferences, and I preached in a number of Bible conferences with Dr. Ruckman, and him and I got to be somewhat friends, and we talk about a lot of things that he liked to talk about. We were at a church one time up in New York, and at the end, all of the preachers would go out to dinner afterwards and have some time together. The pastor up there at the church was a friend of mine, and he was telling me about this kid that was in the church that just always wanted to go out and be able to have dinner with Dr. Ruckman. He asked me, "You know, what do you think about me inviting him out tonight?" I said, "Oh, my church, I do not care what you do." I always looked at this kid as a want-to-be. I never did like him, never did trust him. One of those first gut things, but it was not my deal, and I said, "I do not care." So he says, "Well, I think I will let him come." He wanted to hang out with the big boys, not that I was one of the big boys, but there were some big, heavy hitters there at that time. When I would go out to eat with them, I just kept my mouth shut and listened. Somebody had asked me something, I would talk with them, but I was never pretending I was in that league with them, but this kid thought he was.

I will never forget, we went to a place where they had all you could eat chicken, fish, or something else, and I remember Dr. Ruckman got the fish, and Dr. So-and-so got the chicken, all you could eat, and they were eating away. If you ever saw Dr. Ruckman eat, you just get out of the road. I mean, he has got two things on his mind: preaching and eating, and when he eats, it is all over everything. He is the only preacher I ever know that wears his food really well. You take him to barbecue, it is over his forehead, it is in his ears, it is his face, it is on his shirt, and he does not care. I remember one time he preached at Canton Baptist Temple, and after the service, the people in the choir who were behind him got up there, and they were cleaning the church, and they found a note that somebody had passed in the choir, it says, "I do not think he has pressed his pants since the last time he was here." Probably did not. I have seen him preach with one blue sock on and one white sock on. That is just him, man. That is the way it is.

Well, anyway, they were done eating, and somebody big said to Dr. Ruckman, "Well, how is the fish?" And Dr. Ruckman said, "Oh, the fish was not that good. It was not really what I thought. I should have got the chicken." And the other guy said, "Well, I have got two pieces here. I am not going to eat any more. Go in and have those." Dr. Ruckman said, "You sure?" He says, "Yeah," and so Dr. Ruckman ate them. You know what that little punk did for the next two years? That little punk went around to all his preacher friends telling that Dr. Ruckman stole chicken and did not pay for it and was eating it at an all-you-could-eat deal and ate somebody else's chicken and did not pay for it. That is what a little punk is. I caught up with him about a year later one time, and he was telling somebody that story, and I pulled that guy aside and I said, "You know what,

it is only the fact that I have got to preach the next 20 minutes that keeps me from taking you out to the parking lot and running you over in a car." I do not even have a car. I still want to do it, but that is what happens. That is what happens. They will lie about you.

You will disciple somebody, and they will not make it, and they do not count the cost before they get in it, and then they are going to blame you for it. I had a lady leave the church one time about five or six years ago, and she was mad with me, and she was mad at a lot of you ladies, and I knew she was problems when she came in, but you know me. I give everybody a shot, and I gave her, I mean, all the ladies that worked with her are sitting here this morning. I gave her to the four or five of the best gals that I had in a row. She started with this girl and did not like this girl after two weeks, something wrong with her. She started, I gave her somebody else, she did not, because, and after three weeks, did not like this person. I gave her somebody else, did not like this person. I gave her somebody else, she did not like this. Finally, her husband came over one time, showed up on a Sunday, they said, "We need to talk," and I said, "Okay, what is the deal?" And she said, "Well, we are just really upset and going to leave the church, we think." And I said, "Okay, what are you upset about?" And he said, "Well, the women in this church just do not like my wife." And I said, "Are not you sure maybe that every one of your wife has a problem with one of them? How can you say that?" "Well, I just, what do you want me to do? I am out of women. I do not have any more. You have used up every good woman I got. What do you want to do now? I have got two labs downstairs, one of them could probably do it. What do you want?"

I have got five quality women. You take those five women that your wife does not like, and you say they did not do a good job. You add up the women in our church that they have worked with and helped and brought through tough times. You have got 50 people in our church they did not like that they left. So long, it is so nice to know you. What are you going to do? That is the reality of human nature. You will invest your life in somebody. You will take enormous amounts of time to help them, and they get to a point that they do not want to go any farther, and then they spend all the rest of your life blaming you simply because they are worthless. That is just the way it works. Lusts of the fathers they will do. False witness that speaketh lies. That is the reality of human nature. This is why ministry to people, honestly, on this level, I understand it is not for everybody. When we are in that people ministry, brother, it is a live fire exercise. We use live rounds, man. We nail it down.

In ministry and dealing with people, you simply find two kinds of people, whether they are saved or whether they are lost. You have people of character. People of character will always take their lumps and take responsibility for their issues. And people of no character will always blame somebody else, blame it on you. There will always be a false witness about something or somebody, and that pretty well sums it up.

Last week, we talked about perspective, and I tell people all the time, when you work with people in situations like this, you are going to find these things happen. You better figure out who you are working for. You better realize and understand that you want a great study on a false witness. Study what they said about Christ when He showed up. Study how they bore false witness against Him. Just take the time and detail the scribes and the Pharisees and the

Sadducees and all the things that they lied about Him and blamed Him for, and the sad crumbs that He had a devil. You hang out with publicans and sinners. It was one thing after the other. You know what the great conclusion is you will come to when you get through with that? You do not have any problems. You do not have any problems.

7.) He that Soweth Discord Among the Brethren

Ah, the best one. The one that caps off the other six and makes it an abomination. God hates sowing discord among the brethren. You might have guessed that the one that makes all this an abomination to the Lord and the worst one would have to be the one that Christians do the most: sowing discord.

In the Bible, this is called talebearing or slander. We call it gossip. But the great thing about the Book of Proverbs is it sets up the great set of biblical principles that show why it is the worst one and does the most damage. You see this one with Christ at the first coming. He faced the same problems in His ministry, and so will you.

For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

That is Christ prophetically speaking, all the way back in the Psalms, of the slander that was coming His way. They lied about Him, bore false witness against Him. In fact, they committed all seven of these, if you want to study it out, against Him. Why in the world would you think in the ministry, you and I are something special? If the Lord went all through that to get to the cross for you and for me, why in the world cannot you and I do that for Him because of the cross? It is just that simple.

Now, let us look at these. Proverbs 10. You want to mark these in your Bible. Proverbs 10. Here is the first one. Proverbs says a lot about it, man. That is the foundation of teaching on it.

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

You know what he just gave you there? He gave you the root problem. The root problem why people slander is you already hate that person in your heart. You just mask it with that fake smile you have. You just mask it with those nice sugar-coated words. You just mask the hatred in your heart by your lying lips. That is how you do it. People will tell you to your face, "I love you." "Well, thank you for all you did for me." "Well, I would not know the Bible without you." "Well, thank you for spending so much time." And inside, they hate you in their heart, and they will slander you when they get back to their friends, and then who all live in the snake pit, they will all be there together. I guarantee you.

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

You see that thing, "faithful spirit." It is what spirits you align yourself up to. A real Christian, when he gets a piece of information that has the potential issue to be in the problem, he prays about it. He conceals the matter. He talks to God about it, not to his friends. He is a faithful spirit. He prays about that situation.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

That is a great one because here it shows you that slander, a talebearing slander, gossip, is like a wound, and yet it is a deep wound, and it is likened to a belly wound. If anybody knows anything about wounds, the worst kind of wound you can get is a belly wound because of all the integrals that are in there with your intestines and whatever you had to eat and everything that is in there. You get a belly wound, it is the worst kind of wound that you could possibly get, and it says it is a deep wound. It goes down into the innermost parts of the belly because slander will always be an assassination attempt of your character. It is like going up on the top of the Empire State Building, taking 10,000 goose feathers, dumping them all up into the wind, and then trying to get them all back. That is slander. That is discord among the brethren. That is how it works.

He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Now, that is somebody that you told not to tell anybody, and the moment you told somebody, five other people know. I have had people come to me, and they told me some problem they have had, and I have said, "Well, look, you know, this is something that you need to not get out there until you get this thing worked out." I said, "Have you told anybody?" And he says, "Well, I just told you and so and so." And I said, "Well, you told me, you are good. You told so and so, 20 other people know as we speak." I am telling you the truth. "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth his secrets; therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." Oh, that is a great one to look at. "I love you today, but I will slander you tomorrow." That is what we have got here. "You can teach me the Bible. I would not even know the right Bible if it were not for you, but I will assassinate your character tomorrow to gain an advantage. You helped me when I was down. You buried my mom when she passed away when we did not have anybody. I called you out of the clear blue when my dad died. You came, you buried them, or you did this and you did that, and you were there for me. Now let me return the favor. I want to assassinate your character." That works. Those famous last words, "Thanks so much, love you." Remember who used to do that? Remember you do that, Joe. "Love you, brother. Love you, brother." That is a private thing. I cannot let you in on it.

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, strife ceaseth.

Now there it is. You know what a talebearer does? A talebearer keeps adding fuel to the fire. Talebearers keep things going. "Where no wood is, the fire goeth out." You want to stop a problem as quick as you can, just stop talking about it. But oh no, there are some people that their whole life, that is all they do. They never want anybody to cry. You never see them disciple anybody. They never come to anything on a consistent basis. All they do is just the thing that they bring to the party is their mouth. They keep issues alive and many times keep it from being fixed. The reason why they do not want it to get fixed is because they live for that kind of life. I call them vacuum cleaner Christians. They pick up every piece of dirt that you can find.

How many times last year did you see in the news how many teenagers, and I know teenagers are very vulnerable to this, I mean adults are too. It used to be that in the old days men were men and women were glad of it, but today it is not that way. Most men are just as wimpy as the

women are, not here, but you know what I am talking about. But children, teenagers are always vulnerable. Remember how many times last year you heard the story of somebody bullying somebody on the internet and saying things about them and slandering them, and a girl kid went out and killed themselves? That is where it goes. That is where it goes. You may never, you may never have somebody go out and jump off a grain elevator. You may never have somebody go out and hang themselves, but you may ruin somebody spiritually for the rest of their life.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

"Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross." You know what a potsherd is? That is a toilet seat. Your mouth is like a toilet seat covered in silver dross. God, you have got to love that one. You better get some real lipstick on that one. I will tell you again, deep wounds that are hard to fix, and it is hard to fix because it is always done behind your back. People who slander, gossip, talebearers, all have one great characteristic together: they are all cowards. They will never come to you face to face. The reason they do that, and I maybe have not figured this out, the reason why they do that is because the greatest defense against slander is the truth. If you go to somebody face to face and you confront them and you say, "You said I said this, now I want to know because I did not say it," then you can fix it. But when somebody does not want to fix it, it is because the greatest defense that you have in that particular case is the truth that is on your side, and they know it. They know it. It is never face to face, and they know it is not face to face.

Now, there is a great illustration of how the devil will use God's people to mess up the work of God in the New Testament. Last Thursday night, in our dedicated study to that dispensation that we looked at, I told you about the Apostle Peter, and he has always been a hero of mine in the Bible. Peter did not always get it right, but boy, I will tell you what, Peter's heart was always in the right place. His method may have not always been acceptable, but his motive was always right on the money.

When you go over to Matthew 16:21-23, here is one of the great principles of how a saved man, in this case a disciple, in this case an apostle, can get used by the devil and destroy the work of God.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

You know what Peter is trying to do there? Peter is trying to get Him not to go through the things He has got to go through to go to the cross, and he is trying to get Him to go through the cross. There is a case where Peter was a disciple, he was an apostle. In fact, it is in the same chapter that he got the keys that came to my heaven, and I showed you Thursday night how he used

those keys all the way up to Acts 7. But the devil had gotten into his world and gotten into his influence, and the Lord realized that, and He addressed the devil through Peter because Peter was trying to get the Lord not to go to that cross. Let me just tell you, if the devil can use Peter and try to get to stop the work of God, he will surely be able to use you and me, and when he does, it will be by aligning our spirit to these seven things, and through association with them, we will get used to hurt the cause of Christ.

VI. The Seven Things God Loves

It is simply that, you know, I leave you with this. I gave you the seven things, six things that God hates, the seventh is an abomination, and I told you that association, you associate with these things or people who have these things, the lusts of their fathers. Now let me give you the seven things that God loves, and these are what you ought to be associating with. These are what you do with the people you hang out with that are of good quality. This is where the concept of "iron sharpeneth iron" comes in. The seven things that God loves, the seven characteristics of His Spirit versus the seven characteristics of the devil's spirit.

- 1.) The first thing that God loves is truth.
That is why He cannot handle a lying tongue because He stands for truth. It does not matter how bad it is, He wants the truth. It does not matter how bad it makes you look, it only makes you look worse when you lie because you are going to get found out. He wants the truth because the number one characteristic of God that He loves is truth. Without that, God is nothing.
- 2.) The second thing that God loves is righteousness.
So, you want to hang out with people that not only have loved the truth of God but have the righteousness of God. They want to live right. Nobody is perfect. Everybody is going to make mistakes, but you look for that character quality.
- 3.) The third thing that God loves is the souls of men.
So, we need to develop an attitude of loving the souls of men. We need to love people who are unsaved or people who just get saved. The thing that I love about this church is your response to new Christians or people who are lost. Many of you in here are just absolutely phenomenal at what you do in reaching out to people and trying to help them, and it is because you have developed those characteristics in your life.
- 4.) The fourth thing that He loves is He loves His children.
That is other Christians loving each other. You see, when you love each other as God loves you, then you never have any problems you cannot work through. The reason why you and I get out of fellowship is because not because of God, He is the standard of holiness. It is because when we get outside that standard, we do not want to take it back to Him and make it right. Not His deal. As long as you have two Christians hanging out together that want to make things work together and love God together and love truth and love righteousness and love souls and love each other, what cannot you work out? What cannot you work out?
- 5.) The fifth thing that He loves is His Son.
You ought to love Him too. You have to go through the Bible sometimes and mark all the places and write them down of what God says about His Son. "This is my beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased." He is called the apple of God's eye in the book of Psalms. There are so many things that God says about His Son that shows you how much He loved Him. You know what, if God loved Him, God loves Him because of all that God is and all that Christ is, and that is why we should love Him. We should love Him for what He did for us. We should love Him and understand all of the things that He went through, and that is why when you understand that and you get into ministry and you work with people, you have to go through these bad things that come up. They do not affect you. You do not fold up. You do not run in the corner someplace. You realize that there was a price to pay for you to have what you have and for you to give other people that same thing that God gave you. Now you have got to pay the price for it. You have got to pay the price for it.

- 6.) The sixth thing that He loves is the nation of Israel.

He loves the Jew. We know enough from what we have studied on Thursday night and through the dispensations that we understand completely how that is.

- 7.) The seventh thing He loves is the city of Jerusalem.

The holy city, and of course, we know why, because it falls around the nation of Israel and the kingdom of heaven. Someday God's Son is going to sit on the throne in Jerusalem.

These are the seven things that He loves, and when you build these seven things in your life, and when you look at these, some of them are practical and some of them are doctrinal, are not they? Some of them deal with everyday relationships with people. Some of them deal with knowing the deeper things in your Bible, do not they? It is the whole counsel of God here. It runs a span from what is practical with you and me to what is doctrinal when I get into the Bible that I really understand, like a lot of things that we try to lay out for you here. These are the things.

VII. Conclusion: Aligning Your Spirit

You want to remember that Proverbs shows you how the devil thinks. It shows you the six things that God hates that make up the character qualities or inequalities of the devil, and the seventh one is the abomination that caps it off. You and I have to align our spirit to either God's Spirit or an unclean spirit. We can do that as unsaved people. You can do that as saved people. It is your choice. It is your spirit that you decide. Your spirit is like the rudder of a big ship. That little rudder on the back of a four-football-field tanker, that little rudder, one-fifth of the size of that ship, turns that ship every which way it goes. Your spirit, no matter how big you are, how strong you are, or how tough you think you are, it is that little spirit that sets the direction and the guide of which way you go in life. You either give it to the characteristics of the devil, or you give it to the characteristics of God. Just that simple. Next week, I will show you the doctrinal aspect of this, and you Bible students will all love this.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We do love you so much for all that you do for us. Thank you for today. Thank you for this great chapter, Lord, and all these great things that are in it. Help each one of us look inside ourselves to find the truth about us, and Lord, to help us to work on those things that we need to work on. We love you now. We will thank you for all that we do. Bless us throughout this day, all the things that we have to do, and we will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.