

## I. The Importance of Unity

If we have your Bibles, we are going to go back to Proverbs chapter 6 here as we are working our way through that great chapter. As you know, we have been coming through the book of Proverbs for about the last year or so. Last week, we examined or finished up a complete study on the six things that God hates. We talked about and showed you how the seventh one, which is sowing discord among the brethren, makes them an abomination.

Now we know, and I took the time to show you how they fit the first week from a practical standpoint that we all have to deal with in people and situations in life. Then last week, I showed you the prophetic application as it went to the Antichrist and his hatred toward the nation of Israel, which, by the way, fit right into what we talked about Thursday night as coming through that dispensation on the Tribulation Period. But simply for us, staying away from the people who will try to divide the unity on the oneness of the work of God.

I guess in all the things of Christianity, and all the things in churches, and all the things in the work of God, the one keyword that has to be there, and you are never going to get it in a perfect way, but as close as you can get it, will be the aspect and the concept of unity.

## II. The "12 O'Clock High" Illustration of Group Integrity

I was reminded of a great truth that I had preached many years ago, and I really forgot about it, and a great illustration that I had used to illustrate it. I was preaching one time out of Ephesians chapter 4 on the unity of the church. I had remembered something I had read in a book a long time ago, but then I made a movie, and it was in the movie also. Last week was Memorial Day weekend. You know, on Memorial Day, they put all the man for the whole weekend, it is just one good war movie after the other. I was there, I was not planning on it. I turned the TV on, I sat down there for a few moments, and this movie came on. I had not seen it for years, and it is a great movie. It is called 12 O'Clock High. It was made in 1949. It is probably one of the best war movies that you will ever see.

It is based on daylight bombing that took place in Europe in World War II in the early states. Most people do not think about it, but we never fought on the continent of Europe itself until D-Day of 1944. The only war that was carried on the continent before then was the air war. That is the Eighth Air Force and the Ninth Air Force. They did daylight bombing missions to hurt Germany's war production and demoralize them and all of that. It was very new. The British had tried daylight bombing and then gave it up and switched to nighttime bombing just because their losses were so heavy. This movie is about that very same thing.

In the movie is a great illustration of what I think a church ought to be when you look at and understand it. The losses of the Americans were terrible. In fact, a B-17 crew, which consisted of 10 men, in the early days of the war, their life expectancy was probably two missions. There was no criteria where they got out after 25. That came later. But early on, they just flew until they

died or they could not fly anymore. The losses were terrible. I mean, you would lose 30 planes, 40 planes out of 500, you lost 400 men. It was a terrible thing.

During the process of those early days, someone came up with the idea of flying in formation in a very strategic pattern. Somebody sat down, and here is the theory how it was supposed to work. A B-17 was called a flying fortress. It was manned with 10 .50 caliber machine guns. Now this does not mean much to you ladies, but just bear with me here. I want to make my point. You have 500 planes in a squadron. That is 5,000 guns. Each one of those guns can fire 500 to 600 rounds a minute. In theory, you have a mass of airplanes that can shoot on a consistent basis 2.5 or more million rounds a minute.

What this guy's theory was, as you put them in tight formation, because what the German Luftwaffe would do is they would fly into them, split them up, come head on, split them up, and then pick off the stragglers. Once they got the group disbanded and scattered, then they could pretty much do what they wanted to do. His idea was to never break formation. His idea was to fly them so tight together and stagger them at different altitudes that when a German plane was coming in from the left or the right or the front or the back or from the bottom or the top, that plane was flying into no less than 600,000 rounds coming at him at a time. You would have to really be in a plane flying to see 600,000 tracers coming at you to appreciate that circumstance.

His theory was simply this: if the bomber groups could fly tight formations and every plane and every man realized that his gun was part of the defense system, they called this group integrity, that there would be no German airplane that could get in between the groups to split them up. They could only attack them from the outside, but they could never get in and divide them. The whole concept and theory was built on if one man failed, if one plane failed to do his job, everybody suffered. It was called group integrity. It required every man at his station to do his job. The pilot to stay in that formation, the gunners to synchronize together to keep everybody out, that nobody could get into those formations to scatter them. Once they did that, the losses plummeted. I am not saying they did not lose planes, but they did not lose as many planes as they did because they flew tight formations.

I have always, when I saw that years ago, I have always thought to myself that churches and Christianity should adopt the same theory. Instead of calling it group integrity, we will call it church integrity. Each person biblically flying a tight formation of Bible principles and Bible doctrine, that no enemy can penetrate from within to divide the church, the group. Last week, we saw how that works. That was one of the greatest illustrations that I ever saw in my life. This concept is exactly what we are going to see here in this next passage that we are going to look at today. How to, as an individual Christian, accomplish this in whatever church you are part of. When the whole church adopts that doctrine of integrity, that every person is important, every person is important to keep the church group integrity intact, then a lot of your problems that churches have, they would not have.

### III. The Word of God and Character Qualities

Now look at Proverbs chapter 6, and let us look at verse 20 here and come down through about verse 23.

Now Father, we come here today, and these folks have come here this morning because they want something from Your Word. Lord, I as a man, I have nothing to give them, only as the Holy Spirit of God will flow through me today as I yield myself to You. Lord, this is a great passage, and there are some great things. This is a great chapter, but the book of Proverbs is a great book. Help us today to grow today, to learn today, to leave here a little more in touch with You and in tune with the things of God. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name and in the shape we ask it. Amen.

Now this is a great little passage here. I look at this and I see so many of you are right here right now in your life. You are following the principles, male and female. You are doing what the principles we have spent now 10 years of our lives since this, almost 11. Many of you have been around now, a bulk of that period of time. Even the ones that have been here not quite that long, you are getting it. I am watching it change about you what the Bible says it is supposed to change.

What follows here, if you remember the last couple of weeks, is the process of you and me keeping the commandments of our father and the law of our mother and allowing the Word of God what it does best in our lives. Forget about the Bible being a history book. Forget about the Bible being a book on prophecy. Forget about the Bible being the end times. Forget about the Bible being... think of the Bible as a book of God's character qualities. When you and I approach the principles of God to learn the Word of God and change from looking at life the way that we have and making the choices in life by the way we have and bring it over to God's side, that Bible will do exactly what it says it would do and what it is doing exactly in many of your lives today, building God's character qualities in your life.

#### IV. Grace, Law, and Principles

I think one of the major concerns today with God's people is simply their inability to fully understand the New Testament concept of grace. We think the Old Testament is all about the law, and it is. Everybody looks at the Old Testament and goes, "Oh, I want to live back there. You cannot do anything without getting killed for it." I understand that. But the New Testament, we think it is all about grace. Where in the Old Testament our mental mind is, they could not do anything. In the New Testament, we think that it allows us as Christians to do whatever we want to do. That is not true. That is not true.

*1 Corinthians 6:12*

*> All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

Expedient means not all things are wise for us to do.

*John 1:17*

> *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

You have to understand the balance between grace and truth. There are some commandments that we have to follow. There are some rules that apply to you and me as New Testament Christians in the form of principles. Principles, as I have told you many, many times, are the rules of conduct of life that must be followed.

Around here, we put a lot of emphasis. If you stick around here any length of time, you will find out that we put a lot of emphasis on Bible principles around here. The book of Proverbs, one of the reasons why we are studying it, is because of where our church is at in its overall growth process. It was very obvious that it was time for many of these people here that are sitting under the sound of my voice to move up to that next level. Many of them have. But principles are laws. They are rules. They are rules of conduct. When you get God's wisdom, then it is about getting the principles by which you make right choices over bad ones.

## V. The Consequences of Bad Choices

This last week, I went to Macy, my youngest granddaughter, her graduation. She graduated from kindergarten. I wanted to go simply because I never got to do that. I stayed in kindergarten for just about ever. I think I still am. It was one of the sweetest things I had been to. But it broke my heart in a sense. I do not go to anything or look at anything without seeing through what is happening and seeing many times the reality of what probably is really going to happen. There must have been about 80 or 90 little kindergarten kids. Every one of them came up, they had a little diploma for them, and every one of them came up to the microphone and said what they wanted to be in their future.

Most of them wanted to be police officers. I thought that was very admirable. Many of them wanted to be vets. I thought that was very good, not veterans, but veterinarians. I thought that was very good. Some of them wanted to be scientists. Some of them wanted to be nurses. Some of them wanted to be doctors. Some of them wanted to be lawyers. Some of them wanted to be a pastor. He has no idea what he is in for. Some of them wanted to play football, some wanted to play baseball or basketball. It was the cutest thing in the world, but I have got to be honest with you, the sad part is as I sat there, as much as I enjoyed it, I thought to myself, you know what, the reality is most of those kids will never realize their real dreams.

I did not hear anybody say, "I want to be a drunkard," but you know what, in the world that we live in, some of those kids will grow up to be alcoholics. Not one of those kids came up and said, "I want to be a drug addict," but you know as well as I do in the world that we live in, some of those little kids with their little dreams will never get realized, and they will grow up to be drug addicts. Not one little girl came up and said, "I want to be an unwed mother," but many of them will. Not one person got up and said, "You know, I want to be this and I want to be that," it was on a bad connotation. But as I sat there, I thought to myself, you know what, most of these kids will never realize the dream that they have that is an honorable dream of what they want to do in life, because the devil will make sure that that does not happen.

I say it is a simple fact that every problem we have and the thing that will keep many of those little kids, and it is just there, it is all around, and this is commencement, this is where people graduate. Last week, one of them went, my grandkid went to middle school from elementary school. Some of you are going from high school to college or whatever, and you all hear the same commencement thing, it is all about success. But the truth of the matter is, I am telling you, success in your life no matter how old you are, kids, success in your life is based on the choices we make. Not about the little dream that you have that is an admirable dream, it is about the choices that we make in life.

I can honestly say, and I think this is true, and you probably would agree with me, that every problem we have gotten into today, all of us, we got into it, it is based on violated principles of God's Word that have went bad in our lives. I want to say something to you. Violated principles in our lives as Christians, the situation can go bad very quickly.

When I was 11 or 12 years old, I cannot remember exactly how old I was, I was just like any other kid. I was dumb, I was stupid, I got in a lot of trouble with dumb things. I never robbed a bank or stole anything, I just did a lot of dumb things that kids at 11 and 12 do. Like the day I burned down the back gate of our house, almost burned down the garage. Mom and Dad were at work, they were hard workers, and they worked, and me and my sister were at home, and I never listened to my sister who is older than me, and I did my own thing, and I was playing with gasoline. I was making little gas bombs out of shotgun, 12 gauge shotgun shells, empty ones, but I was filling them up with gas. You know how the old paper water shotgun shells used to crimp out so you could close them back up again? So I filled them up with gasoline, closed them back up, but I put a little fuse in them, you see. I tried lighter fluid, it did not give me the bang that I wanted. Well, that was a bad choice. I found out you do not need a fuse to set off gasoline.

The bottom line was I was so stupid, I set the gas bomb right next to a little can of gasoline, which praise the Lord, only had about that much left in it. I never saw, I never saw, and I have never forgotten this, I never saw a bad choice get out of control so quickly. All I can see is my little self at 12 years old. It is a perfect thing for a Chevy Chase movie, and I would be Uncle Eddie. I mean, it was a thing where I ran up, I mean it started, the gate started on fire, the grass started on fire, the gate was burning. The big part is when my sister said, "I am not telling Mom or Dad, you tell them." Well, I was not going to tell them. I really thought that they would never see the burned gate back there. That was another dumb choice on my part. That gate was gone, man, and it was going into the grass. We had a grape arbor over here right to the side of us. It was burning. It was moving into the garage. The garage was back then was a pot with a tinderbox. So my little legs are running up there, and I remember, like it was yesterday, getting a big garden hose out. I am standing there. I am 20, it is not long enough to get down there. I am arcing the water, trying to put the fire out. Now that is a great example of bad choices getting out of control very quickly. In 30 seconds, that fire was everywhere.

I have got to tell you this, it was not my first experience with gasoline. My dad and mom had warned me many, many times when I was burning out the anthills in the yard by putting gasoline down the holes. I was creative. I had an aunt that was a diabetic or my grandmother a diabetic. I would get her old syringes and fill them up with gasoline, put them down the antholes, you

know, shoot it down in there where I am getting it in where it is going to do some good. I would stand back and watch them little critters, you know, watch them run everywhere. My mom and dad clobbered me for that. But just like me back then in my stupidity, now I am going to make a case for today in our stupidity. How many times have you heard the principles over and over again? The admonitions in the Bible, the warnings in the Bible, the rebuke in the Bible, of in life, you know it will never work in life mixing gasoline with fire.

The Bible is the only book that not only records the good things that men do, but it also records the bad things, the terrible things, the horrible things in graphic detail that men do. The reason God does that is so it is to show us graphically the consequences of us violating biblical principles. And yet we still do. Just like me at 11 or 12 when my mom and dad had whipped me and clobbered me and took things away from me, yet I did not listen to them. I have got to be honest with you, I never messed much with gasoline other than putting it into my car when I got a little older from that day because it took something that tragic in my life to get me to understand that gasoline is not something you play with. And yet I have seen people today deal with them all the time that make terrible tragic mistakes, and they seemingly never learn from anything that happens in their lives.

Grace is given to us as the ability not to be under the law anymore, not to do what we want to do, but to be free from the law to do with our lives what God wants us to do. He says grace and truth, where I may have the grace to do whatever I want to do honestly, but it is the truth that gives me the ability to stay within the confines of God's grace, to use the grace, but by God's truth not to abuse the grace and principles, the rules of conduct, the laws of living right is what gets us through that.

## VI. Binding God's Word to Your Heart and Neck

Now I want you to look at verse 21 here and he says:

*Proverbs 6:21*

> *Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.*

As far as I am concerned, verse 21 here is the key to all of this. "Bind them continually upon thy heart."

*Psalms 119:11*

> *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Learning Bible principles, learning and understanding, there is a set of biblical principles. There is a rule of action and conduct in the Bible for every situation in life. The goal of your life and my life as a Christian fundamentally should be simply to get them down and to start learning how to use them.

I told you earlier, we put a lot of emphasis. Anybody got your three by five cards here you can throw me out real quick so that we pass out to you here? Anybody got them? Yeah, give me right here. Let me have it. You will see a lot of people have these. We have those little three by five

cards that they put biblical principles on, and somebody comes in and maybe they have an issue. They have a problem or they have something they want to go through or learn. We teach this is the way we teach them to learn biblical principles. We teach them by first of all putting them on a three by five card, and that person has a particular issue with something, whatever it may be. We will give them maybe 15 or 20 of them as they go through discipleship and get studying. They put them on three by five card. This one here is 2 Corinthians 4:17.

*2 Corinthians 4:17*

*> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

Now see, that is a promise, that is a principle. You get 30 of those, you go through a tough time, you pick out your principles, you start going through them. Every time you have a problem, you have a problem with anger, we give them on anger. Whatever your problem is, we will give them to you or whatever they want to do, and then every time that comes up in your life, you get them out, you start going through it. We do that for a reason. We do not expect you to carry these cards around for the rest of your life. We expect to put them on cards right now that in the process of time, they will become automatic to you.

Back in a bookstore, we have a little thing called the Bible Promise Book. We give these out, or you can purchase one back there, they are cheap, they are a thousand dollars, but they are no big deal. You will find here that a lot of young Christians, they... the content: anger, belief, charity, children, children's duties, oh, mark that one in yellow, comfort, contentment, correction, courage, death, enemies, envy, eternal life, faith, faithfulness, God's faithfulness, fear, all down the line. You turn to wherever the page is, you will get 15 promises or principles on that subject, and we give these to you and everything that we do because this is what you have to have as a Christian: a principled life, because you are going to have to make choices, and the choices in time you want to make on the big biblical principles that become automatic in your life, getting to the place that you, your life, where you are so familiar with them that it becomes an automatic thing.

My address is 8308 Woodson Drive in Raytown, 64138. My phone number is 816-590-6315. Now there was a time when I first moved in there that I had to actually write that down. My cell phone number, I had a really hard time because I never called myself. Now you know why I know my address so well, you know why I know my phone number. I will tell you something else, we could go to my house right now, you blindfold me, and I could go through every room just about, and you tell me what room I am in, and I will tell you where everything is at, and I will show you where it is at, and I could probably find it without much difficulty. Now do you know why that is? It is because I live there. That is where I live. Somebody says, "Well, how do you learn the Bible and get the principles down?" You have got to start living there. You have got to make it like it is your own home. These are not just something that you use when you get in trouble. These are the investments that you make your life in, and when you live there, you learn them. They become absolute. They become part of your everyday life, and in time, if you stay with it, it will become second nature.

Last Sunday, I gave you a little test. We were doing the prophetic side of the seven things, and I was showing you how those unholy characteristics of the devil follow through history. You have been around now, many of you, for a long time, and we have been in all the different things we do in the Bible, and our whole world here is based on the Bible on all different levels. So I just threw it out for you to do a little test. Most of you got everything in the right place in the right time. Somebody was asking me at the picnic, they said, "Man, did you... I have been talking to people, and most of the people figured that thing out." That is really great. He asked me, "Were you surprised that so many people figured it out?" And I said, "No, I was not surprised at all. I would have been disappointed if they would not have." You see, I understand, I know that some of you guys here, and some of you gals, but especially you guys, some of you guys know the Bible better than I do. So I may have the edge on you with experience, but come on, you are smarter than I am. You have got more brain cells than I have. You are younger. You have got everything going for you. Your mind is like a steel trap. You are sharp. You have got all the things. When you get over the other side of the hill, when you have more days on this side than you have on this side, things get a little fuzzy sometimes. But that is what you are supposed to be.

I can tell you there are churches that when you get to know the Bible better than the pastor, you are in trouble. I wear that as a badge of honor. You know why? Because that is my job. My job is to replace myself with men and women who know that book and love that book just as much as I do. A pastor that does not have that as his ultimate goal, he is in the wrong business. He ought to be selling cars someplace or maybe work for Maytag. But you only get there one way. You only get that place in your life where that book becomes second nature to you, and you know it, and you understand it, and you have recall of it by putting that book, as the verse says, smack dab in the middle of your heart. That is where it needs to be, and when you do that, that is what is going to happen.

Then he says in verse 21, "and tie them about thy neck." Now this is a very important one also. Tie them about your neck because the neck in the Bible will always be a reference to man's will over God's will.

*Deuteronomy 31:27*

*> For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?*

He is talking about Israel. He is right on the money. Now I am going to tell you something, folks, when you and I got saved, the number one thing that should have went out the door immediately was your broken will out and God's will in. That is the number one thing. In the Old Testament, God's favorite expression for the nation of Israel was that they were a stiff-necked people.

*Exodus 34:20*

*> All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male, shall be mine. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou*

*redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.*

It says, "If you have an ass, it is to be redeemed by a lamb." Now an ass in the Bible is a picture of an unsaved man. Here is an ass, an unsaved man needs to be redeemed with a lamb. The Bible said, "Well, well, New Testament doctrine in the Old Testament." But he says, "If that will not happen, then what you do is you break the ass's neck," a picture of an unsaved man's will.

*Song of Solomon 4:4*

*> Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.*

Yeah, that chapter where Christ is looking at the church, and he says some really wild stuff, but it all means something in the Bible if you take your time to study it. It is very descriptive. He is looking at the church, you and me, and he says, "Your eyes are like doves." Now if you ever take a girl out, you know, and you want to compliment her, and you want to get into the book of Song of Solomon and use it in a biblical fashion, you know that would be a good place to start. "My darling, your eyes look like doves." I would stop there because the next one says, "Your hair looks like a flock of goats." I do not think that is going to go over very well. And then it says, "Her teeth is like a flock of sheep." I mean, I can just see, you know, "How do I look?" "Why, your hair looks like a flock of goats, man." I will tell you, I do not think she would appreciate that. I do not think she is going to get that. The Bible says that her lips are like a thread of scarlet, temples are like a pomegranate, but then it says, "The neck is like the tower of David." You know, if you went through every one of those things in the Bible, when you looked them up, you would find that it gives the most impressive complete picture of what the church should be when Christ sees it. Every one of those things is a spiritual thing. We look at it one time. In fact, I have got a picture somewhere in my files where a guy took all of those descriptive things and painted a woman based on it. She is the ugliest thing you ever saw in your life. But I know what it tells you, it tells you that great truth, and I am always trying to lay before your feet, God does not look at things like we look at him, does he? We look at something and we make it on the beauty of what it looks like. God makes it beautiful on what it represents to him in the Word of God. Great, great, great, great, great, great concept.

As I said, in the Old Testament, God's favorite expression for the nation of Israel was they were stiff-necked people. Times today in the New Testament has not changed all that much in the New Testament either with God's people because many of God's people today are stiff-necked still today. The Bible says in verse 21 to bind them continually all the time upon my heart and tie them about thy neck.

## VII. The Principles of God Will Lead, Keep, and Talk With You

Look at verse 22:

*Proverbs 6:22*

*> When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.*

Now this is a great promise verse here on our relationship with God and His principles. Bible talks about the peace that passes all understanding that will keep our hearts and mind.

*Philippians 4:7*

*> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

*Isaiah 26:3*

*> Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

God will keep him in perfect peace. Now you accomplish that in your life, that peace and all that He has for us with the principles of God building the character qualities of God in your life, the things that He loves, not the things that the devil loves or that we love.

In verse 22, the principles of God will do three things basically for you if you are paying attention.

1. It leads you. I told you a couple of weeks ago what I need in my life for sure, and you all need this too. You may not know it, but I am telling you, you need it. What I need in my life is somebody who understands life on planet Earth better than I do. Neil Armstrong has always been a hero of mine. He is the first man that walked on the moon. Most people do not know that he became a Christian later on, many years later. But before he became a Christian, coming back from that, he got into alcohol, he got into drugs, he lost his marriage, he lost everything he had. He got saved at some point in time, and he got his life back together. I remember reading his testimony one time, and he made one of the greatest statements I ever heard. He says, "You know, when it came to the things of this world, they could teach me how to walk on the moon, but they could never teach me how to live my life on planet Earth." We all need somebody in our life that understands life more than we do, and that is the Word of God. I tell people all the time that when Jesus Christ went back to heaven in Acts chapter 1, He replaced Himself with three things. The first thing He replaced Himself with was the Holy Spirit of God. By 90 AD, when John writes on the Isle of Patmos, the Bible is complete. The second thing He replaces Himself with is the Word of God. Then in the book of Acts, we find that the third thing He replaced Himself with was the local church. When it talks about God leading you, God leading me, it is very clear to me, the Holy Spirit of God is my guide, but I have a journey I have to go through in life. The Holy Spirit of God is my guide, the Word of God is my roadmap, but the local church is the vehicle by which I get to where I am going in life. Of course, the Bible says He will lead you. He will lead you through life by establishing our way. God has a plan. God has a way of life for you, a way He wants us to go. In dealing with people and trying to help people, that is all really you can try to do. You can try to help them see and understand that what they need in life is to get somebody in there that will lead them, that they do not make any more bad choices.

2. It keeps you. He says the second thing, "keep you, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee." Now this is where most people do their worrying, is not it? Cannot sleep, just lie there and think and worry. Some people cry themselves to sleep, other people worry themselves to sleep. The principles of God's Word will take all of that away because you have the answer to 95% of your issues, just learning how to trust God and taking care of the principles, and the rest will take care of itself. In fact, knowing and having the ability to use God's Word, the principles will solve just about every issue you are ever going to face in life. I do not know how many times I have sat down in my office and I have talked with somebody about where they are at and what they are going through in their life, and they have made a lot of bad choices, and now they have got a lot of consequences in their life because of that. I do not know how many times I have heard them say to me, "Well, I just do not know what to do." I do not know how many times they have said to me, "I just do not know which way to go." You know, those two statements will never enter into your life as a Christian if you are living your life by the principles of the Word of God. There will never be a time in your life that you do not know what to do, and there will never be a time in your life which way you do not know which way to go, because in life for a Christian, it is never, "Is there anything we can do in life for you and me as Christians?" It is, "What will we do what we need to do?" Okay? I have people all the time, they will come in and they will say, "Well, what do you think we ought to do?" And I will say, "It is not about what I think we ought to do. There is always something we can do. The real issue is right now in your life with the bad choices you made and the complications you have got, are you willing to change that, and will you simply do what you need to do?" That is always the issue, is not it?
3. It talks to you. The third thing, "talk to you, when thou awakest it shall talk with thee." Now I call this God consciousness, simply being aware that in your life you can talk to God all day long. We should go through our whole day looking and equating everything we see, good and bad, to a biblical principle in every situation. One thing I have learned years ago, I have learned that everything in my life today and tomorrow and the next day and every day of my life, once I am dialed into the Word of God and once I believe what I believe about this, then everything in your life and my life for the rest of our lives will be nothing more than a training ground. God will take you through today, and He will show you. You can do the mental gymnastics. You can play the scenarios out a thousand times. You can talk to God back and forth right in the midst of what you are doing because around you will be circumstances and people and situations that you will be part of that you will have to look at, and you will be able to in your mind go through and understand and equate the principles, good or bad, to every situation, constantly reminding ourselves of what God says about everything we see. Watch the news, and you can equate it with what the principles in the Bible say. You can watch a movie like I did with 12 O'Clock High many years ago. I equated a principle out of it that I have used many, many years since. You can read a book or at work with the people that you have to deal with from every morning to every evening, asking God to teach you the principles involved and let Him talk to you through the book and His principles, simply being aware of God and what He is doing around you and allowing God to bring those things into your life. When you have the principles learned from them, that is how you get where you want to get. You do not learn it just from coming on Sunday. You do

not learn it by giving God 15 or 20 minutes a day in the Bible. You get it by living there and using the principles in every situation you are faced with, even if they are not your situations, use it, learn from it.

## VIII. The Bible as Your Survival Guide

Look at verse 23:

*Proverbs 6:23*

*> For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:*

*Psalms 119:105*

*> Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

You know, I say this from time to time, and it bears being said. I make no apology when I say that in this life, all you need is the Bible. I make no apology that, and I know that is not popular today. We live in a Christian world. I am not talking about a secular world, I am talking about a Christian world today where Christian therapists, Christian psychology, Christian counselors all take the place of the Bible and the job that the pastors and the churches are supposed to do. Pastors are inept with the scriptures, so they subcontract you out to somebody else because they do not know how to deal with the situation themselves. I am going to tell you something, and I make no apology for it, there is not any problem you have anywhere in your life in any circumstance or situation that the Bible does not cover.

I had a Christian psychologist tell me one time, he says, "You know what," he says, "I believe the Bible is truth, but he says, I think there is truth outside the Bible." And I looked at him and I said, "You are a fool. There is no truth outside the Word of God." I heard a doctor one time of, I forget what he was, was not a medical doctor, and he says, "Doctor of psychology," or, "You know, I think it was psychosomatics, crock-packs," but they did not add to it. He said, "Well, well, you know, society faces new challenges." And it sounded professional. I love it when they get up there with their \$500 suits and, you know, when he says, "Well, society now has new challenges." That is a new word, "new challenges." You are challenged. You do not have any sin in your life, you have challenges. See, sin does not exist in your vocabulary, it exists all through God's vocabulary.

The thing was, "Well, in society now we are faced with new challenges today, challenges that did not have back in those days, and many of those challenges the Bible does not cover today." Sounds good, even sounds logical. I mean, here you have all those people supposed to live in caves back here, you know, scrolling pictures of birds and animals on the wall, you know, and now here we are today, and we, the Bible was written way back then, you know, and when the Bible, just an old antique book, you know, like a lot of other antique books you find in old antique bookstores. I mean, who would not think that something written there about 2,000 years ago would be up to date and on par with the new challenges that we all face?

Well, doctor, I have some news for you. The wisest man who ever lived said in Ecclesiastes chapter 1, verse 9, that there is nothing new under the sun, that the same issues we face today are the same issues that they faced back then. Then the wisest man also said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," in the last book that he wrote, and he wrote three of the wisdom books, and the Bible gives him the credit for being the wisest man that ever lived. But in Ecclesiastes chapter 12, verses 13 and 14, after he went through all the theologies of man and found them worthless, at the end of his writings, after examining everything in life that all you want to be is want to be like, but it will never attain to his wisdom, he said:

*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*

*> Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*

*> For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

I am telling you, the Bible is all you need, but you need it right. You need to accept the Bible even when you do not like it, even when the medicine that comes out tastes bad. I told you a couple of weeks ago, some parents will flavor their medicine for their kid so the kid does not get to leave a bad taste in his mouth. I guess that is okay, but I know that some preachers do the same thing, they want to put sugar on the sins so it does not seem so bad that it does not make you... I never sugarcoat anything. It is what it is. If the Bible says it is black, then it is black. It is just that simple. It is just that simple.

You ever notice how the Bible is your Christian survival tool handbook? I mean the Bible, I say the Bible is all you need, and I will tell you, we are in a world, and we have to survive. You get on the internet, you can find a thousand books on survival. Who on TV does not like Survival Man? Man, that guy can eat anything and make it look like it tastes good. He can find himself in the middle of Alaska in the winter time freezing to death, and he will have a wolf coat by the end of the show. Incredible. That is why we all like 12 O'Clock High. We are thrown into a situation where we have to survive, and you go to bed at night thinking, "What would I do in those situations?" I just get me a zombie suit and walk around with everybody. We are in a survival situation in this world today.

Do you know that there were three men one time that were in a survival situation way out with nothing, and they came across this wide raging river that they had to get across? The one man, all Christians, the one man, he looks at that raging river in this way, "Wow, man, it must be 300 yards across, and it is roaring down through there." He gets down on his knees and he says, "Oh God, give me the strength to get across that river." God gave him arms and legs that were strong, and he swam across that thing. It took him two hours. The other guy there says, "Get on his knees and pray." He says, "Oh God, just do not give me the strength, but give me the tools to get across that river." God gave him a boat. He had the strength of the boat. He paddled, took him an hour to get across. The third guy got on his knees and said, "Oh God, give me not only the strength and not only the tools, but give me the intelligence to get across that river." God turned

him into a woman. He got out the map, turned it, oriented it, looked, and 200 yards up the road went across the bridge. We are all survivors. We are in a survival mode.

You ever notice the Bible is your greatest survival book? I have an old friend of mine, Terry Phillips, and Terry and I, we go to all the gun shows together. Terry, he does not mess with guns, but he says, "We are going to sell." He does not mess with guns, but he sells army surplus. He had a surplus store years ago down in Northtown, and he goes over to gun shows, he sells all kinds of surplus. I grew up, helped him set it up. He loves this church. They are tied to this church. They live way up about a hundred miles from here, whatever it is, and they love this church. They always get into tapes, always listening to it. They are always calling with Bible questions, and him and I just have a great time. He sells a lot of in his surplus, he sells a lot of these army manuals that they have. You know, you know the number one manual that he sells because I sit there, I watch him go, it is on medical technicians in emergency situations and books on survival. People want to learn how to survive.

You know, in the world that we live in, your Bible is 10 things that will get you through any problems you are in. Your Bible is like unto a hammer in Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 29. It is like unto milk over there in 1 Peter 2:2. It is like unto water in John 4. It is like unto meat in Hebrews chapter 5. It is like unto a sword over there in Hebrews chapter 4, you can defend yourself. It is like unto nails in Ezra 9:8 and Judges 9:21. It is like unto honey in Psalms 119:103. It is like unto fire, and it is like unto light in Psalms 119:105. It is like unto apples in Proverbs 25:11. It is like unto bread in Matthew chapter 4:4. You know, if you have got those 10 things and you are in a survival situation, you can get along just fine. Well, that is your Bible. You have got, and I am telling you, in surviving on planet Earth with all of its problems, this is the only book you need as your survival guide because the devil wants to divide and conquer. He wants to divide and conquer your family. He wants to divide and conquer your marriage. He wants to divide and conquer this church and every other church. He wants to divide and conquer, and the only way you can do that and survive will not be how much gold you have or how many guns. Do not worry about William Devane and Rosland Capital. Do not worry about what is in your wallet. You better start worrying about what is in your heart because there is the only survival you have.

## IX. Five Lamps of God's Word

I will look at verse 23:

*Proverbs 6:23*

*> For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:*

Now as you try to survive in this old world which is darkness, you will find that the principles of God, God's Word, are your only hope. They are your light. In fact, as your Bible is your survival guide, one of those things was fire by which you make light and lamps. In your Bible, where it says the commandment is a lamp and the law is light, you are going to find five different lamps that you need.

4. Reading LampThe first thing your Bible is like, it is like a reading lamp. The Holy Spirit of God will illuminate what you read.Luke 24:45
  - > Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.Psalms 119:130
    - > The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.It says that the entrance of thy word it giveth light. Many of you take your Bibles and you have those little yellow China markers, and you will highlight a verse that is special to you that it lifts itself out when you turn the page. That is exactly what the Holy Spirit of God does when He becomes your reading lamp. You will read through there, and He will say, "Now do you see that? Look at this." You will have some need, you will go to the Bible, and that thing you have read it a thousand times, but it will stick out like you are going to trip over it. He is standing over your shoulder saying, "You see that there? Now you need that. Now that is exactly what you need for your problem." You know what your problem is? You are going to the Word of God, and you are going to the Word of God because you have issues in your life, and you are going to, that is your thing right there. Oh, you do not want it. That is what happens.
5. Heat LampNow the second kind of light it is or lamp it is, your Bible is a heat lamp. The Bible will warm your soul like no other book. When the cold winds of winter's time and life blow your way, it will soothe your aches and pains of this old world. Hopefully, when you play a double header on Saturday night in the cold darkness of this old world, it will warm you and keep you close to the source of heat, the Holy Spirit of God. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is likened to heat. Christ is likened to light. God is a spirit, but the Holy Spirit is likened to heat. Christ is likened to light because you can see light. God is likened to a spirit, but you cannot see the Holy Spirit of God, but you can feel the influence, so it is likened to heat. Psalms 19 and light have a heat lamp warming your soul.
6. Safety LampThird thing, Bible is like a safety lamp. You know, our cars are incredible. I mean, I am surprised that cars do not cost a million dollars with all the technology they have got in them. But in our cars, we have all kinds of warning lights. You know, they have a car out now that you do not even have to worry about if a car pulls out in front of you, it will, it has got sensors on it, it will stop itself. I think that is incredible. But you know, you get into your, you get into your, you get into your car, you know, and you have an oil, you know, your oil is low, a red light comes on, a warning light, safety lamp. If your car overheats, you know, you, you know, you get an engine overheating every once in a while, when it hits so many miles, you know, your engine maintenance light comes on, and it will not go out until you go take it in to get it fixed. Your door is ajar, little light is on there warning you the door is ajar. Yeah, if you do not put your seat belt on, you hear that ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. Somebody is warning you, "Put your seat belt on." Those lights come on to keep us safe.Well, the Bible is the same way. There are some flashing red warning lights that you need to watch out for to keep you safe, and the Bible makes it clear when you get with the wrong association, and you know the principles, the warning light comes on. When you go someplace you should not be, the warning light comes on. The influences you allow in your life, the warning lights will come on. Why, you cannot come to a church service or a Thursday night Bible study or any church service, and if a guy is halfway worth his salt, he is

not going to trip some warning lights in our lives. I am going to tell you something, every bad choice we ever made was accompanied by a warning light. We just ignored it. We are like the guy who does not want to wear a seat belt, does not like the belt, so you figure out how to hook it behind the seat so you do not have to wear it, but it does not ding anymore. I have seen people do that with the principles of the Bible. I have seen people drive two years, "Confess your faults one to another." I have seen people drive their car two years with that engine maintenance light on, thinking that it just put it on there so you would bring their car in and they could get money out of you. For two years, I drove my car that way, and then one day I had some major problems that required a major overhaul. But do not you know that is the way it is in our life? You ignore the warnings and ignore the warnings, and you think it is not real, it is not to you, you do not have to worry about it, it is for somebody else, and then one day in your life you have to get a major overhaul in your life. That is the Bible, it is a warning light.

7. Traveler's Lamp Bible's fourth one says it is a traveler's lamp or light. As I said a little earlier, life is a journey, and it is filled with side roads, shortcuts, dead ends, traffic jams. Modern day GPSs, I think, are quite incredible. I know the richest woman in the world is whoever's voice they use on those things. I like being alone because I just cuss her out and yell back at her. Nobody ever gets mad at me when I do it. I will purposely take a turn left when she says right just to show her that I am still a man. That car cannot do that when the real GPS is sitting next to you. I do not mind the one in there, she just tells me when I turn the wrong way. I hate the one that tells me I am not a good driver. But I think modern GPSs are quite incredible. Not that I do not tell you where you are at and how to get to where you are going. It will get you, not that I do not tell you where you are at and how to get to where you are going, it will give you three or four options. But I will tell you, it will tell you where the traffic jams are, where the wrecks are, where the road construction is. It will give you weather warnings. It will give you road conditions. It will show you everything, the detours. They are incredible. But you have to use it, see. I do not know about you, but I think human nature is probably always the same. I follow my GPS, but I have got to be honest with you, I get a deep thing seated down inside of me that I think I know how to get there better than that GPS is telling me, and almost every time when I did follow my own self, I got lost. God has given you a book that is your lamp, it is your light, it is your traveler's lamp, it is your GPS. It knows where you are at, and it knows where God wants to get you, and it will tell you every warning and every danger in there and get you past every detour that gets you right where God wants you to be.

8. Night Light Fifth one, it is a night light. Luke 18:17

> Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. Jesus said, "Except you come to me as a little child, you have no part of me." I am 63 years old, soon to be 64, and yet with God, I am just a little child. You know, they say that the older you get, the more you go back to being like a child. In a physical sense, that is probably true. I know it ought to be true in a spiritual sense because the more you get spiritually, the wiser you get, the more you ought to realize that the dumber you are, the better off you are. The best faith that you and I could ever have is childlike faith, to just believe whatever God tells you. I agree with it, I agree with it, I agree

with it. But you know, a child, little children can all have one thing in common from time to time, and that is that we all get afraid of the dark, do not we? I told you how verse 22 says it will keep you when you sleep, so we as parents, you know, we leave a night light on. Now for me, that is the Word of God, that is my night light. John 1:5

> And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. It said, "The light that shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended not." When the darkness of this old world scares me, and I am afraid of the unknown and the darkness, I just turn on my night light, and the darkness and the shadows flee. But the night light is the principles of the Word of God in your life. "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light." The original Motel 6 is in here, they will leave the backlight on for you.

## X. Reproof and Instruction as the Way of Life

Now the last thing he says, and I leave you with this: "reproofs and instructions are the way of life." Not only are the principles of God there to guide us and to lead us, to illuminate our situations in life, but I want you to see this, they are also there to reprove us. As much as we do not like being reproofed, the wisest man that ever lived said reproof and instruction are just a way of life. In dealing with people, you can always tell if a person is of any quality by the way they accept reproof and instruction because reproof and instruction is a way of life.

*Proverbs 27:7*

> *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.*

The Bible says in Proverbs 27:7, "The fool so loatheth the honeycomb, but he that loveth the honeycomb, even the bitter things are sweet." See, that is what we have in our life when we love the Bible. I do not like being rebuked. I do not like being told I am wrong. But I want to tell you something, reproof is a way of life, and I think this is very important because how you accept reproof or reject it will always define you of how teachable you really are.

I never, in dealing with people, I never define people. I learned a long time ago that you do not have to do that. You will find that when a person, when a person, you know, allows the Word of God in and takes the reproof or stiffens their neck at the reproof, they always define themselves. I mean, you will find with God's people, I do not mean this in a bad way, it is just the truth, you will find some of God's people who are absolutely worthless. I mean, why would you think you would not? And yet if you say that that person is worthless, you are going to get accused of judging them or being mean and spiteful. I get it. But you do not, you do not get it in reality. The standard has already been set for us as Christians. The bar has been placed at a certain level of performance for us as Christians. I did not set the bar there. A lot of you people get mad at me like you get mad at a cop because he pulled you over and gave you a ticket. He did not make the laws. He did not write the speed limit. His job is to enforce what somebody else put down as a law and a principle. I did not write the Bible. My job, as your job with your children and your family and your marriage and in all your life, is to just reinforce the principle that somebody else wrote. But that is the way it goes.

You see, people get mad, they get upset, and when a person refuses after they are saved to do anything by the standard set by God, and they just go through their life living their life doing their own thing and never do one thing in that book that God ever required of them, they define themselves. I do not define them, they define themselves. The bar, the standard is already set. Reproof is vital in our spiritual growth, just as it is vital in our daily world. In sports, football, baseball, basketball, you do not become great without reproof. Someone telling you what you did wrong so you will correct it to become better. The coach reproves us, he rebukes you only because he saw in you great potential, and he sees the potential is not being realized, so he stirs you up, he brings it to the surface, he tells you what is wrong, but then he gives you the instructions to be what you need to be. Hey, it is a vital part of our development in all ways of life. We learn by our mistakes, not just learning from them, but as I have said before, learning to grow through them. People who never learn from their mistakes are so easy to spot because they just keep going over and over the same mistakes in their life. When you follow the biblical principles in life, those mistakes will make you and not break you.

Now I have got to say this, and you know this is true, there are many of God's people who will take the mistakes that you make through life and will try to hurt you with them. I am not talking about people who have made mistakes and try to lie their way out of them. I am talking about people who admit their mistakes, knew they were wrong, and want to be better for it. People will slander you with your past, and they do not understand everybody on planet Earth has a history. Everybody has got baggage. Everybody has got problems. They will beat you up. They will try to define you in life by them.

When I go to the grocery store, I do not know how you ladies shop, but when I shop for groceries, I always look for that cart in the middle of the aisle that has got all the dented cans in it or maybe the labels are off because I, those are the ones I will buy because they will sell them cheaper. Where it is a dollar over here, it is 40 cents here, and if it is something I need, I will buy it in a dented can. I will buy it in a scorched top can. I will buy it with a label off because I realized that when I got home, when I put the can opener to it and I got some green beans and they were dented, when I opened up that can and took out and dumped the green beans out, you know what, those green beans were just as good as the cans that were not dented. But you know why people will not, you know why people will not buy those? Because they think there is something wrong with the cans that are dented. And God's people will look at other God's people the same way because they have got some dents in their life. They will think that what is on the inside is not any good. But I have been in this business long enough that I know that I have unscrewed some of your tops and I have looked inside some of your cans, and even though you may have some dents in your life, I want to tell you right now what is on the inside is 100% good quality. Do not let people define who you are. Do not let people define who you are.

A real Christian will take the mistakes that another Christian makes and will try to help them, not hurt them. They will help you do better. They will not slander you with it or they will not make up things about you. They will, they will help you do better. They will encourage you to do better. But for all of us, getting a principled life is the only way to, as a Christian and as a church, to get to those places where we fly those tight formations, that we get everybody tied in, all the

guns directed, the Bible doctrines protecting the group integrity, the church integrity, everything through the biblical teachings that you get. Stay to the book, true to the book, maintaining the church group integrity, taking the good things and the bad things in people's lives and helping them grow through it by the application of biblical principles. That is the key of Proverbs chapter 6 and these short verses. A lot of stuff here, but if you ever want to get to the place in your life where you have the victory in your life and you realize the goals that every one of us have, just like those little kids, go and take the principles. You know, right now today, wherever you are at or what you are struggling with, obviously in many cases, you are not going to be able to fix all your problems right now. There will be a process to do that. But I will tell you what, I have never met a situation, I have never been involved in a situation where you could not fix one thing right out of the chute if you are of a mind to. No matter where you are at, the one thing you can do today that will stop the process and begin the right process is to stop making bad choices. If you can just do that, you can fix the rest. But if you cannot do that, you will never fix anything.