

# Proverbs 9

Sunday 9/28/2014

Now, if you have your Bibles, I want to invite you again to turn back to Proverbs chapter 9. This is, I think, a great chapter. So far in this chapter, we have learned some very helpful truths, not only for us, but I think also for the people that we meet in life. We talk a lot about the opportunities that God gives you to be a witness for Him. You know as well as I do, many of those opportunities are people you work with or people that you know when they go through some tough time that God will put you in their life at the right point, the right time, and give you the right things to say.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 14 verse 7, a great verse that I've always thought was something I always want to remember. It simply says that no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. There's always somebody watching our lives. When we're aware of that and we allow God the opportunity to do something in our life to other people, that's really what the ministry is. Yet again today, we're going to see, I think, one of the most profound passages in all of the Bible as far as getting to know and understand God. We're going to define for you today a term that's found in the book of Proverbs. It's one of the most misunderstood and misapplied terms that you're ever going to find people today, and it's simply the term "the fear of the Lord."

I want to leave you today with an understanding of what that means. Today we're going to learn how that you fear God, but you're never to be afraid of God. That's a great thing if you can grasp that today. The great misconception that I get all the time is, "God's out to get you. God's out to get us." People live in fear that because they've done something wrong in their life, God's going to kill them, or God's going to kill their kids, or God's going to give them cancer. I've met people that think that God is just kind of standing around the corner watching for you to screw up and then give you some dire disease. People go through their life that way. Of course, they think God is going to take vengeance on them, that God is going to clobber them. That's the mindset that many people have today. They have that because they don't understand basically what we're going to talk about today. Not only do I want to preach to you to give you what you need, but there are times that I want to take and show you things in your life that I think will help you. This will be one of those things today.

Now let's look at Proverbs chapter 9 and we'll pick it up in verse 10 and we'll read 10, 11, and 12 here. Here's what it says:

*Proverbs 9:10-12*

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

*For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.*

*If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*

Now Father, help us today to grasp from the Word of God the great truths that You have for us. We do love You. We thank You for all that You do for us and all that You've given us, and we

pray now Your blessings upon us and all that we endeavor to try to accomplish today with Your people. Help them be better, help them to be stronger, help them to realize that all of the things that You have for us are only to help us be more like You every day. We'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for Your sake we ask it. Amen.

## I. The Three Key Words: Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding

There's a commercial on the radio that I really like. A lot of things you hear on the radio or even see on television, they're kind of Bible truths misapplied. There's a commercial that comes on about learning another language. I think it's a very powerful persuasion because it talks about, "Will getting a new pair of shoes make you a better person?" Evidently not. It basically says, if you go out and get something new, does it really make you a better person? Then it makes the point that if you learn another language, it'll really broaden who you are. That is true. Learning another language really does broaden you in many, many ways.

But I've often thought of that as the things that we buy in life, the things that we think we've got to have in life, the physical things we just can't wait to get our hands on in life. When you stop and think about it, they don't really make you a better person. What really is going to make you a better person is what I'm going to talk to you about this morning. I think as a child of God, if you're saved here this morning, that's really ought to be the fundamental underlying goal for everything in your life: that you want to be better in what you do.

Now that verse says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Then it says, "and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." A little bit earlier in the book of Proverbs, when we were in chapter 1, I gave you the other verse that says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. From our study so far in Proverbs, we now have the three key words that you have to get down in your life if you're going to really be better for God in all that you do. We've talked about it many, many times, and I try to keep it before you every chance I can.

But we now know those three words are:

1. Knowledge: simply the facts about something.
2. Wisdom: simply applying the facts that you do know to something.
3. Understanding: facts and wisdom applied to the Word of God.

Understanding will show you how God will figure in any situation. An unsaved man can have facts and he can have knowledge and he can have wisdom, but an unsaved man cannot have understanding because understanding is how God fits into the equation.

## II. Understanding God's Role in World Events

I'll give you an example: terrorism in America. We've got a huge problem of terrorism around the world, unprecedented in history. We've seen now every day on the news you hear about ISIS and

Al Qaeda. Who doesn't remember, we just had the anniversary for 9/11, and all those things that took place, and it's all around us.

Now, facts would be that the Muslim race hates Westerners and Israel. That's fact. They've always been against that. They've always been against the Westerners. They've always been against the nation of Israel. Those are facts.

Now, if you want to get wisdom about the facts, wisdom will tell you why they're against the Westerners and the nation of Israel. They're against the nation of Israel because Muslim teaching says that the two boys that Abraham had, one of them represented Israel and the other represented the Muslim race, and they've had problems for hundreds of years. So that's the reason; there's wisdom to that. The reason for having wisdom about why they hate the Westerners goes back to the Crusades, when the Roman Catholic Church under Pope Urban, around 1095, wanted to take the Holy Land back from the Muslims, and they fought for almost 200, probably 200 plus years, what we know as the Crusades. The Muslims never forgot that, and they look back on that butchering of their people at the Crusades, and they spread that with a broad paintbrush to all Westerners. So now we have facts and we have wisdom. The facts are that they hate Israel and they hate Westerners, but the wisdom in it is we now know why.

But putting understanding to it shows you how God fits into it. We talked about this a little bit Thursday night. God has always used nations to judge His people. When you put understanding to what's going on around us today, when you go back to the Old Testament, like the Book of Judges, or you go back to the nation of Israel in Second Kings and Second Chronicles, you find that God used the nation to judge His people when they dumped the Word of God.

Now what you're seeing today is America, who started out as a Christian nation based on the Word of God by the founding fathers, putting it into the Constitution, following it in the school system, where everybody had to read it. It used to be required reading up to about 1930. Everybody had to read George Washington's farewell address and what he talks about what needs to stay in the school systems to keep our country where it needs to be. It's incredible. What was required reading until the 30s is not anymore today. We're looking at America, who once had the Word of God, now declaring herself that she's no longer a Christian nation, dumping the Word of God, dumping God, bringing all the wicked things that God was against into our society. Then we wonder why we have what we have going on around us today.

You see, that's the facts. That's wisdom, and that's understanding. A great verse, if you don't have it in your Bible, you ought to write it down. It is going to come in real handy in the day and age that we live in:

*Proverbs 28:5*

*Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.*

That's what understanding gives you. It'll show you God in any situation, what He's really doing. In the book of Proverbs, when you begin to see what it's really all about, it's about this: when we figure out who God is, and then you have the ability through wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to figure out what God said. When you figure out what God said, then you can

understand better what He wants you to do with what He's given you. That's really what Proverbs is about. Really what the whole Bible is about. Really what Christianity is about.

You remember back early on in Proverbs chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, I gave you a real good dissertation on that passage where it says:

*Proverbs 2:1-5*

*My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;*

*So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;*

*Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;*

*If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;*

*Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.*

You remember I gave you those six things that we have to do. It talks about receiving His Word, inclining your ear, applying your heart, crying after knowledge, lifting up your voice for understanding, to seek and to search for truth like it was hid treasure. The Bible says that when we do that, "then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." Remember I told you that finding the knowledge of God wasn't just finding the knowledge about God. No, no, no. It's getting the exact same knowledge that God has that He operates every day in everything that He deals with. That's understanding in the Bible.

### III. The Christian Life: Getting Things Out, Putting Things In

Now you've heard me say it many times, and it's true: the Christian life in its simplest form, if you want to break it down to the lowest common denominator, is simply that we as God's people, when we get saved, we have to get some things out of our lives and then we have to put some things into our lives. This is the fundamental flaw in Christianity today, as far as my opinion is on it from seeing this thing and watching it over a number of years. Preachers will yell at you, preach to you to get things out of your life, but pastors don't have the ability today to give you anything to put in to replace what you're supposed to get out. It's true. I am to tell you there are some things that you need to get out of your life, but I have failed in that if I do not give you something to replace with what you have to put out.

Then you have the other kind of situation where they don't yell at you at all about anything. They never put anything in. They really never tell you to take anything out. They just kind of leave it where it's at, and they think that just adding the world to what Christianity is is going to be what it needs to be. That's what we have today for the most part. Then we wonder why God's people are so confused today and so absolutely upside down in a relationship with Christ.

Now you and I know, I mean, you're sitting here this morning and you're honest with yourself even a little bit, you and I both know that in our lives as Christians there are some things that will

have to go in our lives. It goes back to one of those counseling principles that I didn't give you this last week when I just showed you a few of them, but we talk about this in the people ministry. It goes back to the counseling principle that you cannot fix the problems in your life or my life. I can't fix the problems in my life with the same kind of thinking that caused those problems. Something has to change. I have to get the old things out and put the new things in. That's where we're at today. Some things will have to change for you for you to be able to change.

For you and for me to have and understand the fear of the Lord, it's simply that through the knowledge of God, you and me getting these three ingredients in our lives to handle the issues of life: seeing it as God sees it, understanding it as God understands it, and then doing with it what God tells you to do by getting three things in your life: the knowledge about God, wisdom about God, and understanding about God. Then, based on seeing and understanding how God fits into everything in life, then you simply walk through all the issues in life that you and I will have to face.

#### IV. Two Main Issues for God's People

I've dealt with people for a long time, and I try to boil things down to the lowest common denominator to make it really simple, not only for myself in helping them, but for them in understanding it. I can tell you today that there are two main issues that all of God's people have. They will need to overcome them in time, and it all has to do with understanding.

The two issues that God's people have to get past in their life or get to in their life are:

4. They have to understand who God really is. They have to understand how they view God biblically. If you would talk to anybody today across the nation, everybody's got their own opinion of who God is, their viewpoint of God. But you know, in reality, there's only one that really matters, and that's the viewpoint found in the Word of God. That's the one you and I need to make.
5. We really need to see who we are in Christ, how God views you and me. One of the best studies that we have around here that many of you have taken, some of you are probably in it right now, we call it our Discipleship Two. That is, once you go through the basic discipleship lessons, we have a set of lessons that I put together a number of years ago that I think is probably one of the greatest assets that you'll have in your Christian life. It simply deals with the ten things that changed about you the day you got saved. It's something that shows you, begins to show you not only how God looks at you but how you're to look at God. It actually shows you that the day you got saved what actually changed about you and transpired in your life.

Now we know from the book of Proverbs, and we've talked about this a couple of weeks ago, we know that the book of Proverbs is our instructions to us as God's son from God. Also in the book, you'll find that there are seven things that the fear of the Lord will give you. You find the fear of the Lord seven times in the book of Proverbs. When you get these seven things down in your

life, you've got understanding. You get these things down, and when you get the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, you'll have the understanding of God.

Honestly, I'm just telling you, I know we like to make the Christian life really complicated. I know that we like to focus on people's problems. I never focus on that when you come in to see me or somebody comes in to see me. You may have horrendous problems, and I want to solve your problem, but I don't focus on your problem. You know why? Because your problems are only the symptoms of a deeper problem. I don't want to spend and waste a lot of time trying to treat the symptom. I want to go straight to the problem. The problem in every case, as far as I'm concerned, is very simple. It's the fact that we all today need a different perspective of life. We need to quit looking at life the way we want to see it, and we've got to see it from God's standpoint, the way it really is, the reality of life, not our way anymore. The ability to see and understand from God's viewpoint what's really important in life and what God has called me and you to do in this life. And me also setting priorities and goals to reach that level of my Christian life. That's basically in a nutshell what I try to do here. I know you're all on different levels. It's like juggling all kinds of things to try to get everybody what they need. But at the end of the day, my goal is whatever level you're on is to give you the ability and the tools to get to that next level.

*Proverbs 23:17-18*

*Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.*

*For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.*

You know that is such a true verse of life. We go through life envying what the world has, thinking if we had it, we would be happy. That's what we do. We envy what the world has, but we don't have understanding. We don't realize that at the end of it, as the verse says in verse 18, "surely there is an end." Whatever you're putting all of your trust in, whatever you want, whatever you think is going to make you happy, at the end will wind up betraying you. It won't be real.

*Haggai 1:6*

*Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

A life without God is like a bag with holes in it. We go through life and we've got this big bag, and we see all the things we want, and we keep throwing it into the bag. We see, "Oh, I've got to have this. Oh, I've got to have that. We've got to have this. Oh, I've got to have that. I've got to have that." I'm not preaching, you don't preach to me. I've got one of the biggest bags you've ever seen in your life. Well, it ain't filled up to the top, I've got it. But when you get down to the end of the life and you get down there at the end, and you get all that done and you say, "Wow, look what I got." But you look in there and it's gone. Because a life without God is like you putting all the things that you think you've got to have in a bag, but there's holes in that bag and it ain't there when you need it.

## V. The Seven Benefits of Fearing the Lord

Now let's look at these seven things here and we'll briefly go through them. This is a great chapter with some great things, and I want to talk to you about the seven fears of the Lord throughout the book of Proverbs.

### 6. The first one is in Proverbs chapter 3 verse 7: Proverbs 3:7

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. This deals with understanding that God is a holy God and He judges sin. When a child of God has understanding, he looks at his life in long term, not short term. This is very important for you to learn. He knows that sin has consequences and he'll think through the end result. He'll think about the final outcome of the bad choice that they're about to make. Many times in dealing with people, and if you folks that work with people and have worked with people, you know this is true what I'm saying. You will have to tell people the decision that they make or they are about to make or maybe they already made is not a good choice. Many times they don't like to hear that. I'm just being honest. They don't want to hear it. I've even had them get mad at you for wanting to hear it. I've even had them get mad at me, like I've got some kind of ulterior motive of not wanting you to make this choice. I don't have any ulterior motive. My reason for you not making that choice is because I've been around for a little while and I know where that bad choice is going to lead you. It's a bag without holes, and I know at the end you think it's going to make everything in your life the way you want it to be. In reality, it's going to make your life into a disaster. Getting involved with an unsaved person if you're a Christian, there's no future in that. The Bible says, "light and darkness, how can two walk together except they be agreed?" They can't. But I don't know how many times I've seen a girl or a guy get involved with somebody who was lost and they were saved, and I've told them that that was a bad choice and that wasn't going to work, and they get upset with me. Now three or four years down the line, when they're divorced or their lives are a wreck and a mess, then I become their best friend again. I am in and out of people's lives as friends and enemies so much I just don't know what coat to put on this morning. When you try to tell somebody what is the right thing and they don't want to hear it, they get mad. But then when it all falls apart, then they come back and now you're your buddy again. Or like getting into situations that will take you away from church. I don't know how many times I've said to somebody, "You know what, that is not a good thing to do. You need to be in church on Sunday morning. You need to be in Bible study on Thursday night." I mean, two times a week with all the stuff the world throws at you. Let me ask you a question. You all work, most of you all work, I think. Do you all shower at least once a day? There's a couple I worry about, but we're going to give that ministry to Bob. He's going to tell them. He's our soap man. Are you going to help me out? But let me ask you a question. What do you think that you would smell like if you didn't shower all week long? You'd be pretty ripe. Well, you know, you go through the world all week long. You know you get dirty. You may not try to get dirty. You may do your best not to get dirty. But you know you can't walk through a flour mill without getting some flour on you. You can't walk through a coal mine without coming out dirty on the other side. Even though your best intention was to tip-toe through it, you didn't make it. I don't know why you think that you can go through life and around here we

only ask you to shower twice a week. We'll put up with the stench the rest of the time. I'm just telling you. But people get mad at that. People say, "Well, you're trying to control my life." I'm not trying to control your life. I'm just, I'm not worried about saving you a lot of heartache five years from now. I'm worried about saving me a lot of heartache or something else I've got to deal with five years from now. That's the way people are. I've told people that, "You know what, you need to get your priorities straightened out." They get upset. They don't want to hear it. You see, a man or a woman who has understanding knows and operates on a simple principle found in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 27: Ephesians 4:27

Neither give place to the devil. The devil will take the most basic things in our lives, even things that aren't considered bad. Old Mel used to say, "Nothing wrong with going fishing, but not on Sunday morning when you ought to be in church." He used to say, "Nothing wrong with bowling, but not when you need to be in church." The devil will take the most insignificant things, the basic things in our lives, and use it to destroy you, your marriage, your kids. If there's anything you should have learned by now, even if you've been saved a short time, given your past, what you've come out of, and where you're at, if there's anything you ought to know, you ought to know the devil never misses an opportunity. He never does. Now I have missed many in my life, and most of you have missed many too, but I want to tell you something, the devil never misses an opportunity to mess with you. He never does. When you fear the Lord, it's not about, "I'm afraid God's going to kill me." When you understand the biblical concept of the fear of the Lord, it's your fear of losing what you have with God to the world: your marriage, your husband, your wife, your kids, your own relationship with God. Most important, losing what you'll have at the judgment seat of Christ. It's not about what God will do to you. It's the fear of what you'll lose with God if you don't stay with God, because there's a lot to lose.

7. The second one, Proverbs 8:13: Proverbs 8:13

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. Now when you look at this verse, four things here that we Christians should hate. In fact, when you come through the Bible, I talked about this Thursday night, you'll find in Proverbs seven things that God hates over there in Proverbs 6, and then when you come through the whole Bible, you're going to find out that there are seven things that God loves. We talked about it Thursday night, and Christianity for the most part today, and I said this Thursday night, Christianity to me for the most part today is the biggest flop and the biggest joke you've ever seen in your life. You've got a lot of God's people running around talking about how much they love God. They say, "Oh, I love God. I love the Lord. Praise the Lord." They'll get up and give all kinds of testimonies, and if you threw an open Bible in their face and asked to show them the seven things that God loves and the seven things that God hates, they couldn't do it in life depending on it. How do you claim to love somebody when you don't even know what that person loves himself? You see, the Christian that has a relationship with God and understands God, he loves the things that God loves and he puts those things in his life, and he hates the things that God hates and he puts those things out of his life. You know what I found with most of God's people who talk about loving God and have no idea what I'm talking about this morning? I found out that almost without exception, the things that they wind up loving are the things that God hates, and the

things that they hate are the things that God loves. That's the way it works today. Long ago, the prophet Isaiah told us that there would come a time when we would experience what we're experiencing today. He said in Isaiah chapter 5 verse 20: Isaiah 5:20

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Isaiah 5:21

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! This is Christianity today. It's hard to believe it, but it's true.

8. The third one is found in Proverbs chapter 10 verse 27: Proverbs 10:27

The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. This is not only true in a physical sense, but it's also true in a spiritual sense. The Old Testament application would be in the physical. God gave men long lives. He gave Abraham 175 years. He gave Moses 120 years. Remember King Hezekiah? He lived through a certain time in his life, and then God says, "You're going to die." He cried and asked God for more. God gave him another 15 years. In the Old Testament, God prolonged their days. He gave them long life. Now in the New Testament, it's a spiritual reference. You see, the wicked has no eternal life. He has the second death. In the Bible, it's called dead in trespasses of sin. It's called dying and going to hell. Whatever time he lives on earth is so short compared to the eternity he's going to spend in hell. I always think of George Bernard Shaw. George Bernard Shaw lived to be 99 years old, and he was a practical atheist all of his life. After he died and they were selling some of the stuff, they found the Bible that he had had, and in the front flyleaf of that Bible, he had written this note many years ago: "This is the most undesirable item that I have ever owned. Someday I really must get rid of it." That's what he thought about the Word of God. He lived to be 99 years old. But you know what? He died a number of years ago, and he's in hell probably this morning, unless something changed. When he's in hell for 100 million years, that 99 years ain't going to look like much. It's going to be forever. But for the child of God, life is prolonged forever. It's God's eternal day. When I do a funeral and I know the guy is saved, I'm always thinking to myself, everybody thinks this guy is dead. I understand there's a sadness, a sorrow, there's a void. I get it. I'm sympathetic to that. But you know the reality is that guy is alive, more alive than we are. He's more alive now than, if she's more alive now than she's ever been in her life. She's with God. People kind of messed up on the approach. They don't have any understanding.

9. The fourth thing, Proverbs 14:26: Proverbs 14:26

In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. Now I think this one is vital. This is the single missing ingredient in Christians' lives today, along with all the other single missing ingredients I'm going to tell you about today. It's no confidence. No confidence in anything. Most people have no idea who God really is or who they are in Christ or what God has for them to do. They have no confidence in anything. There's no confidence in the Bible. They've been saved 10 or 15, 20 years. They still don't know anything about the Bible. No confidence to teach it. No confidence to give it to somebody else. They really don't have any joy in their life. They have no ability to stand unless somebody else is standing with them. They don't know what they believe, or if they do believe something, they certainly don't know why they believe it. No confidence. And look at

the last part of verse 26, "and His children shall have a place of refuge." Your strong confidence in the things of God are a place of refuge for your children. Now we looked at this chapter 9 verse 1, and it talked about building your house on seven pillars. I told you that's a physical house, your own house wherever you live today, or it's your spiritual body. Your children, our children, need a strong presence in their lives, a strong confidence that gets passed on to them. The confidence of a safe home, the confidence of a loving home. They don't need mom and dad fighting and killing each other and throwing things at each other and cussing each other out. There's no security in that. They need a strong home. They need a Bible-based home. They need a place that they can trust, a place that they feel secure in, a place that they never want to leave, a godly home founded on those seven pillars. It'd be safe to say in people's lives today that our children today and their confidence in the Lord, or whether they have it or whether they don't, will simply be a reflection on our confidence in all of these things. Your family, my family, good or bad, is simply the house that we have built. It's just that simple.

10. Now look at the fifth one, Proverbs 14:27:Proverbs 14:27

The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Now in the Bible, fountains are connected with the living waters of the Word of God, like Revelation 7:17. In John chapter 4 verse 14, you have the famous story of the woman at the well where Jesus answered and said unto her: John 4:14

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. You see, a fountain of the Word of God that fills a man on the inside. Now if you're saved this morning, it's not a question that you have the water inside you. That's not the question if you're saved. The question I have for you that only you can answer is, is the water inside you a stagnant cesspool or is it bubbling up fresh every day in your life? That's the question. Is it springing forth and getting everybody around you? If you ever get the ability to have the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, and the understanding of God, and it shows you how to avoid the snares of death, it'll be because you've got the ability beyond this present day circumstance to see the issues as they really are long term, not short term. We always look at things in the short term. We never look at the consequences of the long term. If a Christian ever gets to that place in their life, and few ever do, it will have to come from the Word of God on the inside of your life, not the outside. Men in Christianity for the most part are people with a Bible on the outside, not the inside. They have it, they carry it, they even read it. But it's all for nothing. It never, never penetrates inside and fills them up. So they just have the same problems over and over and over. For you to get some things out of your life, you've got to let some things happen on the inside of your life. It'll never spring from the waters of everlasting life to the waters of everlasting fountains, fresh every day, bubbling up from the inside, never stagnant, never polluted, always clear and clean and fresh for not only you to drink every day, but for others to drink from.

11. The sixth one, Proverbs 15:33:Proverbs 15:33

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility. Along with that, the verse before it, verse 32 says: Proverbs 15:32

He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth

understanding. Now the judgment seat of Christ is going to be a lot of things to a lot of people, but fundamentally the judgment seat of Christ will be you and I getting the honor and the glory of God for our work in this life if we do what God wants us to do. But the thing I want you to notice and the thing I want you to understand today is that there's no glory up there without the brokenness of humility first down here. You better see that. "Before honor is humility." One of my favorite books that I like to read is a book that's about that thick, and it's based on all the Medal of Honor winners. It basically goes through and shows from the Civil War when it was first instilled all the way up through World War I, all the way up to the present day time. I think mine ends at the Gulf War '90. But it's a great, great, great book. At each page, it'll give a bio of a guy and it'll show a picture of him and then tell basically the story of what he did. You know what? To think of them standing there, and many of them, there's the picture of the presidents putting that Medal of Honor around their neck and that blue ribbon, and for them to get the highest award our country can offer. You stand there and see that. Most people think that is so great. But what most people never see is they only got that after crawling in the mud, dealing with open wounds, no water, no food, no ammunition. When I went to Monmouth, Illinois years ago, spent time up there, I met a Medal of Honor winner by the name of Bobby Dunlap. He won the Medal of Honor on Iwo Jima. He was out there for three days all by himself in a forward position calling in artillery on the Japanese. All by himself. No food, wounded twice, no water. He would talk about it like it was just no big deal. There in his room, as I sat there in the living room, and I actually saw the Johnson rifle that he carried, and I saw the Medal of Honor in the case, and there was a picture of Harry Truman putting a medal around him. I thought to myself, "Man, you know what? That guy got the medal and he deserved the medal, and everybody sees him getting the medal. But nobody understands that long before the President put that around his neck, there was a brokenness of humility of what he had to do in that battlefield for three days." If you and I ever get to the Judgment Seat of Christ and ever God ever puts the crown on our head, your head and my head, I want to tell you something. No suffering, no crown. Before honor has to be humility. No cross, no crown. No suffering, no reigning. That old song says, "Was grace that taught my heart to fear," fear the Lord, "but grace my fears relieved." Fear not God, fear God, but don't be afraid of God. But before the honor and the glory of an all powerful, sinless Savior puts that crown on your head, there has to be the humility of a broken heart and a contrite spirit down here first. You have to understand those things.

12. The seventh one, Proverbs 19:23: Proverbs 19:23

The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil. Now that's a great principle and it's also a great promise. A man who fears God will normally live longer than a man who doesn't fear God. But when the exception proves the rule, like John the Baptist or Stephen or Paul or Abel, eternal life then follows, so it still tends to life, doesn't it? When death does come, whenever it comes, evil never makes the call, the Lord does. Psalms 116:15

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Physical life and eternal life, the fullness of both. A couple of months ago on a Thursday night, a question was asked about what would you do or how should a Christian react when he's got some, he just found out he has some terminal disease and he's only got a short period of time to live. He's went to

God, he's went to all the doctors and the doctors can't do anything. He's prayed about it, he's prayed about it, he's prayed about it and nothing ever happens. What is that, what is that Christian to do? You know I thought about that question a lot after he asked that question. We talked about it that night and basically gave the biblical answer to it. But I thought about that thing ever since he asked that question. Now you know what, if you really are dialed into God and you really have the wisdom and understanding and you really figured it all out and you know that your life belongs to God and you've got everything in the right row and you've got the wisdom and you've got the knowledge, you've got the understanding. And the doctor just told you, you've got six months to live. The doctor just told you it's going to be a short time and there's no way around it and you prayed about it and the Lord says, "Sorry, your number's up," and your doctor said, "Nothing I can do." You've exhausted everything. You know what you ought to do if you really have understanding, I know you won't probably be able to all get this but let me tell you what you ought to be able to do. Now I'm not saying I could do it, I'm just saying this is what we ought to be able to do. You ought to get up on the most perfect morning you ever saw in your life and you ought to go out and buy you the most perfect cup of coffee you ever had and then you drive out and watch the most perfect sunrise you ever saw in your life and watch that thing come up on a beautiful day with a bird singing and a cool breeze blowing over and the leaves turning into fall and your cup of coffee in your hand and the steam coming off. Instead of whining and complaining about, "Oh God, I don't want to lose all this," you ought to say, "You know what, as nice as this is, as beautiful as this is, as much as I enjoy this, there's something better coming when my golden daybreak comes in my life." Now that's what we ought to be able to do. I'm telling you, you bet it's good. I'm telling you, I wish I could do it but it's good.

## VI. The Problem of Laziness and Lack of Patience

As I said, the Christian life is about getting some things out of our lives and putting some things in our lives. Now I get it, I understand it's a process. There are some things that when you get saved you can get out right now. I get that, and there are some other things that take a little time. I get that. But in time you must get those things out before God will teach you anything about Himself or the Lord. You'll get some basic things, but if you really want that relationship, building a relationship with God, it takes getting some things out and putting some things in.

But you know what the real issue today, the real issue today, we're just lazy. The real issue today, we just don't have any patience. The real issue today, honestly, I'm telling you now, building a relationship with God is just too much work. To us in our world that we live in, and we live in a cesspool of a world where everything has been made easy, we live in a world where we don't have to wait for anything anymore. We don't. I mean, you go to Burger King and you can have it your way. Why, you even get on your cable TV to watch a movie and scroll through it and you come to "on demand." "I'm demanding to watch this right now." I remember back when the first McDonald's came out in Oakton, Ohio, on Cleveland Avenue, and it revolutionized families because it was a fast food restaurant. I ate at the first McDonald's. The hamburgers were 15 cents a piece, and I never forget it was fast food, but you know what? That wasn't fast enough. So then about 20 years later, they had to put a drive-through in to make the fast food faster. We don't wait

for anything today. We don't have the patience. We don't have any of those things unless it's goofy stuff.

That new store, IKEA, is that how you say it? I think they're Japanese spies myself. IKEA. You realize when they opened that store, two days before, three days before, there were people lined up to stay at all night out there to get a free couch. Thanksgiving's coming up, and on the next day all these stores will have stuff. There will be people that will be lined up outside there all camping all night long to get something, to get a deal on it or to get it free. Now I don't have a problem with that. I really don't. But I want to tell you something. In the 45 years of my preaching in the ministry, I've never seen one of you waiting outside that door up there for it to open. If anything, you drag your dead carcass in here after we already get started. Oh boy, I stepped in it that time.

You know what's wrong with our society? We don't want to work today. That's too hard. We've got a government that will support you. We had a gal one time that kept having children. She didn't have anybody at all. She said to one of our gals, she says, "I love free medicine." It isn't free. Somebody's paying for it. But to her it was free medicine. "Let's have another one." There's nothing free. Somebody always pays for it. "I don't have any medical insurance. The government will take care of you." I was driving down 350 going to Burger King because I like to have it my way. As I drove out, there was a big tent. Right there in that big tent was a big sign. You know what it said? "Free cell phones." And there were at least 30 or 40 people lined up with two people sitting at a table giving Obama cell phones out. Free cell phones. In that line toward the end were two or three people talking on cell phones. They already had a cell phone. Shoot, I was going to, if I had the time, I was going to go back, get me a free cell phone. We've made everything free today. There's no value in anything anymore. Nobody has to work for anything anymore.

I called up last week and I said, "I want to sign my dog Buddy up for free money and free benefits." She says, "Well, you know," I got the most bureaucratic lady. I don't know what she looked like, but I got it in my head what she looked like. This lady was a pure bureaucrat. She says, "You must be joking." I said, "I'm not joking." I said, "I just drove by and saw somebody give free cell phones." I said, "I've got people that get free medicine and free this." I said, "I want to sign my dog Buddy up for free money and the free benefits that you guys are offered from the government." She says, "He doesn't qualify." I said, "What do you mean he doesn't qualify?" I said, "One, he's lazy. Two, he has no job. And three, he has no idea who his father is." You're laughing. He just checked next month. I'm finished out the Christian life for all of this. It's just too hard in the world. We live in today. It's just too, too much, too hard.

## VII. The Christian Life: A Reflection of Our Choices

Look at verse 11: "For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of my life increased." Now there again, that's what's missing today. That shows you and me that 99% of what goes on, what we call the Christian life and the life that Christians have today, really has no resemblance to anything in the book of Proverbs, anything in verse 11 today. For Christians, it's financial issues, marriage issues, family issues, children issues, job issues, personal issues, broken lives,

broken family, shattered relationships. It's the Christian life of disappointment, heartache, trials, struggles, frustration, anxiety, worry, no hope, all of those things, no confidence. It's not the Bible that gets you through anymore. It's your meds. It's your Prozac, your Xanax. It's your prescription drug that you have to take to get you through. It's your therapist. It's your psychologist. Yet we don't get it. We never get it. You know why? Because we're unteachable. We will not learn from our mistakes and take God's instruction.

Every Christian has trials in their lives. Nobody's exempt from it. Everybody does. We get the opinion, "We're the only ones going through this right now." Everybody struggles. Everybody has issues. But we'll never see that. We'll never get to the place where we really see the real problem in life. We want to say the problem in life is this circumstance, or it's this circumstance, or it's this person, or this person over here, and this person. We'll never get to the bottom line truth that the real biggest problem I have in life is me. And the biggest problem you've got is you. It isn't anybody else. It isn't any circumstance. It isn't anything that happened to you. It is you and me are our biggest problems.

Over the years, I've seen parents, they lose one kid, they lose the next kid, they lose the next kid, they lose the next kid. They walk around scratching their head like, "Wow, what happened? Wow, they'll be back in time when God's ready." They're oblivious to what happened. It's always somebody else's fault. Listen, a complete and satisfying Christian life that will take you and me above all the circumstances of life will be because you and I got a process in our life to get the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God, and the understanding with God, and now we know how to deal with the issues in life. It's the man or the woman who through God's instruction of God's principles will get to know who God is and then will take the rest of his life or her life and simply do what God has called them to do. It doesn't get any easier than that. Yet we will not do it. It's just too much work.

Look at verse 12: "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." Now this is a great two-part verse. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself." Now what is he saying here? It's real simple. He's saying that what we get from God has to impact our lives first. It has to change us first. We have to get some things out of the way first. Trying to unpack truth to others before you take it unto yourself will never work. But in a shallow Christianity today, we love to do things for God without ever being anything for God. For the truth of God's Word to work consistently in others through your life, it must first work consistently in my life.

Now I know nobody's perfect. I hear that all the time. "Well, you know, so and so..." Yeah, I get it. I get it. Nobody's perfect. But come on. I'm not looking for perfect people because there are not. I know you think you are, but I, it's a great shock to your system, but take another Prozac and it'll be okay in the morning. I'm not looking for perfect people because there are no perfect people. But let me tell you what I am looking for. I am looking for people to be in a biblical process of simply perfecting yourself daily. That's all I'm looking for. Looking for people who want to be taught to learn and to grow. People who don't want to continue to make the same mistakes all through their lives. People who want to grow through their issues, meet the challenges of life, and to get the victory over them. But to do that, you have to get rid of some

things. As long as you're not willing to get rid of those things, you're not going anywhere because God is not putting anything in until you get some things out.

Then it says at the end of verse 12, "but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." Simply put, blame your problems on everybody else. Put blame on your situation on some other circumstance. You and I are responsible for the choices we make in life, and you and I now own them. Making bad choices in life and then trying to subcontract them out to somebody else will never work. We make the choices in life. We must bear it alone. We now own them. In our world today, we simply live in the house, chapter 9 verses 1 through 5. We simply live in a house that we have built. It's just that simple. Now you can change the direction and fix it or you can stay in the mud and complain about it. You can face the reality and take responsibility for the building of a tar paper shack that lets the snow, the wind, and the cold in. Or you can tear it down to the foundation and build it the right way. But it just comes down to us being teachable or not teachable.

We like to go through life. We like to complain about everything and everybody. We do. I do. And I know you do. Because that's our escape in life. It avoids us from looking inside ourselves and saying, "I'm the problem." But I'm telling you, we are the problem. You can't fix everybody else without fixing yourself first.

My kids growing up, I don't even remember who gave them this, but I always in my heart had a special place for them because it always occupied so much of their time. When they were just little tykes, and they'll probably both remember this. Remember somebody gave you guys a little, you sat on the floor and it kind of covered your legs and it was like a car dashboard with a steering wheel on it and turn the key and you can honk the horn and hit the gears and all that stuff. They sat on the floor, covered them, pretend like they were driving. They were just little kids. They didn't require the car insurance at that point in time. But for hours of time, we'd come home and that's all they wanted to play with. I appreciated it because they just occupied their time. I remember I'd no matter, I'd look around the corner and they'd be down there and they'd be racing each other, and they'd be honking the horn and they'd be shifting the gears and they'd be turning all the buttons and all those things. I often thought back about many, many years after that, and you still think about it today when I see certain circumstances or situations. I've often thought back on that time and thought to myself, "Boy, that is not a picture of what most Christianity is today." A whole lot of action and a whole lot of movement. But there ain't nothing really hooked up. And it ain't really going anywhere. That's exactly where it's at today.

God saved you for a purpose. He has something He wants you to accomplish, but you'll never get there without the knowledge of God, without getting the wisdom of God, and then letting those things bring you to the understanding that you can see everything in life, starting with yourself first. Understanding who God is and who you are in Christ, and then simply looking at what God has given you and looking at every circumstance and situation that comes in life and understanding it because you see it the way God sees it from God's standpoint. Proverbs 9 is a great, great, great chapter. Today was a great, great lesson, not because I taught it, but because of the truth that's contained in it. It gives you and me what we need, the stark reality of, come on, facing up to who we really are and realizing that there are some things in our life that have to go

if we're ever going to put those things in that God wants us to have. Life is just that simple. Let's pray.