

Proverbs 13:1-5

Sunday 10/18/2015

That was a pretty good song, guys. It's good to have you here today. Before we start, I want to keep this separate from everything else we did today because I just want to make a special mention. Those of you that went in the nursery today, you saw we got brand new carpet in there. Ryan came in yesterday and laid all that and did all that for us, and it really looks good in there for all the kids. So we appreciate that and his labor of love for doing that. That's just great. I'm really pleased that the Lord has given us young guys and young ladies in our church who see this as their church and want to do things to help it and keep it. We appreciate that. Go back and take a look at it; it's great stuff. It's really good. It's not new anymore; two little kids threw up on it already this morning, but it's good to go.

Last week, we were in the book of Proverbs. We started Proverbs chapter 13. We started this chapter with verse 1 on getting the instructions of a father. I took you through five applications of that verse.

1. I brought you through and showed you sons in the Bible who did not take instructions from their father.
2. Then I brought you through and showed you those who did take instructions from their father. We saw how that all worked out for them.
3. Then I showed you the third aspect of our children and us as parents instructing them and giving them instructions.
4. The fourth one was your spiritual sons and daughters in the Lord—the people that you win to Christ, or you disciple, or you work with, or you help come along—and your responsibility to that.
5. The fifth one, we talked about you and me as God's son and the relationship we have with Him.

Each one of those, if you could probably imagine, would be a sermon in itself and a great lesson in itself, for they all illustrate the absolute importance of getting God's Word in our lives through instructions. We talked about how simple and easy a relationship with God really is. It all will come down to getting His instructions on the issues of life or not. Then I showed you about two great words about taking the instructions of God thoroughly. It starts on the inside and the furnishings of what you build in your life, based on the great picture of the tabernacle in the Old Testament.

Today, I want to look at the next couple of verses here. We want to move down and we want to see again some great principles, some great truths for our lives and our own relationship with the Lord. I want to read today Proverbs chapter 13. We're going to pick it up in verse 1 again so we can kind of put the whole context together. We preached on that last week. This week will be verses 2 through 5, but we'll put it all together.

Proverbs 13:1-5

A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

Let's pray.

Now, Father, we ask that You take these verses today and give us what we need out of them. We love You. We thank You for all that You do for us. We just pray, Father, Your blessings upon our time today. Lord, we've had a good time. We always enjoy each other, and we have fun and we laugh. Lord, we enjoy our salvation and we enjoy the friendly, loving relationship we have with each other. But, Lord, it's time now to go to work and to look at the Word of God and to take these things seriously. Help us, Father, to understand that the keeping of these great principles and truths will always ensure that the joy that we experienced earlier today will always be there. We love You now and thank You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Power of Our Words

Now, these are some very powerful verses here. When laid out and understood, they will give great insight into why things really go the way they do in our lives. A lot of times we see things; we don't always understand why they happen the way they happen. But yet, I want to tell you that the Bible will always give you the insight behind the scenes of why things happen. There are no great mysteries to human life and human nature and the problems that it has or the blessings that it has. It all comes down to the principles of the Word of God.

Now, let's begin and look at verse 2 here. It says, "A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence." The meaning of that on the surface is very, very clear. What a man says, whether it's good or bad, will have an influence on every area of his life. In time, it will affect his income. It will affect his material possessions. It will affect everything around him, including the people.

The Bible says in Romans 14:7, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." There's always somebody that's watching our lives. People are watching constantly what we do, and people are constantly listening to what we say. When what they do and what they say don't add up, and somebody says, "I'm a Christian, I'm a child of God," then 10 minutes later in a conversation, you'd want to rethink that statement. People listen to what we say.

Proverbs 11:31 says, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." In other words, a good man, a righteous man, gets his recompense—God gives him some things—but the wicked man, the evil man, he gets it a lot more and has a lot more problems. In a general sense, a man who lives a clean life and good things come out of his mouth, whether it be at work or in association with his friends or his professional or personal

life, he'll generally have a better life and go farther, faster than some foul-mouthed reprobate that nobody wants to be around.

If he works for a business or a company, most businesses and companies today are in such competition with other companies, they want to put forth a very positive image. They want somebody to work for them that puts forth a good image for their company. Most companies do drug screens. They know that that element doesn't always make a good employee. They don't want people getting caught up into that stuff because when people are in homes and you get into situations, and if you're under drugs and you have a problem with dependency, you wind up taking stuff that's not yours to support your habit. They don't want to deal with that.

You'll see how fast a company will drop an athlete once the athlete... it doesn't take long to get taken off a Wheaties box. Somebody does good and he's a great athlete or she's a great athlete, boy, they're on a Wheaties box, they wear the clothes with the Adidas and all that stuff. But the moment they mess up something in life that is a big deal and it's going to impact their company, they don't have them anymore.

I see on the television all the time, I think it's Anthony's Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling. One of the in-house places in Kansas City, and they have a model, "A company that you can trust with your house keys." See, they want to project that. In the commercial, you've got this nice-looking lady there and a clean-cut guy comes out of the truck, sparkling clean. He's got a stark-pressed Anthony Plumbing and Heating shirt on him, big smile on his face, clean-cut, good-looking. She's a blonde and she looks good, and she's standing there. She's happy that she's going to get her heater fixed or whatever is wrong with her house, and she's just dangling her keys, giving them to him. He takes them like, "Trust me, lady." They want to project that. You can never do that with some dingy-looking, foul-mouthed guy who you wouldn't even allow in your house, let alone get your house keys. A business that puts forth a professional image and has nice, courteous, clean-cut, sharp-looking workers will always do better than Billy Bob's One-Stop Plumbing and Catering Service. It just goes that way. You're going to see it.

Yet it's true in a biblical application for churches, for a pastor, and for Christians. Simply being open and honest in all that you do. You say what you mean and you mean what you say. Total transparency. In 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, you have one of the greatest verses on ministry in the Christian life that you'll ever find.

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

The last part of that verse, "commending yourself to every man's conscience," simply means people see you and what they see is what they get. You'll be honest in your dealing with people. You tell them the truth. If you say you're going to do something, then you do it. You do what you say. You don't have any ulterior motives. You're not nice to somebody because you want

something from them. You don't use people. What comes out of your mouth, if it's good, if it's wholesome, and it's based on the Bible, will bring forth fruit. You'll be successful in what you do.

Most people today, and we're quitting about this, you know, a perfect church... most people today aren't looking for a perfect church. They're not even looking for a perfect pastor because if you have any sense at all, you know that those two elements just don't exist. What they're looking for is not a perfect one. They're just looking for a real one. A church that manifests truth, a Christian that manifests truth, a pastor that manifests truth. It's transparent. What you see is what you get. You always go farther with people when they feel comfortable because they feel that when they're dealing with you, you are the real deal. That's the bottom line: "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience."

A while back on Thursday night, somebody asked a question about the questions at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and I'll put you back to Job 26 where it talks about the six questions that are probably going to get asked. One of them is, "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" Just telling people the truth.

Now look at the last part of that verse, verse 2 there: "But the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence." In other words, his diet, what sustains him, is trouble. He lives to cause problems. He feeds on strife. I like the word "diet." Everybody knows the word "diet," but most people don't really know the word "diet." We think of the word "diet," we think of controlling what we eat, and that may be true. But "diet" is a larger word on a grander scale than just that. "Diet" also deals with an assembly of people. Back in 1521, when Martin Luther was having all the problems with the Roman Catholic Church, they called him in to Worms, Germany, and they called him into the Diet of Worms. I was actually preaching church history one time, and I talked about Martin Luther was the greatest guy on the planet, but I talked about his problem with the Roman Catholic Church and how he left the Catholic Church, and I said he was called into the Diet of Worms and he made his defense against the Catholic Church. Later, the lady said, "Well, I don't blame him. I'd leave the Catholic Church too if that's what they were eating." Diet of Worms, not what they were eating. The word "diet" means assembly, an association, an assembly of people. Here, when you talk about the soul of the transgressor shall eat violence and his daily substance or diet being trouble, it's because of the association of the people that he hangs out with. His whole lifestyle will be one of problems and issues.

Now, you know in the Old Testament, the soul and the body are used interchangeably, and that's because in the Old Testament there was no new birth like there is in the New Testament. There was no spiritual circumcision, Colossians chapter 2, of separating the soul from the flesh. So in the Old Testament, they're stuck together, so they're used interchangeably. The verse suggests that his whole body, his whole lifestyle, inward and outward, is nothing but a daily diet of trouble, and he lives off of it. It sustains him.

II. The Consequences of Our Speech

Verse 3 says that, "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." Proverbs 18:21 says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

In a practical sense, there's many a guy in Kansas City who got shot or got stabbed or got beat to a pulp simply because he shot his mouth off at the wrong time in the wrong place. I mean, you get up on Sunday morning and turn the news on, hardly a week goes by on a Friday night or a Saturday night if somewhere in Kansas City or Independence or Raytown or wherever you have some man shot or stabbed at a bar at 3 o'clock in the morning. I can almost guarantee you it started with somebody opening his mouth and then somebody else closing it for him. Yet you see people that love that lifestyle. They go back to it week after week. They get in more bar fights, they've been stabbed, they've been shot, they get into more altercations than you ever could imagine in your life because the lifestyle, what comes out of their mouth, is violence and it bears that kind of fruit.

Now, in the Bible, there's some great examples, and I always like to, when I see a proverb someplace and it makes a definite statement like that, I always, just to do it, I always like to go back and find Bible illustrations like we did last week of the son who takes instructions and the son who doesn't. I learned a lot from doing those things, and there's always some little thing you find in there that you didn't see before.

In the Bible, there's some great examples of this proverb here of somebody opening wide their mouth and getting killed for it.

- 1 Kings 2:3: You'll find a guy by the name of Shimei, and what he says to David about Saul's death, he gives David a lot of strife, and it comes out of his mouth. He didn't even understand all of the situation, but he was Saul's kinfolk, so he shoots his mouth off. Down the line later on, it got him killed.
- 2 Samuel 3 and 4: You find Abner, and what Abner says when he shoots his mouth off gets him killed a little bit later on by Joab.
- 2 Samuel 1: Here's a young man that I don't know if he did or he didn't, but he knows that Saul is David's enemy, and he knows that Saul has died, got killed in battle. So he's an opportunist. He figures that because Saul was David's enemy, if he plays himself up in the death of Saul and goes to David and says, "I did this, I saw this," then he's going to get all kinds of favor from David. So he goes into King David and he says, "You know what? Saul's dead, and I want to tell you, I was just trotting along from the battle, and I saw Saul over there, and he was already grievously wounded, and I took the sword and I finished off Saul and killed him because I knew he was your enemy." That's not how the story happened. The kid was trying to take advantage of a situation, but he opened up his mouth, and lies came out, violence came out, and David didn't stand for it. David is one of

the most principled men in the Word of God when it comes to issues in battle, and he says, "You know what?" He says, "Why did you do this thing? Just outstretch your hand against the Lord's anointed." You know what David said? "It wasn't your place to kill him. He's God's anointed. I had at least three chances to kill him and I didn't do it because the Bible says, 'Touch not the Lord's anointed.'" What came out of his mouth got that kid killed.

- Acts 12:22-23: You've got Herod. He talks about being God, and he says, "Oh," and he displays himself as being more powerful than God, and everybody looks at him. God killed him for what came out of his mouth.
- Revelation 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4: At the end of the Tribulation, it's what the Antichrist says about being God that gets him killed.

The key is to always let, when you speak, the key is to always let the principles of the Word of God tell you when to speak and what to say or when to keep your mouth shut because, "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life."

I put such an emphasis around here on learning Bible principles. I teach them to you in everything that we do because I think that they are the key to everything you do. Every situation you find yourself in as a Christian, every situation you deal with, everything, whether it's your family, your marriage, your kids, or whatever, you have to go back and operate by the principles, and that necessitates you understanding them. It's an incredible thing when you look at it. This is called in the Bible discernment. This is called discretion. This is called the ability to react to a circumstance based on the biblical principles rather than respond to it out of your own emotions or your own flesh.

I watched this week one of my favorite movies. I think it's a great movie. I like movies that are true, that have a real meaning and story to them, and it was a movie, "42," about Jackie Robinson and his hard time breaking into the Major League of Baseball and how he was treated. It was one of the most heartbreaking things you ever saw in your life. But that's the way the world was back then, unfortunately. Jackie Robinson was the first black man to ever come in and play professional baseball. He came in, and he was told when Branch Rickey brought him in and wanted to bring him in, he told him upfront, "There's going to be guys that are going to say this to you. There's going to be guys that are going to try to pick a fight with you, and you cannot answer back. You cannot lose your control. You cannot fight back. You cannot speak back. You can't do anything back. You just got to take it."

I'm sure Jackie Robinson at the time didn't see the big picture that there would be a time to come that he would be the open door for black men and women to come into the sports world and to really be part of making an impact. Here's one guy, in a worldly sense, though I believe he's a Christian, in a worldly sense, that saw, or maybe he didn't see it, but he was smart enough to understand that he was the key for the next 40, 50 years of men and women coming in that were

black to be able to play professional sports because it was completely barred. The price that he paid was unbelievable.

Now, I look at that in a worldly sense, and I look at that in a sense of playing sports and playing baseball, and I have an appreciation for him and I have appreciation for that because I think that kind of stuff is totally, completely wrong and unfair. But putting it into a spiritual thing, you know what? There may be times that you have to do what's right. There may be times that you can't say what you want to say the way you want to say it. You can't react or respond the way you'd like to simply because you ought to be smart enough and understand the principles involved that you're holding that line and not doing what the next person would do, or maybe you even have a right to do. Maybe it's the key to God doing something down the line. It's incredible. "He that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."

III. The Sluggard vs. The Diligent

Now look at verse 4, and man, this is a good one. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." All of these proverbs have a powerful biblical, spiritual application to us as Christians, and I always try to lay that out. That's my goal. I may give you a physical, like the Jackie Robinson illustration. I may use an actual physical thing that really has nothing to do with God or Christianity to illustrate that you may have to go through the same things on a spiritual side. All these proverbs have a powerful biblical, spiritual application to us as Christians, but yet at the same time, all of them have a real-life application. Something that you can actually, if you carry it with you, you can actually see it work and learn from it in everything that you do. I mean, who would think that somebody bringing to light what happened to Jackie Robinson back in the 40s would ever be something that we could use in an illustration? But it's such a powerful illustration that here's a guy that had a chance to fight back and didn't, and because he didn't, it was used to open the door down the line. In a spiritual sense, many times it's the same way for you and for me. I try to lay out both. I try to show you the practical, and then I'll try to bring it around. Many times the practical will be such a powerful thing that it will actually uplift and illustrate the spiritual aspect when you want to bring them out, and I always try to show you both of them. The Proverbs is filled with it, and this verse here is incredible.

The verse says, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing." Simply put, simply desiring something will not get it done in your life. People who dream big, I've been around them all my life. Boy, I'll tell you, especially young guys, not so much young girls, but young guys, you know, they get a bug for the ministry or they get a bug for the Bible, they get this or they get that. I know I was the same way. I mean, I remember sitting down there, boy, back in the Canton Baptist Temple when I just got saved, and I remember the first night I heard Dr. Ruckman, boy, he got up there, he preached on the Gospel according to Exodus, and he laid that thing out, man, and I had never heard something like that in my life. I was sitting there watching that, looking at that, and I thought to myself, "How in the world? I've read Exodus chapter 12. How in the world did he get all of that out of there?" And I wanted that so desperately. I wanted that so bad. I listened to the guy from, I can't remember his name right now, from the Cleveland Baptist

Temple, and boy, was he a great preacher. He was one of my favorite preachers, Roy Thompson. Boy, I'll tell you what, he preached a message one night on Zacchaeus that I preached a thousand times, one of the greatest, most profound things I ever saw in my life and heard in my life. I listened to those guys, and I'd watch them come out there, and I'd watch them preach, and I'd watch how they would move a crowd, and I'd watch how they would use the Bible, and I would watch how they would use everything at their power to get the Gospel message or what they were trying to get across to their people. I thought to myself, "Man, what it would be like to be able to do that." I don't think in my own heart I would say, and I don't think there's anything on this planet that is greater than getting up and taking the Word of God and moving people's hearts and lives with that book simply because the Holy Spirit of God uses you to get it done.

I know people dream big. Sometimes they have big plans: "I'm going to be this," or "I'm going to do this." But you know what? In most cases, it never happens. They'll spend, I've seen them spend a ton of money on training and time and energy on schooling and training and going to college, and yet after they get it all done, spend all of that money, they do absolutely nothing with it. This person here he's talking about, he's a daydreamer. He'll think about it, he'll want to do it, he'll have a desire to do it, but he'll never get it done.

Here's the sluggard in Proverbs 6:6-9 and 26. A sluggard, there's one of those things you see on your sidewalk in the summertime with those long things that's slippery and slimy. If you put salt on them, they're really taste good. You know, they'll leave a slime trail wherever they go. You ever notice that? Every once in a while, if you just, you'll stick their little antennae up there, you know, and check it out where they're at. Maybe they're getting cable TV, I'm not sure, but he's probably Skyping on the internet. But anyway, but there's a thing where they're gross, man. Yet the Bible says somebody like that, to God's viewpoint, is a sluggard. He's a daydreamer. He's recognized in every age. They've always been around in every country on the planet, and his principal occupation is wanting what he doesn't have, envying those who have it, and yet not doing what he needs to do to ever get it.

You know, and yet it's true in a spiritual setting. I've seen guys and gals like that a thousand times over the years when it comes to learning the Bible. In a practical sense, they never get anything in life that they really want, but in a spiritual sense, they never get anything out of the Bible they really want. They all want to learn the Bible, they want to know it, and they want to know how to use it. They'll see some of you get up and do a devotion, and in their heart they'll say, "Man, I want to do that." They'll come to a Thursday night Bible study and have something laid out, and they'll say, "Man, I want to be able to do that." There's nothing wrong with wanting those things. It's a good thing to have a desire to learn and be able to unlock the Bible. It's a good thing to do. Yet I've seen them over the years make a hundred promises to God: "Oh God, I'm going to do it this time. Oh God, I'm really serious this time." Five or ten years of New Year's resolutions, you know, "God, I wasted last year, you know, but I'm going to do it this year," and it never gets done. "Oh Lord, this is going to be my year. I'm going to do it." Of course, you don't need a New Year's resolution; what you need is a New Year's revolution. You need to throw some things out and overturn some things, but it's still nothing.

There are always three areas in their life, wherever you see it. There are just always three areas in life:

6. They're all basically dysfunctional when it comes to things like this. They just don't have a function to be able to get into it.
7. They're all non-structured people when it comes to the Bible, and they have no self-discipline in spiritual things.
8. They're just all over the page. They go through their whole life wanting the Bible, talking about the Bible, talking about this, talking about that. They'll get ten thousand things about the Bible, but they'll never learn the Bible.

There's one key word missing in their life. You may have a desire, you may have a passion, you may have a zeal, you may want it all your life, but you'll never get it. You'll be just like the guy in the verse there, for there's one word missing from your vocabulary when it comes to spiritual things, and that's the word "diligence"—to be diligent.

You know, it's not just the word "diligent," but it's what you're diligent to. I've seen people, honestly, and there was a time when I didn't understand this because I've seen men and women over the years who had incredible work ethics. Whatever they did for their job, they were meticulous at it. They were absolutely incredibly good at it. When it came to success with their job or what they did or their ability at work, oh, they were great at it. But when it came back to the Bible and spiritual things, they could just never get it. That bothered me. I got to tell you, that bothered me for a lot of years. I would say to myself, "Why is that? Here's a person that can do all these things at their job. They're number one at their job. They do this well, they do that well. I mean, if something needs broken, it needs to be fixed, they can see it, they can do it, they can get this, and they can do that." Then I'm saying to myself, "But when it comes to the Bible and really getting the spiritual things down, what's the difference between the two?"

Then one day I got it. One day I figured it out, and it's so simple, I don't know why it eluded me for so many years. The answer is simply this: learning the Bible, learning it right, and getting it down will be different than anything else you've ever done in your life. The same effort you put into your job will fail you when you try to put it into the Bible. That book and learning it is different than any other thing that you're ever going to do.

I had a kid ask me years ago, he says, "Bob," he says, "I really want to learn the Bible." He says, "What do I have to do to really learn it?" Then he started to answer his own question, which many people do and saves me time, so I like it. He said, "You know what? I guess I've got to study because the Bible says, 'Study to show thyself approved.' So I guess I just really got to study the Bible." I said, "Well, you know what? Studying the Bible is really good because, as the verse says, but studying the Bible is not the key to learning the Bible." He said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I got to read it." He said, "I've heard you talk about Mel Sabaka, your father, Lord, read it through once every 30 days. You know, that's what I'm going to start doing. That'll get it all familiar in my mind." I say, "You know what? That's really good," and he did do that, "but that's really not the key to learning your Bible." He says, "Oh, yeah, it's memorization. I need to start memorizing whole passages. I, you know, I'm going to start to... I remember Jack Van Impe, and

we heard him preach one time, and he was called the walking Bible. He had memorized the complete New Testament. That's quite a feat." I said, "Well, that's really good, but that's not the key." He said, "Well, Bob, what is the key to learning the Bible? If it isn't study, and it isn't reading, and it isn't memorization, what is the key?" I looked at him and I said, "All those things are important, but the number one key to learning the Bible is simply loving the Bible. When you love it more than anything on this planet, when you have a desire that out-desires everything else in this world, that's when you'll get it."

Listen, to learn that book, you have to be diligent about some things, and you have to do it God's way. Your way won't work anymore. That's the difference between your job that you do during the week and coming to that Bible. You follow your own protocol, you follow what you've learned to do to make that job work. That may be great at the factory or great where you work. It will never work when it comes to the Bible. You're going to have to have self-discipline in God's way. You're going to have to have self-motivation in God's way because your way won't get it done anymore. Your way is great. Don't lose it at your job. Don't lose it here. Don't lose it there. But understand, it will fail you when it comes to the Bible. You have to get down some things. You have to get down some things in the proper order, and brother, that takes diligence, and you can't do it your own way. You can't decide what that order is going to be. You can't look at it and say, "Well, I'm going to do this, this, or this," or "I read so-and-so's book that says do this, this, and this." No, no, no. You got to figure out the way that God wants it done, and then you got to discipline yourself and be diligent to that. You have to get down some things in the proper order. You have to get a plan and then be diligent about that plan. You can't... you have to stay with the building process of learning the Bible. You can't be all over the place. You can't jump here, jump here, go here, go here. You have to decide, "This is what I'm going to do." Find the exact way God says get it done, and then go to work on it.

Getting a ton of information that you can't put into an orderly structure when it comes to the Bible, you can't fly by the seat of your pants. Your ability and your personal strength and your ability to be able to make things happen may be great where you work. It'll fail you every time when it comes to the Bible. I've heard people say, "Well, boy, that guy's got great ability," or "She's got great ability," and maybe they do, and that's a good thing. But when it comes to the Scriptures, your ability is worthless. It's not your ability that gives you the Bible; it's your availability to let God have you where He wants you to be. I'm going to tell you something, folks, learning that Bible is totally different than anything that you've ever done in your life, and this is why so many people cannot get it. They want to approach the Word of God just like they approach everything else they do in life, and you may be the best at what you do, and you may be absolutely incredibly good at it, but you will fall on your face when you try to bring those same elements into the Bible. When you come to the Bible, you got to come knowing nothing and scrape it off to the foundation. Start it His way. You must get and follow the right structure. You must stay on task with the right things and the right plan that you're doing. You must discipline yourself to that. You must be diligent about it.

When it comes to the Bible, there's God's way to learn it, and then there's man's way to learn it. I've always told you before, just like there's two ways to go to St. Louis. You can go right out

here, go right down and get out there on Lee's Summit Road, go out to pick up 70, and three hours later or so, you'll hit St. Louis by going east. Or you can go out here, go down to Lee's Summit Road, go down to 70, pick it up and go west, and you can get to St. Louis that way. You can get to St. Louis that way. You go down through Wichita, you go through Colorado, go through over to California, pick up the big ferry, go over to the coast of China, go over to China, go through the Middle East, go into Europe, get up a boat there, come back around the United States on this side on the East Coast, and then pick it up and come back that way. You can get there two ways: you can get there by going down the road to St. Louis or through Ching Chong China. You know what most of God's people's problem is? You're still stuck in Ching Chong China. That's because you want to do it your way. That's because you don't want to structure yourself, be diligent about some absolute things you've got to be diligent in. You're all over the place. Hey, I can put together a plan for you. I can put together a structure around you, but if you're not diligent in your pursuit of the Bible God's way, and forget your way, forget it.

Building the Bible in your life, it's just like building a house. In fact, he says over there in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 that we have a master builder. When you build a house, the first thing you do is you lay a foundation. When you want to learn the Bible, there's some foundational things that you got to get down first. Then once you get the foundation in, then you start to add the framework, and it's built on that foundation. The walls go up one, two, three, four, and at some point they start to put the part that's got to hold the roof on, and they get the framework in. Then the last part, once they get that foundation down and the framework in, then they start sheetrocking, then they start wiring it, then they start putting all the things in, and they get to the point where then they deliver the dishwasher, deliver the stove, they deliver the ice box, they deliver all the stuff and they put that in. How stupid would it be to go out when you said, "I'm building a new house," you go out and they're on the job site before they built the foundation, before they put anything in there, before they put any structure up there, you got a brand new dishwasher, a washing machine, you got a refrigerator, you got a stove, you got everything just sitting on a lumpy dirt lot? That's the way so many of you approach the Bible. You're trying to get the fantastic stuff. Oh, nothing greater than a refrigerator that's got an ice cube maker in it. I don't have one of those.

This American missionary was in a church with a Bible conference we were at. They had a thing over at their house for all the missionaries, and the woman was from Mexico, and she really looked Mexican. You know, you find Mexicans that don't look like Mexican. This woman was a Mexican. Let me just say something, get it down. You're laughing at the wrong things, and the really funny things I'm saying, you're not laughing at. This missionary woman was an idiot. God bless her, but she was an idiot. Why, when you speak to somebody who you perceive don't speak English, you start talking like this, "We el goo over el hero." Like that's helping you. A Mexican lady who was a pastor's wife down there was looking around the kitchen, and she was just obviously a beautiful kitchen, and I was standing over in the corner munching on a piece of pizza, and the woman came in, you know, and she thinks, "Oh, this poor Mexican pastor's wife, she's never been in a house like this." And she brings her over and she says, "Yes," she says, "stove." She says, "dishwasher," opens it up, you know, and she walks over with the lady, puts

her over, and she says, "refrigerator." And those Mexican ladies said, "Oh, yes, we have one too, but ours has an ice maker."

Oh, man, that's what people do. They don't want to lay a foundation because that's the nitty-gritty. Oh, they like the stuff in Revelation. They like the stuff about the conspiracy. They like the stuff that, "How many words are the Antichrist got on his nose?" They like the stuff about this stuff, but when it comes, and they put it all in their sand lot, here it is, "Whoa, look at that! Here we did! Whoa, look at this! Whoa, look at this!" You're laying in a dirt pile, and you get all that stuff done. You can't live in a house like that because you have no house. You got to start a foundation, and when you start that foundation, then you got to put a framework around it, then you got to put a roof on it, then you go in and start finishing it off on the inside. In all people's lives, they'll be like the person of verse 4, they'll desire but they'll have nothing when it comes to the Word of God.

Hey, when God gave us the Bible, He also provided the only right way to learn it. This is why you can see people save 10, 15, 20 years, and they don't know anything about the Bible after all that time, only what they can parrot or what they get off the internet, but nothing of substance to the Bible. Yet at the same time, I can show you some that have been saved five years, and they're so far ahead of the learning curve, it's incredible. Now, what's the difference between the two? Just one word: diligence. Diligence to the way of God and the things of God when it comes to the Word of God.

You know, when it comes to the Bible, every one of us have two fundamental issues we got to overcome. First, you don't get over this hurdle, you're wasting your time. You're just bringing in dishwashers and bathtubs and all the nicety-nicety things that you're going to put in your house, and you're putting on a bare, dirty lot. There's two fundamental issues that every child of God has. I have them, you have them, and until you fix those two things first, everything else is just a waste of time.

9. The first problem we all have is when we get into the Bible and we read it, you have no idea what you're reading and never can see anything but a sea of verses looking back at you. It doesn't mean anything to you. The stories have no relevance. You don't know what to do with this versus this. You don't know how this goes together with this. You just look at it and you have it, you read it, but you have no idea what you're reading.
10. The second problem is when you finally do find something, you have no idea what to do with it. You don't know where it fits in the Bible. You don't know where it fits into history. You don't know where it fits at all.

Hey, look, you fix those two areas in understanding your Bible first, the number one thing you do, and you'll be well on your way. But I'm going to tell you, you'll have to discipline yourself to be diligent in those two areas. You have to forget what you know. You have to forget how smart you are. You have to forget what abilities you have. You have to realize that when you come into the Bible, you're now entering into something that is unlike anything you have ever entered into in life. It's the easiest thing you've ever done, but it's the hardest thing to do the right way. You can't get caught up in all the other stuff, the internet junk and the books way before you shouldn't

even be reading, way before you're ready. You have to sit down and get the material you need and crack that book and start to find out what you really have in that Bible.

The key words of the Bible of understanding it, as far as I'm concerned, is simply one word: it's the word "context." Understanding what you have when you're looking at it, be able to put every book, every chapter, every verse in its proper context. I'm not saying you got to know everything about them, but you got to know the context where it fits. There's a simple way you do that. You start with the basic books of the Bible themselves. Where does each one fit? How does it fit? They're the foundation that you're going to build. You see how all 66 books fit together. You follow a common theme, an idea that God is laying out historically in time, doctrinally in time, inspiration in time. There's your foundation. Then the next thing is, once you get that down, then you begin to look and understand how each chapter lays out within that book or section of chapters. That's the framework. The individual books of the Bible is the foundation, but the framework of your house are the chapters and the verses. You learn how the historical application first, what's really happening in the Bible, what is the timeline of the Bible, how do the books relate to that timeline.

Twelve years ago, when we started our church, the first thing that I did was, knowing that someday we were going to be where we're at right now, and by the grace of God, I had the foresight that you'll remember some of the first year, the first two years we did, is I went through and I laid out every book of the Bible, and I showed you exactly if you wanted to learn the foundational structure of the Bible, you start in Genesis and work your way through. When you take the first one, you take Genesis, you put it over here, and when you're done with that, you'll have everything you need to understand how Genesis fits. Then you go to the next one, then you go to the next one. If you can do one a month, it's going to take you 66 months. If you do one a week, it's going to take you 66 weeks, a little over a year. But when you're done, now you have the ability to have everyone laid out in your Bible, and now you can take all 66 of them and put them together or lift this one out, lift this one out, lift this one out, put them all back and understand exactly what you have. In that study that I laid out on there, you have everything you need. You have the ability to get the foundation, you have the ability to get the framework, and you have the ability from what we laid it out and how we did it to get every aspect of it that you need. But on that website, for 12 years, I put two people on it this week. Every time somebody comes in and says, "Bob, I really want to learn the Bible," and they really have a desire to do it, this is where I go. But the real test isn't you coming in and me doing it. The real test is, do I ever see you again? Because now all the other stuff's got to go. Now you eat, sleep, drink one thing: getting that Bible down—foundation, structure, inner furnishings.

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Now, "fat" in the sense of Psalms 92:12-15.

Psalms 92:12-15

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Next time your wife says, "Does this dress make me look fat?" just simply say, "Yes, but flourishing." Now, verse 15, "To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." I don't know if you can glean out of here, but four key words here that says everything I'm saying this morning.

11. The first thing is a palm tree in verse 12. A palm tree in the Bible would be a picture of the Millennium when Christ came in a triumphant entry. They laid down palm leaves. The second coming are the Feast of Tabernacles when they made those little booths like we talked about Thursday night. They roofed them with palm leaves. Second coming of Christ. But a palm tree in the Bible is a picture of a Christian. Palm trees are unique because of the fact that they survive in a desert. They can survive when nothing else can because they get their roots down so deep that they can get hidden water way down underneath, and nobody else can get that. That ought to be a Christian. Palm trees are a source of revenue in the Far East, in the Middle East, simply because of the fact that the average palm tree, I think last time I looked, there was like 360 different things that you can make out of a palm tree. Very versatile. But the greatest thing about it is it's a picture of your life and my life as a Christian. You ought to be able to survive in the desert land that we live in.
12. The second thing is in verse 13: "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord." Now, that's, are you a member of a church? See, there's your structure. Where are you planted? Do you have a New Testament? Now, I know things come up and all that, but the bottom line is, do you have a New Testament local church that you are planted in? That's the key. That's your structure.
13. The third thing is down here in verse 14: "They shall be fat and flourishing." Spiritually fat.
14. The fourth thing down there in verse 15: "My rock." There's your stability. You're unmovable.

You see, when you get these things in the Word of God in your life, you survive in this old planet. You are established and planted in a church. You're spiritually flourishing and fat spiritually, and you're unmovable because you know what you believe. The nearest word in a spiritual sense to the word "fat" would be our word "satisfied," "filled up." I know myself, I always like to eat a lot because I just never know when I'm going to eat again. I know that's stupid, but what really kills me is you go to those, you ever go out to the boats and they have that big buffet out there? I mean, here's the pasta, here's the fish, here's the barbecue, here's the steak, here's the Mexican, here's the Chinese, here's everything, everything you could ever want, and it's right there. You got ice cream, you got cookies, you got salad bar, you got everything, and you stand there, and you know, you know that your eyes are much bigger than your belly, and you know you're going to do your best to prove yourself wrong in that last statement, and you start, "Get a plan, eat a little bit of everything." That doesn't work. Eat a lot of everything, and you start going. But then you find something that's really good, and then they throw you a curveball. Friday night is crab leg night, all you can eat. So now you go out there, and you start, and you're so absolutely... I mean, you look around and you're saying, "How in the world can I

eat all this, but I want to eat all this?" It's like eating a four-course meal dinner, and you're filled to the brim, but man, what tops it off every meal and satisfies you is when you see him bringing that little cart around with a chocolate cake on it and a good cup of black coffee. No matter how full you are, there's always room for cake, chocolate cake, and a good cup of coffee. Then you sit back, and man, you are bloated, you are just, but you're satisfied. There's something about after a meal when you can't eat anymore, and then they bring that tray out. You know what's of the devil? They bring that tray out, and there is all kinds of desserts, but you're a cake lover, and all you see is that big piece of chocolate cake, and you know you got to have it because you saw the other cart and it was a smaller piece. They made a mistake on this, and God is blessing you with the bigger piece, and you do that all the time, and you'll see how satisfied and fat are so close together, or you'll gain 20 pounds.

Spiritually speaking, God's people need to put on a little weight this morning. The healthy child of God who enjoys the fatness of the Word of God and flourishes will only get to that condition by being diligent, by the diligent study of the Bible and getting it down God's way, not yours. The sluggard who dreams of preaching great revival, building a great church, teaching a Bible study, great missionary adventures, great reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and large congregations that come to hear him preach, he's only kidding himself. That Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:5 that you're not crowned unless you run lawfully. When it comes to that Bible, you only learn it one way: God's way. You have to build a foundation, you have to put up a structure, and you have to do the finished work in that order.

IV. Hating Lies and Avoiding Shame

Now look at verse 5: "A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame." The verse pretty much stands on its own about hating lying, but if you put it into the context of verses 1 through 4, you begin to see that the cases can be lying can be us lying to ourselves, deceiving ourselves, kind of like sitting in a message like this and doing your best to deflect the Holy Spirit away from your heart. A righteous man hates lying to others, himself. He hates being lied to. He hates being lied about. But most of all, he hates lying to himself, deceiving himself. He has such a relationship and in touch with the book that he knows exactly who he really is and stays in the Word of God and stays the best of his ability right with God as best as you can, and he hates himself when he doesn't. He's under no illusion that he's something great. He's just a saved sinner who deserves hell and is so thankful that the God of the universe gave him a chance to learn his Bible, and brother, he's not going to blow that opportunity. But the sluggard will say he'll miss it every time, every chance in his Christian life. He'll never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

The Bible says he's "loathsome." That means he's disgusting. He's abhorred. He's despicable. That's a tough word, man, but that's how God looks at us when we throw aside the book that He gave us. The last part of that verse says, "and he cometh to shame." Now again, in a worldly sense, that's shame of messing your life up, screwing it up, and bearing shame for it. But in a spiritual application, you can't miss the reference to the Judgment Seat of Christ. 2 Timothy 2:15, we looked at it last week, said, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that

needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And there are all the elements of success in verse 25: study, a workman, rightly dividing the word of truth.

You know, and I know you know this, we are in the last part of the church age called the Laodicean church in the Bible, and Laodicean means "rights of the people." This church is exactly where we are today in Christianity, the church who wants our rights. We talk about human rights, civil rights, abortion rights, gay rights, health rights, women's rights, and nobody cares about God's rights. That's the church today we're in. That's the church today we're in. The great verse on it in Revelation 3:14-18 says:

Revelation 3:14-18

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Now, look at the seven main characteristics of this church. It fits right into what we're talking about today, and tell me this doesn't line up to where God's people are today.

15. The first one is in verse 15: it's a lukewarm church, not cold, not hot. It's not totally in apostasy, but it's not on fire either. Oh, they still get people saved every once in a while, but there's just no hot preaching about it, no tearing the paint off the walls, no really getting down to it. Don't want to offend anybody. They're not totally in apostasy, but they're not on fire either. They're right in the middle. They're lukewarm. The Bible says a little bit later on that this church makes God sick, and He spews the representative angel out of His mouth.
16. Verse 17: It's a mega church, rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing.
17. Verse 17 says, "but knowest not." This is a church that's lied to itself. You see, this church thinks it's rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. It's lied to itself. It's told itself, "Look at what we got. Look at who we are. We're really great." They've lost the whole relationship with the Word of God.
18. "and knowest not" verse 17, that they're wretched, that they're miserable, that they're poor, spiritually bankrupt. The messages are weak, the people are weak, the church is weak because the pastor's weak.
19. Verse 17 says they're blind, spiritually blind. They've lost sight of all God's great truths of the Bible. They don't know what it means to be pre-millennial anymore. They don't have enough clue how to deal with somebody who believes in predestination. You're finding churches all over the place dumping the concept of the rapture of the church. They don't understand the

gap between 1:1 and 1:2. They don't understand God's plan. They don't understand God dealing with Israel. They've lost completely all of the great truths that the church once held. 20. Then number seven, verse 17: they're naked. The obvious reference to 2 Corinthians 5:1-11, the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Now look at God's counsel to His own church who's ashamed, who's going to be naked, who has lied to itself. He instructs, His instructions, remember last week, His instructions, Father to His son, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." You know what that means? That means take your stand and pay the price for it. When gold goes through the fire, it only gets purer. Now, when you take your stand and go through the fire, you only get purer with God. But that's the number one problem today. Most of God's people have never taken a stand for anything for God. Oh, they'll take it in a little group there, or they'll say this, but publicly taking a stand and declaring where you're at against somebody who is not where they need to be or whatever someplace that will cost you something, ain't going to happen.

He says that you get "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Revelation 19:8 says that the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Then he says that "the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." See that word "appear" there? You want to run that back to 2 Corinthians 5:10 where it says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." This church is going to show up and appear to the Judgment Seat of Christ under the spiritual conditions listed in Revelation 3:14-18. He says, "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve." That's the Holy Spirit of God anointing your eyes to see God's truth that now you're blinded to. The church today, Christians today, are exactly what Proverbs 13:2-5 is talking about.

Look at Revelation 3:20, the last thing he says about this church. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Now, doctrinally, that door is the door of the church, and of course, if you know anything about the first three chapters of Revelation, it's a great contrast between 3:8, the church of the open door, Philadelphia, and 3:20, the church of the closed door, Laodicea. It's a great contrast to those two churches and why one was open and got what they had with God, and the one today doesn't. The door of Christ's church has been closed to Him, and He's on the outside trying to get back in. Imagine that. Imagine the Lord Jesus Christ, who the Bible wrote the book of Ephesians and told us about the church being His bride. Imagine in His mind with churches today that He is on the outside knocking on the door, and the church has closed its door to the very one who was the founder of the church because they've forsaken His principles and are doing their own thing in His name. Wow.

But inspirationally, it's even worse, if it can get worse, for its inspiration is the door of the hearts of God's people, saved, but the door to their heart is open to the world and everything in it. Don't you know we always say the phrase, "Are you open to this?" "Well, I'm open to that." "Yes, I'm open to that." "Well, be open, just be open-minded." That's the problem with God's people. You're open-minded to everything out there in the world, but when it comes to that book and the Lord Jesus Christ, you've closed the door, and just like He's knocking on the door of the church to get back in, He's knocking on the door of the hearts of God's people to get back in. No supper, no fellowship, no fellowship with His Word.

You know, in final moments here, closing, Israel in its final days before it completely went into apostasy and fell apart, had a complete breakdown. When you go back to the early times when God first brought her out of Egypt, and you look at her under David and even Moses, when God gave her everything that He wanted her to be, will you compare that to what she is in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles when she goes into captivity? Totally complete. Don't even resemble each other. She lost the power of God. She lost God. She lost everything that God wanted her to do. Yet she's as religious as you could ever think she could be. Still talks about God, still prays to God. It's just not the God of the Bible that brought her out of Egypt, and she's playing the game. You talk about a nation that has deceived herself and lied to herself, and yet believing that she is something great with God and the people of God. That's why the Jews have a, you know, they're always given a rap of being somebody that's arrogant, somebody that's got their nose stuck up, thinks they're better than everybody else. You know where that goes back to? It goes back to the fact that they know that the Bible says in Romans chapter 4 that the oracles of God were with the Jew. They know deep down inside they're God's chosen people. They think they're better than you, and they walked around like they were really with God when they were so destitute and far from God that they didn't even resemble the people of God.

You know what? In the church age today, in this final day, you're seeing the complete same breakdown. The church today is as far from Jesus Christ in 2015 as Israel was in 606 BC. We are just a former shell. I mean, we have a form of godliness, but we deny the power thereof, and it's all a game, and it all goes back to that one single word in that passage: diligence. Being diligent about the things of God, realizing that the God of the universe allowed you to have a copy of His Word, and yet we put so many things ahead of that, so many things we put a higher value on than that. I mean, we put a high value on this and this and this, but when it comes to the book that God gave down to man that has everything in it that He wants us to know about past, present, and future, and everything that God is, we put such a low price tag on it and value on it and no diligence to it. There's the problem. As long as that word "diligence" stays out of our lives, as long as we refuse to do it God's way, we just keep picking it around here, getting this, getting that, getting that, and never settling down into that book, it'll never change. You'll have a desire, but you'll always come up empty.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. Thank You for the time we've set aside today and all that You've given us. Thank You for our church. Thank You for the good people here, and thank You for the good Word of God. We pray now, Father, Your blessings upon us and give us a good day today as we go out on restart and all of the things that we endeavor to do for Thee in a good week and all that we try to do and accomplish. Bless these people, bless their families, bless these singles, bless their moms and dads, and bless the folks, Lord, and just give them the opportunities to reach out and to touch people's lives. Bless us, come and win it, as we bring the young men in here and for the few, and help us to reach out and love them and to be there for them. Lord, just thank You for all the things we've got going on and bless us, keep us safe today in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.