

I. Doctrinal Reference: Tribulation and Second Coming

Now this is another great passage with a lot of good stuff in it. It's got a lot of deep stuff in it, what we're going to talk about, and I'm going to show you some things. This will be a morning where you can get a lot of little key notes in your Bible about certain things, so you want to be ready to do that. And yet, along with it, there's a lot of great practical applications in this verse.

Proverbs 13:9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

It always amazes me how the world will steal its sayings from the great principles of the Word of God and then turn around and use them in everyday life. And they have no idea where they come from. The Bible says here that, "but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out." We say all the time, "I'm going to punch that guy's lights out." And they don't even know where it comes from. They don't even know where it originates from. And yet that's exactly what God is going to do when the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

Now, the first little note I want you to get in your Bible, and you can just put this in there if you got, I use one of those little epitographs, I wouldn't put it in with a sharpie or anything like that. But the first little note you want to put in here about this passage in verse 9 is a doctrinal reference. You want to know what this is doctrinally. And doctrinally, all four of these verses will be references to the tribulation period and the second coming of Christ. And you always want to be able to understand. And you know, if you just put these things in now while you're going through it, I know a lot of people say, "Well, I'll just write it down and go back and do it later." You won't. You won't. I learned that lesson when I was studying my Bible.

I began to go through something in the Bible, and a lengthy thing. And I would see something that referenced something way back here that really had nothing to do with what I was studying. And it was something that I knew that I would need down the line someplace. I had one rule in my life when it came to the Bible. That rule was simply that whatever I was doing, I would stop right there, go back and completely put that together and then have it. And I don't know how many times over the years that's paid off to me when somebody's asked me a question in the Bible or Bible study, and I went to some obscure passage back there. And there, lo and behold, because I was diligent of putting the note in there, I had what I needed. So you always want to do it. And this is an easy format to do it in. You just want to basically put down doctrinally these four verses deal with the tribulation and the second coming.

When you read here and it says, "the light of the righteous rejoices," that light will be Christ appearing at the second coming. And obviously to put out the lights of the Antichrist and his crowd. You see references to this all through the Old Testament and you want to put these little references in there too.

Isaiah 9:2

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Isaiah 60:1-3

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

In Matthew 17, where you have the Mount of Transfiguration, where Christ is transfigured before them and He shines like the white light, bright as the sun. That passage in Matthew 17 is Christ stepping beyond the cross. He hasn't even been crucified yet. And it's a picture of the second coming where God takes Him beyond the cross and then glorifies Him as He will be glorified at the second coming, hence the light.

You see it again as another example in Acts 9 where Paul gets saved. Paul is one of the most unique individuals anywhere in the Bible. I know he starts the church and he is the apostle to the Gentiles, but in type he's a type of the Jew going through the tribulation period. Paul calls himself a Jew born out of due season and that due season is the tribulation. So when he's on the road to Damascus, his salvation comes because he sees the Lord and he sees the glory and the light. And as that he's a type of this verse here, the Jew in the tribulation that's going to see that light. So, doctrinally, just want to put that in there.

II. God's Light Versus Man's Lamp

Along with that, there's a great practical aspect to this great verse and it's got some really good stuff in it. And it's simply God's light versus man's lamp. And that's something that I want you to see today. The Bible says, "the light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out."

Now God's light will be a white light. It'll be a pure light. It'll be the light that whenever you find Christ in a glorified fashion, that will be the light that is associated with it. When you go over to the book of Revelation, most people don't even know this. A lot of things in history make sense when you learn the Bible. When you look at a nation like the nation of England, who for 400 years really carried the weight of the Word of God around the world. And God's blessings were all over them and God made them, that tiny little island, God made them a world-dominating power that they had colonies all over the world. I've told you many, many times the saying was that back then the sun never set on a British soil because she had colonies everywhere across the world. And wherever she went, the missionaries went in and people got saved.

I told you Thursday night about she had one of the greatest navies in the 1800s that the world has ever seen to this day. And it was an absolutely formidable navy that all the other nations that maybe didn't like England or maybe didn't care for her, they gave her a wide space simply because they knew that there was something about that nation that they didn't want to fool

around with. And all that stuff, the nations and the navy and the military and the colonies all came down to what she did with the King James 1611 Authorized Version. And I told you Thursday night that her battleships were huge. I've seen pictures of them around the turn of the century where they're stretched out in a line for like 40, 50 miles and they're absolutely huge and they got the name Dreadnoughts. And of course most people don't know what that name even means but it was an acronym off of the phrase Dreadnoughts for God is with thee. And they knew that the God of the universe had his hand on the little island of England.

And I say all that to say that there was a time when she really honored everything about God and the Word of God, much like America did in its beginning. And when you go to Revelation 4 it talks about Christ glorified in that light we're talking about here and it says that his hair is white like wool. The idea being that the light is so bright that it actually makes his hair look like white wool. Now the British saw that. They believed the Bible. They believed what they believed and they loved the Bible and they loved God and they wanted God's blessing and they wanted to emulate the principles of the Word of God. So in their parliament, in their court system, all the judges, everybody wore a white powdered wig. And that was a symbolism of the fact that they recognized that they were in the seat of authority and power and they wanted it to be done the right way like Christ being honored and glorified from it. There's all kinds of things that you'll learn when you just try to match up the Bible and history. But God's light is a white light.

In Malachi 4:2 it talks about the second coming of Christ and it says that the Son of Man shall arise with healing in his wings. That's a second coming. So when you look at the phrase Son of Man, which is a reference to Christ, it's not spelled S-O-N, Son of Man. It's spelled S-U-N like the sun that we have in our solar system because we all know that that sun is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ and that that sunlight is pure light that comes and radiates down on this planet.

Now it's God's light versus man's lamp. And this is very important. Man's lamp will be a false light that man has fabricated. It stands in stark contrast to the pure white light of God. You see a lamp is something some man makes. The white light of God is the Holy Spirit of God illuminating the things of God and for the people of God. And the man's lamp in this particular context here will be a picture of what man fabricates through a man-made false religion that has no real light with it. It's not by the Holy Spirit of God. It's man-made. It's man-fabricated. It's man-contrived. So it's a false light that gives off light but not the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Now there's a great example of this that probably all of you have went through at some point in your life and probably didn't even know it. And that is looking at something in your home and trying to discern, is that black or is that dark blue? Many times you'll see me wearing one black sock and one blue sock. It's because I looked and was deceived by the lights in my house. You'll look at one of these shirts and you look at it and you say, "I want a black one." And you grab it and it looks black. You get out and in the sunlight and it's dark blue. Sometimes in house light red will look orange. Sometimes white will look yellow. And the false lights that come off of this, it's good. It gives us light that we can see. But what I'm trying to tell you today, if you really want to see something the way it really is, you have to get it into sunlight because the light of

your home may be good and it will show you some things, but it will also deceive you on some things.

If you want to, I remember one time I had a gray blazer and I had a pair of gray pants that did not come with the gray blazer. In my home, they looked like a perfect match. Outside my home, I looked like a perfect fool. The grays did not match. But in my home, underneath my manmade lamp said, "Look great." But when I got it under the real white light of God's sun, it showed me that it didn't match. And you know what? In life, a lot of things that you look at through a manmade light will look like it matches. You're going to have one of these online dating things, and find somebody that you think that it's a real match. Well, it is looking at it through the light you're looking through it. You take it back to Genesis and the principles of the Word of God and scrutinize it under sunlight, we'll see how it really comes out. In other words, what I'm trying to say to you that sometimes the way, you look at things when you get it, have to get it into the real light of the Word of God, the pure light of the Holy Spirit. Manmade light will never give you the true perspective of what you're looking at or what you're looking for. God's light, the true light, or it's going to be manmade lamps. That's just the way it is.

And you're going to find when you get into false religions, it's all contrived. It's all manmade. It's all put together. They'll take things of the Bible and they'll take it completely out of context. And then they'll add, I don't know how many other things. And a person who looks at that through the light of the world, it may look good. But boy, you scrutinize it through the sunlight of this book. Doesn't look so good.

You know, I don't know if you know it or not, but they have what they call a spectroscope. A spectroscope is a machine that breaks down light into light beams. And you will find that light from the sun, sunlight, which is a type of Christ light, is a perfect light in the fact that it has seven colors in that spectrum. It has red, it has orange, it has yellow, it has green, it has blue, it has siren, and it has a violet. Every other color we have will be a mixture of those seven. But true light from the sun breaks down into a system of seven colors. And seven in the Bible is the number of God's perfection. You know that. And yet in this verse, along with that is one of the most incredible, deepest studies that you're ever going to find on the light of God versus the lamp of man.

III. The Devil's Lamp Versus God's Light

Now we know that if the light of God comes from God, we know that man-made religion or falsified light has to come from the devil. So we have the devil's lamp versus God's light. And what I'm about to show you is one of the greatest studies anywhere in the Word of God that will unlock so many things. And I don't have the time this morning to give you all the depth on it, but I want to walk you through enough to get you an understanding of it, and you're seeing it in the context of our verse.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Now there's the two lights. There's the devil's man-made fabricated lamp versus God's pure light. And you're going to find that the Bible says that the devil transforms himself into an angel of light. Now yet, you're going to find the Bible says in 1 Peter 5:8 that the devil transforms himself into a roaring lion, and he goes around seeking whom he may devour. Now those are two great verses, and I don't have time to get into all of that, but let me just tell you this.

In the Old Testament times, when you really didn't have a modern day society, you didn't have all of the scientific things that we have today, and the world was nowhere near as modern and up to date in its thinking and understanding of things. It was still very far advanced, but it wasn't to the point like it is today. All you had was nations in Europe and nations everywhere through the Middle East that were warring factions, and you had the Hittites, and you had the Babylonians, and the list is endless in the Bible. They're very pagan. We would never think of taking our kids when they were born and then going someplace and offering them up as a burnt offering, as a sacrifice to your God today. Totally unthinkable, but that was common practice back then. They did some horrendous things back in the Old Testament to serve their God who was the devil.

In the Old Testament, when the devil dealt with those nations, he dealt with them like a roaring lion. He took them by fear. He held them by fear. He had them do despicable things to their own children. You read back in the Old Testament places called, "have your children pass through the fire." Or you read where it talks about the fire of Molech. Molech was a big god of the Moabites, and he was a gigantic brass image hollow on the inside with a big hole in his stomach with mechanical hands. When they would worship their God, their sun God, fire, they would have their first born child and they would take that child and they would offer it up to their God Molech, and they would build a fire in his stomach that was roaring and the brass would almost turn red. It was so hot. And they'd lay that little baby in those mechanical hands while they danced around and beat their drums and gave honor to their God, and they cranked those hands and that hand brought that baby and dumped it into the fire. That's having your children pass through the fire. You don't see that in churches today. You see, the devil back then came after them like a roaring lion. He's much too sophisticated today. He knows if he's going to get you to follow him, he can't do that. No, so he'll transform himself in a New Testament fashion as an angel of light. He'll transform his ministers as ministers of righteousness and he'll imitate God's light so you will be deceived by it and blinded by it and what he will do is he'll fabricate a lamp that gives off a false light that when you go by it does not show you the truth of what reality really is. That's how he does it.

And yet, the Bible says that Satan is light. And all through the Bible he's called darkness. And it's a study of the mystery of the devil being darkness and yet he's a light.

Jude 13

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Well, when you go out on a nice clear night you see stars. They're pinpoints of light. Some are brighter than others but they're shining points. Here are stars that have no light that they're reserved under the blackness of darkness forever. Now these wandering stars, they have a blackness to them. In astronomy, one of the greatest mysteries of the universe is what the scientists call black hole stars. And a black hole star, theoretically, no one's ever seen one but they know that they're there. I believe they're there because Jude 13 talks about wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Now I know in a Bible sense that's the sons of God out of Genesis 6 because Revelation 9:1 will tell you that stars in the Bible are angels. So I understand that the reference here is to the sons of God which fell in Genesis 6. I get that. But here we've got something in the universe that nobody understands. And what they say is that when a star dies, a huge star, our own sun is a star. It's a very average star. It's not a very big star at all. They say that our star will burn out in about five billion years. And when it depletes all of its hydrogen and it all burns up, it'll be reduced as a cinder about the size of the moon. And of course everybody left on planet earth will freeze to death. But don't worry about that because you have been burned to death long before you freeze to death because it'll go into a supernova before it goes into that mode. Never mind because all this stuff is very boring. But you don't have to worry about it at all because the Lord's coming back. You ain't got five million years.

But I'm going to tell you this. When you get a, and there's some stars out there that you could take a million of our suns. Our sun has a diameter of eight hundred and sixty thousand miles. There are some stars out there that are so big you could put a million of our suns inside and still not fill it up. They're incredible. And science says that when those stars begin to deplete their hydrogen and they go into a supernova and burn up and get brighter and brighter and then they begin to condense and they begin to condense down in what is commonly called in science as a neutron star. And a neutron star is tremendously dense. If you would take just a grain of sand off of a neutron star and bring it down to planet earth and put it on a scale, a grain of sand off of a neutron star would weigh four hundred billion tons on earth. That's how dense it is. And in a neutron star when it gets that, that forms a black hole, all the gravity pulls everything inward. And on a normal star where the light is shining out, on a neutron star because of the density, it sucks all the light in. And they say that if you could ever go into a black hole star, the heat would be so intense, the heat would be absolutely beyond belief. You would burn to a cinder and yet it's such a fire. It's a heat, but yet it gives off no light. The Bible calls that outer darkness.

I heard a scientist say one time, unsaved man, he said a black hole is a place that is exiled from the rest of the universe. I thought when he said that, he must have got that at Isaiah 66 because the lake of fire is completely exiled from everything else when God does when it gets into eternity. Now I don't have a clue what a black hole star is. I got a better clue than they do because they don't have the Bible and I'm telling you right now, those black holes that give off a heat and give off a light that is a dark light that you can't see, that sucks everything in and the gravitation pulls everything down. And don't you know right now, if it wasn't for this earth, there's a force in

this universe trying to pull you down. It's gravity and the Bible teaches right now that hell is in the center of the earth. If it wasn't for this earth that you're standing on, that gravity would pull you right down to hell. You see when you die in the old days, they understood that. So they said when a die died, he went under. So they called the guys in the funeral home, undertakers. Now when you got saved, you don't have to worry about an undertaker. You know why? Because when you got saved, you got an upper taker. When you die, your soul which is eternal isn't affected by gravity and you go to be with the Lord. A light that is darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says that Satan's black light blinds people from seeing the truth.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Blinded with a false counterfeit black light. Blinded with a light that gives off a black light, a dark light that you can't see and it's man-made and it's fabricated and it distorts everything that you see. Self man-made religions will always be based on things that are not found in the Bible. You know why? They're a lamp. They're fabricated. They're made up.

Many young Christians do the same thing when they try to learn the Bible and study the Bible. They get started with the same trap, not to the same degree, but they follow the same line of reasoning. I've had them all the time to come to me and say, "Look what I found in the Bible. Look what I found in the Bible." And because they found something and they read something over here or they heard something over here, they take what they just read and leap way over here with what they think they just found and try to make the connection. And you've got to learn when it comes to understanding the Bible. The Bible is built on a path of light. You have to have a trail of light. You have to make sure that whatever you're looking at and whenever you're studying, real Bible study is a natural path, a trail of light. He says that the Word of God is a light under my path. It lights the way and it will always be in the Bible. Wherever you go, you don't just pick this out and say, "Look what I found." You've got to go back and walk at the path of light that led you to that conclusion.

Now the devil on the other hand in Job 41:32, where you have God's light breaking you through the pathway, the Bible says the devil makes a path to shine after him. You see, one is made up. Where God's light is natural through the Holy Spirit of God, the devil makes a path to shine after him.

Now look at Matthew 6:22-23. This is a tremendous study. One that takes us way, way beyond.

Matthew 6:22-23

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

All right, now watch this. There's a saved person who is single focused on the Word of God and his body shall be full of light. Look at verse 23. "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Look at it. Look at the last part of the verse. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness." Now there's a light that is a dark light that is darkness. Just like the black hole stars, just like everything that the devil is, a lamp that he made that puts forth a false counterfeit light that is darkness. And it blinds people from the true light.

Now flip over to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 and you'll see it in a context for you and me now.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Now there's two kinds of people. One is the true light of God that you're a child of that light. The other one is a light that is darkness and you're in darkness and you're in the night. And you have to have a man-made light to get through it. One represents saved people of the day. One represents unsaved people that are in darkness.

Now you stop and think about a black light. And I know that a black light that we have that you can go and buy someplace today, I know it's a cheap variation of what he's talking about here, but it illustrates the point very clearly. You want to have a haunted house where you want to scare people and you want to make things spookier than they really are. And you want to have people dressed up and you want them to really look more scary than they really do. All you got to do is bring a black light into it. A black light will take the edges off of everything. That is reality. So when you go to a haunted house and you want to scare people, you take them in a room and it's a black light. A black light emits off in a dark light that does not illuminate the details, it confuses the details.

You'll go to some of those dancing disco places where they have herds of young men and young ladies drinking and boozing it up and doping it up and they'll put it in a black light. You know why they do that? That makes the ugly woman look prettier. Makes the goofy looking man look better. Turn that light on and you turn into a stone, you're dancing with Medusa. You see John 3:19 was right when he says, "men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." So when you say people are always going to go to darkness and when they got to have light in the darkness, they're not going to turn on bright lights and illuminate and let you see what it

really is. They're going to put in a false black light that masks what's really there. A black light that blinds you and it will distort the real picture of things that you look at. This is the light that Satan transformed himself into as an angel of light. This is the path that shines after him.

Last week I talked about learning the Bible and I showed you man's way versus God's way. God's way will be the light of the Holy Spirit of God, a path of light. Man's way will be a man made lamp that he fabricates and the devil brings along and shines after him because it's made up.

IV. Pride and Contention

Now look at verse 10. I wish we could spend all morning on that verse 9 but we can't. Got you enough that got you going.

Proverbs 13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Now that's a great practical verse. People who are well advised, people who have wisdom, Bible principles, you'll be able to avoid contention for the most part. Side-step, strife and conflict. Now if you work with people to any degree, this will be a great principle on dealing with them. It really shows you some incredible things. The first thing it shows you is the number one source of all our problems and issues and arguments and all our contention that we get into and we cannot resolve them simply will be because of pride. When you go back to Proverbs 6:16 when it talks about the six things that God hates, number one is pride.

Now this principle will form the concept behind what we call in the New Testament church, church discipline. Church sometimes have to deal with issues and people that won't deal biblically with them. It's sad to say this but in some cases there were people that all they do in their life is cause contention and cause strife. That's all they do. And the idea of church discipline is to confront it when it gets out of control, I'm not talking about in the little petty things, but when it gets out of control and put an end to it and bring it to a resolve. Many times you can't and then the person gets mad because of pride, they leave the church, they don't want to do what the Bible says.

Proverbs 22:10

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

And you know it's something I hate to say but there's sometimes in every church when you've got somebody that's off all they do and when they finally decide they leave it's like a breath of fresh air came over the place. It's like a weight has been lifted off. Hey, one or two people can bring in problems that will hold back a whole church from doing what God wants it to do. And if you don't believe that you go back into Joshua 7 and you look at the sin of Achan. There's one man who disobeyed God and did what he wanted to do and his sin affected the whole congregation of the nation of Israel. One man and obviously the name of the game is to resolve it, to get it fixed, to try to work it, to get the people together. But you know what? When it won't work it's because of pride. It's always pride. Pride will keep contention going. It feeds on it.

You see it in family feuds. Sometimes I've seen family feuds that went on for 20 years and you know what? Nobody even understands anymore what caused it. They don't say, you say what say to them, "Hey what happened?" "I don't know. It was like that when I was born." What was the main source? They don't like each other, they hate each other. I have no idea. You've even forgotten what it was. You know what keeps it going? Pride. Somebody won't step up and say, "Hey, this is stupid." No, no, your pride's involved.

I've seen it in preachers and pastors. Pride. They're never wrong. Everything that goes wrong in their life is always somebody else's fault. I've seen them move from church to church to church and fail in everything they've ever tried to do and yet they'll tell you it's never their fault. You know what that problem is? Pride. And you'll find with people like that there's three characteristics.

1. They don't have a clue of how to build a church in the first place.
2. They're totally unteachable in how to do it.
3. They're always crooked as a dog's hind leg, man, I guarantee you. Every one of them I've ever met.

But you see it in families. My family. I'm going to tell you a story. My mom and my grandma. Her mother. Now my mom's family, if I remember right, they had two sisters and five or six brothers. It's been a long time ago. I tried to name them off this week and I couldn't remember them all but it was a big family. And I had an uncle whose name was Uncle Milt and all of my mom's brothers were characters. They were characters. They all were, all probably unsaved and all characters, all of them were. All drinkers, all, we didn't do drugs back then but they all were heavy drinkers. They all were into it.

And my grandmother, my grandmother got old. My grandfather passed away when I was just a small child, about 10 or 11. And they got, they took her in, Uncle Milt. And they lived about 30 miles away on a little farm and we would go up there and, oh, I love going up there. I was a barn and I was just a young guy and I'd get in there and find all kinds of stuff. And he was good to me. He knew I liked World War II stuff so he would hide little things in there and I'd come down and say, "Look what I found." And he'd say, "Well, if you found it, you can keep it." I really, I had a long time with him.

I don't know what happened to this day. But man, there was World War III. The family split. My mom got mad at grandma for something and grandma got, side got taken by Milt because he was staying there. My mom accused Milt of milking my grandma and taking all the things, the money and everything she had, which I don't know if he did or he didn't. It didn't matter. It was a knockdown drag out. And I'll tell you, one thing about my mom's side of the family, when they were mad at you, they were mad at you. And there wasn't any coming back. And I'll never forget my mom wrote her mother off. She said to her and my grandma said to her, my mom, some of the most, I couldn't believe it. I was just a little guy. I couldn't take notes that fast. They were calling each other everything in the book and wishing the other one was dead. Hope this one would die of this and that. I mean, it was terrible. And I'm just a little guy here and I'm, you know, and I'm looking at this and I'm thinking, man, end of story with the family.

I had asked my mom, "Mom, don't you ever miss your mom?" Oh, that was the wrong thing to ask her. I never saw Milt again. He died. And obviously my mom's mom, my grandmother died. Never saw him again. In fact, we never saw the rest of the family ever again. The other sister. Yeah, but the rest of them never saw him again. They all, I believe, they died at some point. We never heard, never knew anything.

Now, my point is this. When my mom wrote you off, my mom wrote you off. And my mom and Uncle Milt and grandma and grandpa, I love them to death and I love them all. And I took no sides on it, but I'll tell you what, their problem was pride. Pride got in the middle of that thing and nobody could say, "I'm sorry." Nobody would say, "I'm sorry." Nobody wanted to say, "I'm sorry." Because you know why? Nobody was sorry. That happened when I was probably 11 years old.

When I was 23 years old, my mom's family is all from Maryland, Frostburg, Maryland, little south of Cumberland, little coal mining town. We went back at 23. My uncle on my dad's side, his brothers, a bunch of them there too, were going to take me deer hunting up in the mountains of Pennsylvania. And I was excited about it. We stayed with my aunt Nettie, who was my dad's sister. So we're all there, we're staying there, you know, and down over the little knoll, just like all these little places, was a little church where my grandfather was buried. A little country church, a little Baptist church, a little seminary there, and my grandpa who died many, many years. So we decided, all of us, that we were going to go down and my mom and Nettie and we're going to put flowers on grandpa's grave and we all said, yeah, that was a good thing. But I've never forgotten this. We went down to that grave, walked up to that tombstone and there not only was grandpa, but between that time, grandma had died and was now buried and her name was on it and we didn't even know it. You know what my mom did? Not a thing. She never shed a tear. She never felt bad. She never said, "I wish that I made things right." Pride was running on a mock meter of Mach 6.

And I think back of that in my life as a young kid looking at that and thinking of that and I'm saying to myself, you know what, boy, pride was the problem. Pride will always be the problem. And I don't think, my mom died earlier this year, you know, and I would, well she got older, she got a little more mellow and she would talk about it, but she had never had nothing good to say. She never felt bad in a day of her life. And you know what, I love my mom, but I want to tell you something. That's what pride will do to you. That's what unleashed pride will do if you don't get a handle on it and you let it be the contention part of your life, it'll get such a hold on you, you can't change it. Pride will only lead to more contention and then it adds to arrogance, it adds to bitterness. I saw it in my family. And when a family or a church, contention comes, it's because somebody got their pride involved and that will keep the, that'll keep it going on and on and on and you'll never be able to solve it. That non-forgiving spirit ongoing contention based on pride.

Now I fully understand that there are times when you have to take a stand on things that you don't give in on. I get it, I understand that. I'm not saying that you just absolutely, no time in your life ever take a stand and always give in. I'm not suggesting that at all, but I am suggesting this, a smart Christian who is well-advised according to the verse will learn to choose what battles he puts himself into. You know sometimes it's better to win the brother than it is to win the battle. A

Christian needs to be smarter than the problem. He needs to see it and realize that you know what, because I'm well-advised, I have the principles. This is not a battle that I want to escalate into something because there's no value in it.

Romans 15:1

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Now in life with human beings, even though we're saved, there's going to be issues, there's going to be problems. That's just life. But being well-advised, you take yourself out of it, your pride. And you know what you do when you take your pride out? You put the cause of Christ in. I can't think of anything between two Christians that doesn't get on a high level someplace that just unspeakable problem that should not be able to be resolved by two people who have the Holy Spirit of God inside them when they follow the principles of the Word of God. You know what the problem always is? Pride. Pride. They forget the fact that the cause of Christ is at stake, that the contention that we make such a big deal over is nothing compared to eternity.

You see it in marriage. Marriage has problems because you have a prideful husband, or sometimes you have a prideful wife, sometimes you have both. And the husband won't give in because he thinks he's right, she won't give in because she thinks he's right. And as long as you hold that position, you know, hey, you're not going anywhere. Now I'll tell you if you want to have a good biblical fight with your spouse, here's what you fight over. Fight over taking the blame of who's going to be wrong. You do something stupid, guys. Your wife calls you on it. You simply say, "Yeah, that was really dumb. I should have known better. I'm sorry I did that." Now, if she's really biblical, she's going to respond to that and she's saying, "Well, you know, I understand. There's no big deal. We all make mistakes, you know." And, you know, "And I've done some tough stuff too." And you say, "No, it was me. It wasn't you." She says, "No, no. It's okay. It's me." You say, "No, no. Honey. It was me." And she said, "No, no, it was me." And next thing you know, you're arguing about who's going to take the blame. Now, that's a good fight to have.

The moment, the very moment, she calls you on something or you call her on something and you may be legitimately right. You may have done something really stupid and she has a right to call you on it. She may have done something stupid and you never have a right to call her on it. I mean, you have a right to call her on it. The moment you get your pride involved, the moment you let your bad day enter in, the moment you start to get your back up and you're going to now say, and you're going to defend your undefendable position, you're not well advised. Most marriages that wind up in tremendous severe problems didn't start with tremendous severe problems. I want you to know that. They started with little issues that nobody was well-advised and their pride got in the middle of it. It's just that simple.

You take two Christians in their life when they have an issue. You saw it in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul saying, "What are you guys doing? You're having an issue with this guy and this guy, you're both believers. And instead of taking it to the Bible and dealing with it and getting your pride out of the way, you're taking each other to a civil court and showing each other." He says, "Don't you

guys know that someday you're going to judge angels and you can't even judge these little things?" And they couldn't. You know why? Pride. Boy, pride gets in it, man. It's gone.

You see it in churches when they have issues. A church simply needs to follow the basic biblical principles in solving problems and it doesn't include pride. If you're wrong, you're wrong. It's okay. Everybody is. If I'm wrong, I'm wrong. Everybody's wrong at some point. Trying to defend yourself in an undefendable position is nothing more than pride when you clearly know the Bible teachings on it.

Now I'd say this, if there was ever one main attribute of Christ that defines a man or a woman in their relationship with Christ and that person being led by the Holy Spirit of God, it would be this aspect right here. Taking a blame when it isn't your blame. You know why? Because that's exactly what Jesus Christ did for me. He took my blame when he was blameless. You know if anybody should have got pride involved and said, "I am not letting my holiness aside for that wretch of a guy," it should have been the Lord Jesus. But he didn't. Pride never entered into it. Now if we're Christ-like, how in the world does pride enter into us? If he can absolve us, why can't we absolve the mistakes of others?

I know everybody hates this. You deal with somebody and they say, "What do you think? What do you think about that? What do you think about that?" My standard answer is, "Well, what would Jesus do?" No, I know that's corny. And I know we all hate to hear that. You know why we all hate to hear that? I say that to some people and all I get is, "Oh," you know why? You go, "Ah, ah, ah, ah," because deep down inside you really know what Jesus would do. And you're not doing what Jesus would do. And you resent the fact that I just said a simple little four-word sentence. What would Jesus do? Five, ooh, five. You don't like that. Hey, absolving people of their mistakes and moving on. In most cases, I understand, in some cases, you can't do that. I realize that. There are some things that people get into that I'll say, "I'll forgive you for that, but you know what? You're not coming back to church. I'm sorry. Get a fresh start. Get someplace. God's best of luck to you." I get that. But that's not most cases. Most cases bearing the infirmities of the weaker Christian. And you're doing it because you're well-advised. They have the insight that you see where they're at. Hey, and if you're, honestly, if you're more spiritual to see that they're wrong, then you ought to be more spiritual to help bring them along. It's just that, hey, if you've got the power to tear them down, you've got the power to build them up. You get to choose.

You know, Romans 14 and 15 is probably the greatest chapter in the Bible on dealing with people from Bible principles. And when you go through chapter 15, I've probably given it to you sometime. There's seven great principles in that chapter on dealing with people. And he says, first of all, that in 15:1, that he bears the infirmities. That's your strength helping a weaker person. That's you looking at that Christian who did something stupid, maybe to you or somebody else, but you realize that they're doing it because they don't know any better where they're at spiritually, or even if they do, they just made a flat mistake, which we all make. But no, no, we've got to get our pride involved and make the Goodyear blimp out of the problem.

The second thing he says is he pleases others and not himself. Now that's taking, that's taking self out, putting others in. Sometimes we get our nose out of joint because somebody else gets to do something that we thought we should have got to do. I never feel that way. I'm always glad for that person because I know at the end of the day, if God really wanted me to do it, there's no power on earth would have kept me from not doing it. So I rejoice in the fact that, you know what, maybe I would have liked to do it. Maybe I thought I could even do it better, but you know what, that's just me. God thinks that this guy is exactly what he needs, or this guy was exactly what he needed to do the job. I'm for it, man. Take self out of it.

The third thing he says, he receives people. Now that's all people. That's not just the ones you like. That's not just the ones that fit into your social economic status. It's not just the ones who you get along with. It's receive everybody. I don't care who they are.

And then the fourth thing he admonishes other people. You know, you ought to have one goal for the person sitting next to you and the person sitting in front of you and the person sitting behind you. You know what that goal should be? You ought to want to make them better. You ought to want to make them better. Why do we want to hurt other people and make them worse just because we got our pride and self involved? You ought to look at somebody sitting around you and they're not where you're at and maybe you know more about it than they do. You know what? You ought to want them to be better.

The fifth thing he edifies other people. Not only do you want them to be better, you encourage them in that. You ought to take some Sunday morning or some Thursday night. It'd be a great revelation for you. Just go around to people and say something encouraging to them. And not just your best friends. Go up to people that you don't like and say, "You know what? You really look nice today. That's a nice dress." Too bad they didn't have it on your side, but that's a nice dress.

Number six is he ministers to the other people. Their needs. That's one of the things I love about so many of you in this church. You'll see somebody that has a need and you're sympathetic to it. I think that's a great thing. I really do.

And then the seventh thing is he prays for other people. You know talk is cheap, but prayer is really the substance of our talk. Do we really do what we do when we say we're going to pray for somebody? Or is it just lip service because we know that's what we're supposed to say to get something off our back and make us feel good in our conscience? In other words, he puts his pride aside. He knows that it will always cause constant and strife. He puts others first by always putting the cause of Christ first. Now that what Christ did for me. And that's what he expects you and me to do for him.

Of course, in an imperfect world, I know that you can't always do that. I get it. There are some people who won't respond right and reject you whenever you try to do what's right. I understand that. I get it. I deal with it all the time. That's okay. You're not responsible to them. Just make sure you do it right in your own life.

Romans 12:18

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Now, sometimes you can and sometimes you can't. But never let it be because it was your pride that you can't or you don't or you won't.

V. The Value of Labor and Patience

Now look at verse 11. You can breathe a little easier now. I'm off that.

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

One of the great lessons in life is learning the value of money by having to work to get it, not just handed to you. I, as many of you older men and women here because of, you know, we came from a generation that had to work for everything. My parents, some of your parents, you older men and women, they went through the Great Depression. They went through a time that was a reshaping of values. They learned its great lessons on life and what's of real value.

I look at my dad. My dad never had a new car in all of his life until I was probably 12 or 13 years old. Now today a kid gets out of high school. If he doesn't get a new car, he thinks he's being deprived in the world. When my mom and dad got married, they lived 18 years in a little apartment before they ever bought their first and only house. My dad was a steel mill worker and worked a part-time job as a gas station on the side to make ends meet. My mom worked as a waitress and sold Avon to make ends meet. We never had, we were on the other side of the tracks, southwest section, we never had a lot of things like other kids had. My mom and dad sacrificed for me and my sister. And we never did a lot of things. We didn't take vacations. Our vacations was little fishing trips here and there. You know, our biggest fun night was going out to the airport in Canton, Ohio, watching the planes land. They had a shuttle that went between terminals. That was the greatest ride of my life when I was five, six, seven and eight. You know how you go through those tunnels and they have all the marquees of places you could go? I'd always see Disneyland, Disney World. I was 12 years old before I thought that that was in Disneyland. I had kids that say, "We're going to Disney World, we're going to the airport in the morning." And I said, "Oh man, that shuttle ride's really neat, you're going to like it." I thought it was Disney World. I'll never forget when they put in the first escalator. I must have rode that for an hour. My mom and dad just sitting down there, we're going up and going down, going up and going down. They learned to be patient and to save for what they wanted. We didn't have credit cards back then. My goodness, I remember when the first calculator came out. They were like that. Now you got them on your phone.

I got my first job when I was 12 years old. Little mom and pop store, they used to have them in all the little neighborhoods around there. I started at 50 cents an hour stocking shelves, Andrews Grocery Store, right down the street from where I lived. When I went to high school, I moved to the Woolworths Company and it was a dishwasher. Freshmen all through high school. Then I went to Republic Steel when I worked in a steel mill for a short time. Went to the Hoover Company and made vacuum cleaners, the ones that don't work that your mom and dad probably bought. Went in the Army. I worked all my life. You know, those early lessons I learned at work, of work, were valuable to me.

You know, kids today get out of school and like they said, they expect a new car. While you got out of some of your kids in school, you got a \$500 iPhone. When I grew up, we had a 210 can with a string between the two of them. You sit down here in your living room and you play. You got \$1,000 worth of video things. You slip in there. You play kick the can in the alley, all the in free. Today kids aren't patient for anything. Got to have what all the other kids have. And in most cases, they don't come out with a very good value system. Completely undisciplined. When I grew up at Christmas, we got basically two things. Two presents. Fourth days, you got two things. I never knew what it was like to have 30, 40 presents showered on me. And then after two weeks, you can't find everything because they're stacked in some closet someplace or it's broken.

Hey, I get it. I get it. I mean, I get it. I mean, parents today want a better life for their kids than they have. I get it. I did it for my kids. I bought my kids their first car. I bought them a stick so they wouldn't like it and I could sell it later. I understand it. I get it. I'm not preaching against it. I'm trying to show you that when your kid don't come up with a value system of working for what they get, they don't appreciate it. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished. He that gathers by labor shall increase." Just the teaching of knowing the value of what you have by how you got it, working for it.

When I grew up, we had chores around the house that we had to do. And we never, I mean, some families gave an allowance, you know, 50 cents a week, but here's your chore. I never got an allowance. I mean, I just realized that I was supposed to do this and I did this. And when I got a good job, I paid my, I lived in a home. I was my mom and my dad, my dad, my mom and my dad. I gave them \$40 a month for rent and board in my own home, with my own parents. It taught me some things.

VI. Hope Deferred and God's Timing

Now look at verse 12. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. Now you want to get this one in your Bible. Now doctrinally this verse is aimed at the nation of Israel who has its hopes deferred in the tribulation period, but gets his desire at the second coming and the millennium when the Messiah shows up.

Inspirationally, it's me. You see, if you're really a true born again, child of God and you're getting it all eight cylinders, the number one desire in your life ought to be for the Lord to come back. Everyone out of this hellhole called life on planet earth. You know, every day that goes by, you have that hope that today's going to be today, but it gets deferred because it's another day on this old world. But you know, all that does is get you ready for when that day finally does come, what a day that's going to be. The day that your desire cometh as a tree of life.

And I know too, I know too that, you know, we all look forward to the rapture, 1 Corinthians 15. We always talk about the rapture, look forward to building a rapture, what a great blessing that would be. And that's a great desire for most of God's people, but you know that not all of us are going to make the rapture. Some of us are going to die of old age, some of us are going to die in car crashes, some of us are going to die natural causes. As you see that desire that we have, it kind of, you kind of get bummed at the fact that it might not happen. I've had people that were

dying, older folks, and they would say to me, "Well the only regret I have is the fact that I'm not going to get to go being part of the rapture of the church." And I understand that, but you know what, I gave it to you a couple of weeks ago on Thursday night, Psalms 139, where it talks about if you take the wings of the morning, or surely the darkness cover you, you go in the rapture, or you die in your bed, you know what, the desire comes. I mean in both cases you close your eyes over on this side and you open up and there you are in glory land, man.

And you know, and yet for a child of God, there's a great practical lesson here, because many times as a Christian we have a desire of what we want to do in life, or get out of life, good things, you know. You want a certain job that you really want, but you never get it. You want a husband or a wife, and here you are, you're 25 years old, you're not married yet and you think you're past the flower of your age, you know, and the end of the world's coming. You want to try to get into a school, or you want to try to get a certain vocation in life, and it just doesn't seem to work out for you. And you know, you get your desires, you get your dreams, and you get all of those things that you hope and you want, and when it doesn't work out the way we want to, then we get down. We get heart sick, get lonely. I don't know how many times I've talked to young singles that just felt like that, you know, they're still awful young yet and they haven't found somebody and they just feel like that, you know, the end of the world's come. I get it. I've had people that have their hearts set on this job, you know, and they just keep eluding them and they get, they actually get down and really heart sick about the thing.

Listen to me. God wants exactly what is the best for you. And you have to wait on Him and keep that in your focus. I want to tell you something, getting God's best is always a hundred thousand times better than you getting what you think is your best. I'm going to tell you something else, time spent waiting on God is never time spent wasted. Don't ever get ahead of God's timing on anything. Slow down and wait for Him to move. We get to the point when it doesn't happen and we get to a certain point in our life when we don't get our hopes and our desires, we have a tendency, all of us, to jump in and make it happen. You say, "Well, how do you do that?" It's so easy because you've lost your focus. Here's what you do. Quit looking at what you want and what you don't have and start focusing on God and what you do have.

Driving over here this morning and I had that Christian station on that plays all the good songs, you know, it's on Sirius and that little song just ringing through. I just loved it all the way over. Such an easy song. It's in your hymnal and the guy was singing it, did a marvelous job on it. It was such a simple song but they had put a whole melody background to it that took a simple little song and made it great. It was simply, "Count your blessings. Name them one by one. Count your blessings and see what God has done. Count your blessings. Name them every one. Count your blessings and see what God has really done." That's the answer. We spend so much time focusing on what we don't have and forget all of the things that God has given us.

I tell people this all the time when they get down in the dumps about this or that or something didn't work out for them. My biggest function as a pastor, really, my biggest number one thing I do is simply remind people. I tell them, I said, "Come on. You've been in this church now what, four years, three years, five years, two years, a year. Have you forgotten what you were when you came here? Amen. Have you lost sight of how screwed up you really were? How messed up

you were? And look, look in this short time, the things that God has changed and I bet you don't even have them written down anywhere. In a short time of your life that you got into the Bible and got with God and gave him everything that you have, look what he has done. Thank you, Lord. Amen." Quit looking, quit looking at what you don't have. Look at what God has done for you and I tell them all the time, you know what? You need to understand, look where God has brought you to and I promise you, I don't care. Get out of the dumps. There's nothing down there. People don't throw stuff away like they used to. Get out of the dumps. Quit focusing on the negative things that you don't have. Realize where God brought you from there to here. He didn't bring you from there to here to leave you where you're at. You got to be patient. Being patient and waiting for what God has for you is a hundred billion, trillion times better than you getting involved in making it happen and making a mess out of your life.

In my day growing up, TV shows were really pretty good and wholesome. I was telling you about it the other night. You know we had Ozzy and Harriet. We had Leave it to Beaver, Eddie Haskell. We had all of those good wholesome shows that really was a parody on raising kids and life, but they always did the right thing. A lot of them had Bible verses that I remember watching Gene Autry one time when he was a kid, was on television. After the end of the show, he actually rode up on his horse and pulled up sideways and spoke to the kids. He says, "Now kids, Gene Autry is going to tell you, you obey your parents and you listen to your parents and Gene Autry is going to tell you, you read your Bible kids on TV." There was a show that was always our favorite and I've thought about it. It was a show simply called Father Knows Best. And it was a show about kids growing up who always got their ideas about things and they had a very wise father who always brought them back to the reality and at the end of the show, it was very obvious that father knows best. And for you and me as a child of God, your heavenly father knows best. And all you do in your life, your job, who you have a relationship with, who you marry, what you do with every aspect of your life, my advice to you, Proverbs 13:10, be well advised. Get the principles. Learn and get the principles down from a book on everything you ever want to do.

Proverbs 11:14

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Now that's not Dr. Phil. That's not your psychologist or your psychiatrist or your therapist. It's not your special friend who has his own homespun philosophy of fixing problems in your life. God wrote you a book that has 66 counselors in it and it will cover everything you need in life to get you wherever God wants you to go. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it's a tree of life." Don't get focused on the downside of life. Focus on the upside of what God has given you, what he's doing in your life and be patient. Give him the time to get you where he wants you to go. There he had bound in every octopus. Father, we thank you and pray.