

Proverbs 11:10-14

March 8, 2015

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, thank you, fellas. That was great, as always. Let's go back to Proverbs 11. We have been moving through the book of Proverbs. I have been in Proverbs 11 for a little while and made the breakout a couple of weeks ago out of the first section on balance. Now we have been looking at very practical principles that the book of Proverbs so eloquently lays out as you study it.

Last week, you will remember, we looked at Proverbs 11:4-9. I showed you five very practical principles for everyday living, principles that when all put together, all of them through the Bible, they form a structure of life that really makes life a lot less complicated than we like to make it.

There is a great truth about God that I think has been lost today, and that is the truth that everybody needs to try to remember: God always makes things so simple. It is man that complicates everything that God does in every way. You remember back in Genesis that when God started it all, His plan was a garden. There is nothing more simplistic than a garden, a farm, and just living off the land. That was God's plan. But when man messed it up and he wanted to complicate it, then he goes and builds a city. Of course, if you know, the first city was built by a murderer in the Bible.

You take salvation. Can it get any simpler than what God did? God did all the work. All we have to do is to believe what the Lord said, accept it into our hearts, and the Bible says, "thou shalt be saved." But when man gets his hands on it, it has to become a religion. It has to become a baptism. It has to become some good work. It has to become only through my church, through church membership. It gets so complicated.

When God gave man the Bible, He did the same thing. He made it so simple. The Bible is written in fourth-grade English. God wrote a book that any dirt farmer in Kansas that never got past the sixth grade could read and figure out. Of course, the Bible is built around stories. The Bible is built around keywords that you learn. But when man got his hands on it, then it got real complicated, didn't it? Now it has become Bible college. Now it has become seminary. Now it becomes Greek and Hebrew lexicons. Now it becomes all of the things that God gave you the easiest book in the world, and man tries to make it complicated.

When you look at life, it is the same thing. Life is so basic and so simple as long as man follows what God says. Solomon said over there in Ecclesiastes 12:13. There are twelve chapters in the book of Ecclesiastes. The last chapter that he writes is really a conclusion of the whole book that he has laid out for us. If you know anything about the book of Ecclesiastes, what he has done in the book of Ecclesiastes is gone through all the complicated follies of man, all the philosophies that man comes up with. As the book of Proverbs says, there are many devices in a man's heart, and these are the devices that you see in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, wades through every one of them, some thirty or forty of them. He lays out all the end result of them is all worthless and goes through all of those. When he talks about life and life on planet Earth at the end of his book, he says this:

Ecclesiastes 12:13

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

That is all life is. Life in its most simplistic form is just simply following what God told us to do.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

You will remember last week, I gave you five great principles that you will want to remember. We talked about that the richest profit not in a day of wrath. We talked about how that the Holy Spirit leads and guides your steps. The steps of a good man are ordered from the Lord. We talked about the foolish expectations of the unsaved world, but also worldly Christians who come crashing down and all their unrealistic expectations at death and no hope. We talked about the righteous getting delivered out of his trouble and talked about being delivered from the mouth of the wicked, whether it be wicked Christians or whether it be wicked unsaved people, the hypocrites, as the Bible calls them.

It is some great practical material, but it is all built around one book in the Bible, the book of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs shows you two fundamental things about life: the negative and the positive. There is going to be negative and there is going to be positive in your life. The way that you get around them is simply to follow what the Word of God says.

Now today, I want to look at four more very basic concepts that we find about life. The book of Proverbs will cover it all, and by the time we get done with it, you will see. You will remember that the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs were really an introduction. The first nine chapters or so told us how to get wisdom. It told us how valuable knowledge was and told us how that understanding was the thing that we really wanted to try to get in our life. We saw in the first nine chapters or so how that discretion and discernment were absolutely vital. All of these things come from us getting the Bible and just following the Bible. Now we are actually seeing the principles in action as we come through the book of Proverbs. We are taking one at a time. I am laying them out. I am taking them and showing you how they work in your life in a negative and a positive way. I am showing you how to deal with the positive, deal with the negative, because as I said last week, negative and positive is what makes up life.

Now let's read Proverbs 11:11-14. Here is what he says:

Proverbs 11:11

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Now you see there is a negative and a positive. This is positive and a negative. This is what we find here.

Proverbs 11:12

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

Proverbs 11:13

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

Proverbs 11:14

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

Now Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You today. We thank You for everything that You have given us in our church. We thank You for the Bible that we stand on and how, Lord, we simply believe it. We follow it. We do not add anything to our curriculum. The Bible is all we have. We go to it for all the answers in life, all of the negative things and all the positive things, and we just love You for giving us a book. These are good people here today. Some of them we know have traveled a long way to come here today, and I am so appreciative of that. But, Lord, let them go home today with a blessing. May something that is said encourage them, help them make the long trip home worth the trip here. And, Lord, let them know that I am always here for them to help them in a personal way, any way that I can. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Situational Christian

Now we will begin to look at these one at a time, just like we did last week, and we will begin to come down through. Proverbs 11:10 says:

Proverbs 11:10

When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

Doctrinally, if you do not have this in your Bible, you will want to get this. Doctrinally, what you have here is the Second Coming of Christ. The city here is Jerusalem. The wicked that perish, of course, is the Antichrist. That is what the verse is saying in a doctrinal way.

But the verse for us has a very good practical side to it that I want you to see today, and one that you will see a lot if you deal with people or you are looking around and working with situations. You will see this all the time. I have found that most Christians today, and really Christianity today, but both Christians are what I call situational Christians. They are just like the verse I just read. Their happiness is always built on the situation that they are in. When it goes well, they are very happy. When it does not go well, they are not very happy. As long as it is a good scenario and it works to their advantage, they are very happy and they rejoice. As long as they get what they want and nobody ever challenges them on it, there is no issue.

You see a lot of kids like this with parents. I have seen kids that parents had that they were really good kids until you had to discipline them. I mean, they were respectful, everything right up to the point that they did something wrong or you had to correct them or you had to deal with them

on an issue. Then you see that they are not happy about everything in life, and you see where you are beginning to have some problems. These people's lives are definitely based on the positive and never the negative. Their comfort zone is very narrow, and they do not do well when it gets threatened. In most cases, their life revolves around them, and so they want their comfort zone around them. It goes without saying that the older a person gets, the more they become that way. So anything that would threaten that, there will be some issues.

In churches, I have seen them all my life. They are fine, all the time they are great, until you have to deal with them on an issue, and then you will see that there is no rejoicing or shouting anymore. They are the kind of people that are situational Christians. Their whole joy of life, just like that city, their whole joy and happiness is based on everything going well. People like this are the infamous church hoppers that we hear so much about. They bounce from church to church. They start with one church and they go there for three or four months or maybe a year. Everything is great. "Oh, it is a great church, we love it." Then something rattles their windows and off you go to another church. At some point, you obviously are going to run out of churches. Then when you get to that point, and I have seen this, you just stay home. You either do not go to church, or if you are somebody, you start to say, "Well, I will just have church in my home." You just cannot find a church that is worthy of your greatness. So they struggle through all of those things because it is always built on them and their situations. Situational Christians.

II. A Different Ministry Model

Now let me begin this by saying something here. My style of ministry has never, nor will it ever be, I am afraid, will ever cater to that kind of situational lifestyle. My style of ministry is very foreign from most styles, and I want it to be that way. I do not fit the mode of what pastors should be. Many times you have introduced a major pastor and people had to take a double look. They have a hard time. I do not want to look like, you know, you can spot a Baptist preacher. If there is a crowd of 10,000 people at Disney World, he will be the one with a three-piece suit on. You can pick him up pretty clear. His wife will have the long dress. It is very easy to see. Our church does not fit the mold of most churches, and I do not want it to, Baptist churches. Most, I mean today in Christianity, the pastor in a cardigan sweater sits on a stool and he teaches the Bible. That is not my style. Now we do have two stools here, but we do not use them to sit on to teach the Bible, okay? It is a thing where that just does not work for me anyhow.

Years ago, about 19, I do not even know if it was in the 60s, probably the 60s. I forget exactly when it was. I remember reading a couple of books on it. It was around the end of the Cold War. It became clear that America's military had to change its thinking. There would be no more World War I's or World War II's. Most people who do not understand anything about history, they just hear World War I and World War II. There was a vast difference between World War I and World War II. In World War I, you measured success by yards. It was a static warfare, trench warfare. You had your trench here and a German trench maybe a hundred yards away from you. You never moved for two or three years. That was static, and there was no advancement. Oh, you went a little bit, maybe you took that trench, but then there was another one.

But in World War II, it was totally different. In World War II, it was measured in miles. When Patton's Third Army broke out of Bastogne and got the 101st out, they charged into Germany, and they were going sixty, seventy miles a day, liberating town after town after town. Those days of warfare are gone. Our military, back around the 60s when we got into Vietnam, they knew that there would be no more warfare like that. Everyone taught us that wars from this point on were going to be fragmented all over the world, hot spots, much like you see today. In the Middle East, you are seeing a great example of it. We are at war, even though we do not want to admit it, at war.

You know why it is hard for some people to understand why we are at war in the Middle East with radical Muslims who want to kill all the Western Christianity and are doing it every day over there? Because they do not wear uniforms. In World War II, you had the 12th Panzer Division, you had the Krakow, the 335th Infantry Division. They do not have divisions over there. They do not have armies like they used to have. Nobody wears a uniform. You cannot tell the good guys from the bad guys. If there is any time to buy bumper stickers and pass them out that says, "Kill them all and let God sort them out," it would be the day and age we live in. It is very confusing in war today. It is a situation where you do not know who the bad guys are. There are no armies, there are no companies, there are no battalions, there are no divisions. Everybody is moving fluidly all through the region over there.

It was in light of things like that, that they saw coming out of Vietnam, that the army changed its whole philosophy. They took the famed 82nd Airborne Division, which is a very famous airborne group, and they added to that four Ranger companies, and they developed what came to be known as the Rapid Deployment Brigade, about a thousand guys. It was a highly mobile, rapid response combat team. It was a thousand guys that they could take in less than twenty-four hours, drop any place on this planet that they could solve and get into any conflict, deal with it. They were experts in what they did with pinpoint precision. They were a surgical strike team, and they absolutely could be anywhere in twenty-four hours where a situation was boiling up because they knew that there would never be any more wars like the wars that we fought.

I remember reading that years ago, and I thought to myself, "You know what, I always thought that was the right way to build a church." Forming a group of people into a team that could be dropped by God in any scenario, in any situation, to get the job done wherever. Whether it be in Wichita, whether it be in Monmouth, Illinois, whether it be in Lincoln, Nebraska, no matter where it would be, anywhere around the world. Now it goes without saying that you cannot do that with ordinary Christians, Christians who are situational in their lifestyle.

III. Quality Over Quantity

I had to laugh this last week, and I do not know if you caught it or not, but the Prime Minister of Israel, Netanyahu, spoke before Congress. He came over here, and he spoke. To me, I thought it was probably the single greatest speech I had heard probably in the last twenty years of my life. It was absolutely incredible. But the response to it was exactly what I expected. The Democrats, of course, did not like him coming over here. They felt like he was going to infringe on what the President was doing with the people in the Middle East to get them not to get a nuclear weapon.

So they all downplayed it. The Democrats, many of them boycotted it, and I watched the response when it came back, and I thought to myself, "That is absolutely so typical of where we are at today."

A whole group of Democrats were standing there, and they were giving a response, and they talked about it being very theatrics. "He got an Academy Award." They talked about that he was demeaning in his speech, and one of them said, "Who is he to come to this country to lecture us on terrorism?" Who is he? Let me tell you who he is. For the last thirty years of his life before he got into public service, he was head of his Israeli Special Forces Group that ran more counter-surgeries into the Middle East than any other group.

Back in 1976, or maybe it was 1978, I cannot remember exactly when it was, when they had the great, if you remember down in Uganda, 1976 it was, Idi Amin. Some Muslim radicals had hijacked a French jet that had a lot of Jewish people on it. Flew it into Uganda in Africa and held them prisoner at the airport. They wanted members of the PLO, the Palestinian Liberation Army, to be set free, or they were going to kill all the Jews, which was about 150 if I remember right. They let all the other people go, but they held the Jews hostage, and they wanted them to turn over all these PLO people, and they were going to let these people go.

Israel does not negotiate with terrorists. You know what they did? They put together a surgical strike team that flew out of Israel in the middle of the night, flew 2,500 miles, never refueled with anybody, never told anybody, and in the dead of night, they landed in the Uganda airport and in the dark night taxied way off to the side. They had a car in there and a guy dressed like Idi Amin, and the surgical team came out and took those guys out, got every one of the hostages. I think they lost four, and they got them on the plane. They took them out before anybody even knew what happened. Benjamin Netanyahu's brother was the key commander that was killed on that raid, the only casualty they had.

That man has fought terrorists for forty years of his life. He was a member of the special forces commando team that had at least a hundred raids into those places. He has fought in four of the six wars that they have had. He is like the Joshua of the day in Israel. Who is he to lecture you? Who sits in an air-conditioned office, who never got outside her office one time and served a day in the military? I will tell you who he is. He is somebody you ought to listen to. He has been where it is at, and he knows what it takes. It is situational politics, or like situational Christians. It takes men and women who want to be the best in Christianity now. It takes men and women who want to be the best to do the work, to get to be the best. It takes highly motivated individuals.

Most pastors, they want large attendances in their churches. I understand that. That has always been true. They want a church of a thousand or two thousand. They want to have some great monument built on themselves that they can stand around and say, "Look what we are doing." Well, it is obvious that God is not doing it, so you are doing it. But in my thinking and my own style of ministry, I will take quality over quantity anytime. Just like the whole U.S. military cannot get a specialized job done, big churches cannot get it done either.

You take our church. I never planned to run 600 or a thousand people. That was never my goal, will never be my goal. Right now, if we get everybody together, we probably got about 250

people in our church. I think the Bible is very clear back in the Old Testament that the Bible tells you that the effective range of a church, the maximum, is about 400 people very clearly. You get a thousand people or 800 people, you know what you get? You get 200 people doing the job and 800 people going along for the ride. I will take 200 to 300 people who are doing the job anytime. The smaller number, the closer the relationship, the better hands-on training.

Just like that special reaction force that could be anywhere in the world, I want to train God's people to be anywhere that God wants to drop you to get the job done, whether you are in a group or whether you are by yourself, but you have the self-confidence, the self-discipline, and the self-sacrifice to be able to get that job done. In miniature today, there is no place in my mind for situational Christianity. We need to be trained hard. We need to live hard. We need to be able to do hard things.

Back in the Old Testament in 2 Samuel 23, one of my favorite stories, and I have always thought that this was the great key to building a church. It is a chapter that deals with David's mighty men of valor. It was very clear that you had the armies of Israel, but that you had a special group that were getting the job done in a greater way than the whole army could. I have always thought that that story is one of the greatest keys to building a church as far as a philosophy and a strategy.

Now I understand not everybody is going to make the cut. I am always on the prowl. I am always looking for every man or woman, young kid that comes into this church to check it out. While you are checking us out, I am checking you out because I am always on the prowl. I am always looking for anybody who has one ounce of leadership ability. I am always looking for anybody that has that extra edge that puts you into the elite category, that you are not situational in your life, that you will get trained. You will get the Word of God. You will get everything that you need.

When the Navy SEALs, who are probably America's greatest reaction team that we hear so much about with the famous SEAL Team Six, who got Bin Laden and all that, they go through a horrendous training period. It is a tremendous thing called "BUD/S Week." Down there you will find that they put them through. The first week is absolutely horrendous. They do that to try to get them to quit. If you would go to any BUD/S training center down there and you would look at that first week, by the middle of the week, and certainly by the end of the week, you know what you would find? When they have their formation along the line, they all wear helmet liners, and they are all painted with a number on it. That is their class number. You would see those helmets all lined up there on the line. You know what they do? When they cannot take it anymore, when the tightening gets too tough, when they realize that they wanted to be a SEAL, but they did not have the inner courage to be able to be one, they did not have the self-discipline of determination, the pain got too great, the challenge became too much. You know what they do? They all get into formation, and they give them a chance. They take that helmet off, they lay it in that long line of helmets, and they walk over to a big old bell, and they ring the bell. You know what that ring of the bell says? "I quit." "I do not have what it takes to be what I want to be."

Boy, in Christianity over the years, there are a lot of God's people that ring the bell. A line of helmet liners goes for miles. It takes somebody special to be able to do that. It takes somebody, and you know, and it does not matter. It does not matter how old you are. It does not matter how healthy you are. All it matters is the determination and the motivation and the attitude that you have. That is all that matters. That you are going to be everything that God wants you to be. That you are not going to be a normal Christian. You are not going to be a situational Christian. You are going to allow God to train you, make you, mold you into everything that God wants you to be so God can put you anywhere, at any time, in any place, and get the job done.

You have to build a church from the inside out. I would much rather have two, three hundred, four hundred people who were, that 360 of them were on fire for God, ready to go, could go anywhere. You will get more done with that than all of the fluff. That is why I never put a sign out for this church. There is one out there, but you cannot see it. I am the guy that planted a tree in front of it so you could not see it. I never put a sign out. All the people around here that went, a couple of them came to me, got to be careful that nobody is upstairs, a couple of them came to me a couple weeks ago and said, "Well, I am really mad at Larry." And I said, "What is that?" Larry owns the place. He said, "They will not let me put a sign out." And I think we ought to all get together and talk to Larry about putting a sign up. I said, "Well, count me out. I do not want a sign."

You know what happens when you get a sign? All the people driving up and down Florida Highway, they just got mad at the last church or the last pastor, or looking for a new church and a new pastor so they can get mad at. You know why you are here today? You got here because of no sign. You got here because nobody knocked on your door. You got here today because God brought you here today, one way or the other. He must think you got something special. He would not have brought you here. Now I realize that God looks inside all of us and He sees what is special. That is never the issue. The issue is, can you look inside yourself and see what is special?

Look at Christianity. They are like that verse. As long as everything goes great, I am fine. The moment their world gets shaken, it never ceases to amaze me. It just never does. It never ceases to amaze me how God's people are all relaxed to their circumstances. They come to the place where I believe that when you take a people and you train them from the inside out and you teach them everything that they need to know, you teach them to be flexible. You teach them to be adaptable. You teach them to be compatible. You teach them to be durable. You teach them to be flexible. There will be time in ministry where you get bent but you do not get broken. You learn to adapt. You have to adjust to every situation. You have to realize that the situation is not going to change for you. You have to change for the situation.

Compatible. Be able to work with others, whether they are sixty, they are fifty, they are forty, or they are twenty. The idea is ministering together. Everybody has something that is special, durable, getting beat up, coming back for more, never quitting. No way I am ringing the bell. No way my helmet liner is going up there. I will take all they can. When I cannot take it anymore, I will find the strength to take some more. That is what Christians need today. Every Christian

cross-trained to work together or work alone to do the job, not based on the situations of life but based on self-sacrifice, self-denial. Today, not many people can do that.

I want you to know this. When you commit to work with me in this ministry, I will put you in every bad situation I can find. I will let you get out there in circumstances and situations, and I will let you, I will always keep my eye on you, and I will not let you fall, but I will let you dangle for a while. I want to see what you are made of. I want to see how you respond. I want to see how you do what you need to do. I want to see how you take what I have been teaching you and learning and do something with it. I do not care if your situations are stupid stuff that you cause yourself or stuff that you are not responsible for. I want to see how you deal with it because it determines whether you ring the bell or your helmet goes along the line. Whiners and wannabes need not apply. Everything we do, every level of training, there is nothing more getting us ready for the next challenge that God will give us. At the end of the day, everybody online, and that is 250 or 300 or whatever it may be, will put 2,000 to shame any day of the week.

Now, a lot of people when I talk like that, they say, "Oh, there he goes again." Yeah, here I go again. But you know the principles found in David's mighty men of valor. You go back and study it because those guys were special, because those guys applied themselves, because those guys were a cut above the rest. One guy killed 800 men. You think he was just blowing smoke like you think I am doing? I put some of you up against the very best in this country when it comes to the Word of God. Because you are, I look back there in Daniel 1, when Daniel was taken into captivity. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to make him like all the other people in the world in the kingdom, and he wanted to feed him a diet. And he said, "Hey, you know what? Just let us keep staying in the book. Just let us keep eating what we eat and doing what we do with God." At the end of a period of time, "Put our people up against your people." And he did. Worst decision he ever made in his life. At the end of the day, when they put the test between the Hebrew children and Babylon people, they were ten times better. You know why? That is what the Word of God will do for you. That is what self-discipline will do for you. It will make you better. It will make you stronger. It will give you what is missing today in Christianity. That is the courage to stand and hold the line in these last days.

Most of you do not know. I always all my life, I have always enjoyed reading stories of great men in great military battles and watched and looked between the lines of what got them through when it did not get somebody else through. There is a story of a guy by the name of Colonel Pat Flint. They called him Patty Flint. He was killed six weeks after the Normandy invasion. He was 56 years old when he was killed. He is a colonel of the 39th Infantry Division Regiment. He was riding point on a tank at 56 years old. When he was riding point on that tank, he was leading his whole company, his own regiment up against a hedgerow of Germans. He was in the front leading them at 56 years old when everybody else was in the rear with the gear. He was out in front. A sniper killed him on that day. He was an incredible guy.

At one point in his life when he took over the 39th Infantry Division, on his own helmet one day he had painted and stenciled a little design. It was A-A-A with a long bar and then a zero. He showed up at the parade that morning, and all of his subordinates looked at him, and everybody

looked at on both sides of his helmet, A-A-A-0. One of them said, "Colonel, what does that mean on your helmet today?" And he says, "It is going to be the new motto of our division. It stands for anything, anytime, anywhere, bar nothing." Now if you think I made that up, I am prone to making things up. I got this from a guy by the name of Boffman. He is dead now. He was in the 39th Infantry Division. You see this was the original net, had not been touched in 65 years. You see that net, you know what you see? You see the stencil, A-A-A bar zero. That was the motto. That ought to be the motto of every Christian. That ought to be the motto of this church. That ought to be what we stand for. That when we train ourselves, when we get ourselves to the place where we are ready to do something, that it is for God, anything, anytime, anywhere, bar nothing.

Some of God's people will be fine, but when issues come up, they get mad about it. You know a great example of that in Genesis 4 with Cain and Abel? Cain is a great picture of a situational Christian. In Genesis 4:5, they bring their offerings to the Lord. He brings to the Lord. He is as happy as can be. He goes, El Camino back truck backs up with all of his fruits and vegetables on it. He lays them on there on the ground and he says, "Oh, what a great day. This is the day the Lord has made. Thank you God for this great blessing. Here is my offering." God says, "I cannot take it. That is the wrong offering." That situation changed everything about him, didn't it? God looks at him and He says, "Why has thy countenance fallen?" He says, "You did not accept my offering." He says, "No problem. I will give you the benefit of the doubt. You missed Sunday school that morning. They taught that lesson. I will tell you what. You go get the right offering and bring it to me, and I will accept it. No problem at all." But you know what happened in Genesis 4:8? He rejects God's offer. He gets angry over his situation. He kills his brother. In Genesis 4:16, the Bible says he changes churches. He left the presence of the Lord to find a new church. He goes down and starts a city and builds a church, the First Baptist Church of Nod. That is where he goes. He says, "It is not in the Bible." It ought to be. Because that is what happened with situational Christians.

IV. The Mouth of the Wicked

Now look at Proverbs 11:11.

Proverbs 11:11

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Great principle here. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 9:18:

Ecclesiastes 9:18

Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

Now this is the single reason right here to build your church tight and lean and well disciplined to the principles. It never ceases to amaze me, and I have seen this phenomenon in every church I have ever been associated with, no matter what. Many times I have gone to preach, and I have seen it. I held revivals for them, and I have seen it. I have been in the Bible conferences with them, and I have seen it. I have seen it all my life. It is true to the hundreds of times in my 44

years in the ministry. You can have the hottest game in town in your church. People coming and getting saved, and God's blessing all over the place, and God's DNA in everything. I have been part of some of the greatest revivals that I have ever seen in my life. I have been part of some of the greatest Bible conferences where God came down and heaven filled your soul, brother, if you were there. And yet there will always be some people that will only see the negative in anything. Now I understand there is negative in everything, but there is also positive in everything.

I had a lady one time, and I just finished preaching, and somebody else was preaching, and people were getting saved, and it was a great time. I was sitting back there wiping off my sweat and cooling down, and they were singing a song and a break, and a lady came up to me, and she said, "Well, Brother Alexander, I enjoyed your message." And I said, "Well, thank you, ma'am." "But I want to tell you there is a lot of things wrong with it." I wanted to say, "Ma'am, forty people just got saved. God's spirit came down and empowered this place like I have never seen in my life, and all you can focus on is what you do not like." That is situational, see. God's people like that. Mouth of the wicked. That is just the way it is. They will never focus on the positive, only the negative. They could not tell you the name of the last ten people that got saved in their church if you put a gun to their head. But boy, they pick up the dirt better than a vacuum cleaner.

I always give tribute to those Christians. I love hardware stores. There is something about a hardware store. I love the tools. I love all, I do not know anything about them, but I love being in a hardware store. You get all the bolts and all the nuts. Everything lined up. Everything you could ever want. But I always pay tribute to these people because every time I go to a hardware store, I always walk down the vacuum cleaner line and stop for a moment where they sell the Dirt Devils. Have a moment of silence for them. It is like the lady that traded her vacuum cleaner for a phone because you could pick up more dirt with a phone than she could the vacuum cleaner. The reason they are that way, bless their hearts, Proverbs 11:11, is to overthrow what God is doing by the mouth of the wicked. Their life is so negative in every way, and they need negativity to survive. They are like a vampire who needs blood. They are like the walkers on The Walking Dead who have to have flesh to survive, and they have to live in the flesh to survive.

Now this is why you build your church on a strong elite status. You get eighty to ninety percent of your church on a wartime footing, ready to go on the edge, trained, believing the principles, using the principles, who are trained to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, like 2 Timothy 2:3 says, and you will want the majority of your church on fire and in tune. It limits the mouth of the wicked. Their circle of friends like them, the wicked, becomes very limited, and they get clobbered by the troops, spiritually so to speak, and they just do not have the supply to be able to survive.

Now look at Proverbs 11:11, the last part, "the mouth of the wicked." We have seen this all through Proverbs eight or nine times now. We have been told that out of a righteous man's mouth will come righteous things, and out of a wicked man's mouth will come wicked things. It is always the righteous, the men and the women who do the work of God, who will hold the line and get the work done. When you build a mentality of toughness and ministry based on the principles, based on self-discipline, self-sacrifice, putting yourself aside and helping others, build

that elite team of men and women who will go anywhere, do anything, at any time, bar nothing, you get done. It is a foreign concept in most churches today, certainly with most of God's people.

I just say this, if you listen to a CD on here someplace and you listen to this and you do not like what I just said, hey, just come on over. Try some of these people on for size. They will beat you bloody. Most of God's people today cannot even grasp what I just said, but that is okay because in my life, in ministry, all I do is work my way through a hundred people to find five or six that can make the cut. Everybody else can ring the bell. See, I am absolutely sure today, even though the world we live in is a mess, I am absolutely certain of this one fact. I still believe, just as Jesus said back there with Elisha when Israel was in apostasy and Elisha thought he was the only one doing the job, God says, "Get a life, man. I got 7,000 people out there who have not bowed their knee to Baal." I believe in this effeminate, messed up, worthless Christianity today, there are still some men and women who want to be what God wants them to be. I thank the Lord every day for God bringing them to me. I really do. I just thank the Lord for it when He does it.

V. Understanding and Talebearing

Now look at Proverbs 11:12.

Proverbs 11:12

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

Now, this is one of the great principles that you will ever see for yourself. "He that is void of understanding despises his neighbors." Many times somebody is going through something, some deep trial, or they are faced with some tremendous, terrible issue in their life. If we are honest, we have all had things in our lives that we are not proud of. Every one of us could look back, and there are things that you would not want to be publicized. We are glad that God forgave us, and God forgives people like that, but we are never willing to give that same grace and that same forgiveness that God gave us to other people. That is the way we are.

Now the verse says a man void of understanding, he will judge that person immediately, especially if he does not like the person. But the man of understanding, he will keep his mouth shut about it. He will let the Lord reveal the truth of the matter. He will let God deal with it. He will talk to God about it, but he will not talk to everybody else about it. Proverbs 18:13 is a great verse that says:

Proverbs 18:13

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

Basically, there are two sides to every story. Many times when people get into helping somebody or dealing with somebody, they just believe what that person tells them. I have never met a person in my life, maybe in the sake of three or four, that when they told me their side of the story, they gave it exactly that there was not a bias to help them out in some way, shape, or form. I am not saying they did it on purpose. I am just saying that is survival of human nature. If

anything I have learned out there, I am smart enough that I do not just take what somebody tells me. If I got an issue where somebody says, "Well, he did this," or "She did this," it is easy to get enraged, especially if you like this person, but do not like that person. Does not bother me. I love them both. I will come to the place that I will never take one side without sitting down with the other person and finding out both sides. That verse there, if I had the time this morning, I would have every one of you write it down on a piece of paper and pass it to the person to your right, take it home with you.

But you see, when we have an axe to grind against somebody, because we are not biblical, we love to get all the negative one-sided stuff put out by the wicked crowd who take it to each other instead of taking it to God. You remember that Proverbs 6:16, the six things that God hates, the seven with an abomination.

Proverbs 6:19

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

I have watched these hypocrites for four decades. What they call sin in your life, what they call a terrible sin in your life, and they judge you for, but when it into their own lives or their kids' lives, well, now it is a shortcoming. It is just a mistake. Just a lack of judgment. It is just a weakness. You see, if you have wisdom and understanding, you know that many times there are many elements that make up a tragedy in somebody's life. If they are saved, they are your brother and sister in Christ. Yet how many times I have seen God's people rejoice over a brother falling or a sister falling? They revel in their tragedy. It does not matter to them who is right or wrong or what the truth is. Lifting up the fallen is just not very popular today.

Listen, the fall of a brother or a sister in Christ should make us weep instead of sneer. It should break our hearts instead of laughing, talking about it, making jokes about it, making sport about it, posting it on Facebook like we have got some great news. You like Christ, are we? These sanctimonious hypocrites, well, let me tell you something. Jesus dealt with every sinner and sinner on this planet, didn't He? He dealt with thieves. He dealt with drunkards. He dealt with harlots and fornicators. He dealt with crooks, and He dealt with murderers. Most of all, He dealt with the most vile people you ever saw. That would be me and you. He never did to us what God's people do to other God's people.

Now let me say this. I have got to clarify something here. I understand that there are some really wicked things and some really wicked people out there. I get it. Sometimes by design, I have met some of God's people that I can only describe them as pure wickedness. They are out to hurt you. I call it the Absalom Syndrome for those of you in people ministry, you know what I am talking about. But that is a very small percentage in your life. You will know that there will be people that you deal with, like Paul said, that you have got to mark them. You have got to set them outside the church. You have got to name them. You have got to protect your church from them. Sometimes you have got to protect your children from them.

But the truth is every man or woman in that Bible at some point was a terrible sinner. A lot of them did some terrible things after they got right with God. Yet we are so quick to set all those

things aside. Somebody says, "Oh, I love the Psalms." Really? "Especially the ones that David wrote." Really? You are with your wife? "Well, my Apostle Paul is my greatest example of life." Yeah, well, he did disobey God and cut his ministry short and wound up in prison. "Well, I love the Apostle Peter." Really? He denied the Lord three times. "Well, I love Solomon." Well, he destroyed God's kingdom. Strange, isn't it? We will look past all the things the people did in the Bible, and they really did not do anything more than any of us have done. But we will give them a pass because it was a long time ago. But we will not give each other a pass. That is just the way God's people are today. Proverbs is a great book.

Now look at Proverbs 11:13.

Proverbs 11:13

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

If you have got a secret, my advice to you is never confide it to anybody else, even if it is one person, because then it is not a secret anymore. It is only a secret when you have got it, or you and God have got it. There are some verses in the Bible that they just do not need any explanation. I can save a lot of time on this one because this one needs no commentary. This one, like so many verses in the Bible, is so clear. This nails everybody. You either do it or you do not do it. You are either one or the other. You are either a talebearer to reveal the secrets or you are a faithful that conceals the matter. There is no in the middle here on this one.

Here we are. The verse says, "A talebearer revealeth secrets." Now, a tale implies a falsehood. It is equivalent to a story. Even though it may have some truth to it, it will always have enough untruth in it to disqualify its carrier as being a truth-bearer. When a man of a faithful spirit, he lets things pass that will not meet the six biblical requirements of speech when it comes in regard to another person. The Bible gives you six clear principles to follow that you have your speech.

➤ Here is the acid test of who we really are. God's people will simply fall on one side or the other of this. Now, here is your conversation checklist. Before you say anything or you get involved in a conversation with somebody about something, now I understand that when you are working with somebody in counseling, I get all that. I am not talking about that. I am talking about the dirt devils. You ever notice those little vacuum cleaners are red? Somebody knew their Bible.

➤ Here is the first thing. This first thing you ask yourself:

➤ Now, here is the second thing. You say, "Well, it is true." All right, great. Here is the second thing:

➤ Third thing:

➤ The fourth one:

➤ Now the next thing he says, and these last two are really good. A good rule of a man's honesty and courtesy would be to follow these next two steps. This will be number five and number six.

➤ Anybody know who Bob Ford was? Raise your hand. Anybody who Bob Ford was? I knew Jimmy. I knew you would. Hang on. I am going to let you tell me here in a minute. Anybody know who Bob Ford was? I love it. I love it. Jimmy, who was Bob Ford? He was the man that shot Jesse James. He was the man that shot Jesse James. How many home runs did he hit in the first inning? He is a baseball. Knows every statistic. Used to win thousands of dollars going on top shows winning. Jimmy is a mind when it comes to baseball. Anyway, he knew Bob Ford. Now, it is no big deal that you did not know Bob Ford. But Bob Ford was the man who shot Jesse James. Do you know why? Who knows who Melvin Purvis is? We got one back here. Anybody else? I guess I am in the wrong generation here.

➤ But you know why nobody knows who Bob Ford is? You know why nobody remembers Bob Ford? Because Bob Ford was a coward. You know why Bob Ford was a coward? Because he shot Jesse James in the back. You know when he laid out his story of what he did? He told the story that there was no way he was going to take Jesse James on face to face. He said, "If I had to take Jesse James on face to face, I would have been dead. Jesse was faster, he was a better shot, he was quicker than I was, and there was no way that I was going to try to go gun to gun with him face to face with him because he would have killed me. So I had to get him killed because I wanted a reward. So you know what I did? I shot him in the back as a coward." That is why nobody remembers Bob Ford because he was a coward.

➤ Now let me make the practical application for you. Most people that have a problem with you or with me or anybody, they are cowards. You know why? Because they will never come to you face to face. They are like Bob Ford. They are just going to shoot you in the back. That is the way they operate. That is the way he operated. Of all the famous outlaws in history, Jesse James, especially in our state Missouri, nobody knows who Bob Ford was because he was a coward. Cowards will always shoot you in the back. Never say anything about a person's private matters in his life that they will not first say to that person's face. You know how it goes in the West. The clock hits twelve. Strap on your guns. Call them out on the street. Let the whole church be there. "You did this! You are the only of this! You are a heretic! You are this! You are not! I am calling you out!" Never happened. No, you are just like Bob Ford. You just shoot them in the back.

- Now the sixth thing:
- You know, Facebook, and I know there is a lot of good things on the computer, and I know there is a lot of good things for Facebook, but there is one side of Facebook that reminds me of what I see on restroom walls. I just got to be honest with you. Over the last couple of years, these idiots thought they could post anything about anybody. Now I think it was last year I just read there were over 35,000 lawsuit, libel cases, because people are coming to find out that you are responsible for what you put on there.

VI. The Multitude of Counselors

Now look at Proverbs 11:14.

Proverbs 11:14

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

Now this is the common truth, as most of the proverbs are, that before a man decides a course of action, he should get all the facts, both sides, if it affects him in any way or any of his business. You never get the true picture of something without the whole story. People tell the story biased. You see it in newspapers all the time. A particular newspaper will have a particular bias, or whatever story they write, they will write it with their particular bias. That is just the way it works.

But in another context, we all have choices and decisions to make, don't we? Sure we do. This verse is used 99% of God's people, like this: "Well, I have something I need to deal with. I have a decision I need to make. I have a choice I need to make. So here is what I will do. I will call out five or ten different people. I will get everybody's opinion. I will lay it out and get everybody's got the say. And when I will find the one that most suits me, that is the one I am going to take." That will always lead to a disaster.

Now I have got to say this. When it says here "where there is no counsel is," and "there is safety in the multitude of counselors," he is not talking about your therapist or your psychiatrist. He is not talking about some Christian counselor. He is not talking about some good friend who has a homemade solution for your problems. No. God gave you a book of 66 counselors. This is the book of life, and it has in it every issue that you are ever going to struggle with. The Word of God is your 66 counselors. Men who wrote these laid out every scenario and situation that man would face, find himself in all through life. Each counselor will specialize throughout his book in many different issues, like Job, like Psalms, like the Song of Solomon, like the Proverbs, like Ecclesiastes, like Romans, like 1 and 2 Timothy, like Philemon and those books.

Sixty-six counselors have written these books from the guideline of the three greatest counselors the world has ever seen: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. They have been written under their inspiration. They form the absolute truth of life in everything you will

encounter. There is never a problem. There is never a situation. There will never be an issue in all of life that Dr. Grace cannot fix.

We have our people ministry. Some of you came yesterday. I invited you in because we were going to do a great study on biblical format of depression. We had a great crowd there. But now you better understand and see what it is all about. After laying the groundwork of dealing with people, cause and effect, we just started in Genesis and started working through every scenario that the counselor of that book gives us. We are up to First Kings now, I think. We are just going through at each book as the counselor of that book lays out his thesis on the cause and the effect. That is what we are following. That is what we are teaching. That is what we are trying to get you to use when you work with people. When you have an issue with a person, it is these counselors who tell you how to rightly deal with it. If you have an addiction, it is these 66 counselors that will show you how to break it. If you have a struggle in your walk with God or a struggle in a relationship or you are lonely or you have no friends, it is these counselors who get you through it all and show you how to fix it. If you have an issue with your children, it is these guys who provide the answers to your situation. If you have a problem with marriage issues, you do. It is Dr. Grace that will get you through, that will show you every scenario. It shows you everything that you need to understand, of understanding both sides of the situation. If you have a stronghold in your life, it is these 66 counselors that will break the chains of that stronghold.

But it all comes down to you. The book of Proverbs is about a wise man and a foolish man. It is about a man who takes the things of God and a man who will not. You either make God's counselors your absolute authority by the principles, or you will keep getting it from your friends and keep getting into trouble more and more in most cases as you just spiral down with it. Trying to mix the two will never work. It will never work. That Bible says that life is simple. It is not complicated. Everything that God has done and given man, He has made as simple as it can be. It is man who likes to take the basic simple things of God and make it complex.

We started a couple of weeks ago, or last week I guess it was, when we looked at the study of Naaman. Naaman, the great lesson that comes out of that, you know what Naaman? You have got to do it God's way. You cannot do it your way. The way you have been doing it all your life has not worked. Now you have got to change, and you have got to do it God's way. These are some of the most practical everyday principles, the basic fundamental issues that will guide you through any issue in life. Every week we just keep breaking down a little bit more. We get a little more down to it. We see the very good, clear, practical applications to it.

VII. Hold the Line

When I go back to what I said and make no apology for it, I want to build the best, strongest, elitist group of men and women that will stand on that. That will stand on that book, that will know how to use it, that will know how to read it, that will know how to love it, and to do everything with it that God wants it. We do not have a lot left.

You know in the military there are a lot of orders that you have to follow. The structure and the discipline, whether it makes it or not, is based on somebody following orders. Many times in a

combat situation when you are out there all by yourself and you find yourself in a situation where there is no air. There is no air support coming. There is nobody helping. You are on your own. You are left to yourself. You may have a squad or a platoon of 200 guys or 100 guys out there, and you are surrounded, and there is no way you are going to get out of this thing. For a combat soldier, the worst order that he ever hears, that he ever comes down the line, because he knows at that point he is not getting out and it is not coming in and you are going to have to stand and fight. The thing that he dreads hearing is that order coming down the line. I mean when the flares are going off and the tracers are zipping over your head and they are coming over the wire and you have got no place to go, and they scream down that line from captain to sergeant to lieutenant to the corporal right down the line, and everybody hears the command: "Hold the line! Hold the line! Nobody is going anywhere! Stand in place and fight! Hold the line!"

That is when all the training, that is when all the self-discipline, that is when all the aching hours and the aching muscles, that is when all of the PT, that is when everything that they put you through that gave you the hardness that you are now will get you through that moment. That you hold the line. For you and for me, we are right before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe you cannot hear it. Maybe you do not want to hear it. Maybe you are so deaf to the things of God you could not hear it if He put it on a loudspeaker. I hear it coming down from my Commander in Chief very clearly. This church needs to hold the line. That is what we are going to do. You can hold the line. You can ring the bell. Does not matter to me. We are going to hold the line. I am looking for men and women anytime, anyplace, anywhere that will train themselves and be everything that God wants them to be that in these last days before Jesus comes, we hold the line.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You for our church. I thank You for the great, strong men and women that You have given me here. For our young teenagers that are coming up for their strength and their durability. I love the fact that, Lord, that they endure hardness, that they adhere themselves to hard training and discipline and self-sacrifice. They will give up of themselves to do for others and for You. Lord, they have the ability to stand in these last days and do what needs to be done. I cannot speak for any other church. I would not presume to. I speak only for this one. That I can tell You, Lord, that to the best of my ability, as long as I can stand and preach, we will train young men and young ladies to be above the rest. We will train them to be elite. We will build them into a team that will hold the line until Jesus comes back. Because that is what our job is, and that is what we have been called to do. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. For His sake we ask it. Amen.