

Proverbs 11:27

Sunday 4/19/2015

SEC: The Successful Christian Life

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want you to turn back to the Book of Proverbs, Chapter 11. As you are well aware, we have been coming through the Book of Proverbs, looking almost verse by verse, and many times word by word, really getting the principles laid out that are in there. We have been in probably one of the greatest sections in the Book of Proverbs, truly showing and helping us understand how to achieve the successful Christian life.

I have told you many times that a successful Christian is simply somebody who finds out what God wants them to do with their life and then fulfills that for the rest of their life. I do not know of any greater place in the Bible that lays it out in such detail as we have been coming through than Proverbs 11:23-31. We certainly have been coming down verse by verse, and we have seen so far four great principles that we have gleaned out of here for our lives. They really give us the balance when you try to have that successful Christian life. There are things that, even though I give them to you in a one-line sentence, you can actually take and build on for the rest of your life.

The first one was found in Proverbs 11:23, and we talked about that the first week: the desire.

Proverbs 11:23

The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

We talked about our desires in life and how that is one of the keys to understanding God. You will see another aspect of that today as we get into the verse.

We looked at Proverbs 11:24, and we learned about scattering and putting out the Word of God. In that great passage, it talks about how when you scatter and put it out, you get an increase from it. We talked about how that works.

Proverbs 11:25

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Last week, we talked about the liberal soul and the fatness of our soul. We defined all of that from the Bible. You learned last week how the Bible has one set of definitions, and the world many times has another set of definitions. So we put all that together.

Then we also saw in Proverbs 11:26 last week, the selling of the corn, not withholding what God gives you, and how it comes back to you on your head. We talked about the aspect of our head, that the head of every man is Christ, and took it right down the line and showed you how that all works. As I have already said, these verses are some of the best material in all the Bible that helps us truly to be everything that God wants us to be.

Today, we are going to again look at the next set of verses, and we will see how they will apply to us. Today we will be in Proverbs 11:27. We will not get any farther in this verse today, but I think that you will see when we are done that there is a lot in this verse.

Proverbs 11:27

He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

Let us pray. Father, thank You today and help us with all that we endeavor to do for Thee. Lord, these are good people today who have come out to hear Your word. I pray that they will get a blessing from it, Lord, that You will open up the scriptures. Father, we will look deep inside all of us today, including myself, and ask Your forgiveness for anything that we have done this week or today or yesterday that is not pleasing to You. We will put it under the blood that we might be able to receive all that You have for us. We do love You. We thank You now and praise You for our time together in Your word. We will ask it all in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

SEC: The Principle of Pursuit

Now, this verse is very simple as you read it: "He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him." It seems like at first glance it is self-explanatory. It seems like something that all of us in the Bible, when we read it, we just read that, take it for face value, and then move on. But I want to tell you, incredibly, this verse might be simple, yet it is incredibly deep and profound in its application. When you begin to take it apart and look at it and examine it as we have the other verses, you begin to see.

On the surface, the verse simply says this: Good or bad, you will get what you pursue in life. That is what the verse is basically saying. If you just want a simple application to it, that is what it is. In almost every endeavor in life, you see this principle or this verse at work. In school, you are going to have some students who excel better than others. Some are better at math; some people are terrible at math. Some people are really good at science; some people are terrible at science. Everybody kind of finds their way, and some people just excel and are better at it than others.

When I went to school, high school and grade school, it was always a tough thing for me. I dreaded the parent-teacher conferences. My prayer life took a sharp peak right before report cards came out. I was never very good in school. A lot of it, most of it, was my own fault. I was a daydreamer. The teacher would tell my mom that I was looking out the window and just looking around the room and not paying attention. A lot of it was my fault. But there were students who were a lot better than I was. They excelled more than I did. There were some things that I was good at, but I was not a straight A student by any stretch of the imagination. D's were happy for me. When I got D's, it was like heaven came down and glory filled my soul.

But you see it in sports, too. You have a basketball team; you have a starting five. Those guys will play, and the other guys will get to play every once in a while. But there are some guys that never get to play. They are on the team all the time, and they never get to play. I am not sure why that is—ability. Maybe some guys try harder than others, work out a little better. I am sure that

happens. You see it in football when they have a starting team. Even in baseball, you have a team that the guys are out there playing, and everybody else kind of warms the bench or kind of sits over there.

But it is true in everything, even in your job. Wherever you work, you know you are going to find people who excel greater than others. Some try harder, some get more done, some get promoted faster than you. I know many times it is a political thing; I get that. But it is basically fundamentally true: Some people will excel farther than others simply because they put out more than others. It is that inner desire a person has, or in some cases does not have, to be all that you can be when they pursue something in life.

SEC: Spiritual Equality and Desire

Now I know in a physical world, as we live, go to work, all the things I talked about, men and women are not created equal. Some of us have better talents than others. Some of us are better at this than others. So the idea that all men are created equal is really not a true statement. Now I must say that Colonel Colt and Smith & Wesson kind of even that out a little bit, but not a whole lot. There are some people who just have better natural skills and talents than some other people in whatever—academics, football, sports, and all areas of life. And yet even in that, you are going to see some very small cases where desire overrides talent.

My favorite movie is Rudy. If you have never seen the movie Rudy, you have got to rent it and you have got to watch it. It is a true story. Rudy Ruettiger was a guy who graduated from Notre Dame in, I believe it was 1976. He is the only player in the history of Notre Dame that got carried off the field by his team. Rudy Ruettiger was a walk-on. He had this desire to play football for Notre Dame. He was five foot nothing. He was a hundred pound nothing. He had a speck of football ability, but he wanted to play for Notre Dame so bad it was unbelievable. He walked on; his grades were not good enough to get in, so he went to Holy Cross first and got his grades up, and then he transferred over. He went out for football. He never, never, never, never, never, in four years of his time, he never got to play on the gridiron with all the great guys. He was on the second team, and they beat him senseless, but he never quit. He hung in there and hung in there and hung in there for four years. The last game of his senior year, the coach put him in for the last 20 seconds of the game. Not because the coach wanted to put him in, but because everybody in Notre Dame knew who Rudy was. You could hear in the stadium 10,000 people crying, "Rudy, Rudy!" Everybody was doing it. And out of this great dismay, the coach put him in the game, and he got to play. It is one of the greatest success stories of a man's desire. It is a great motivational movie. It is something that when I see it, it just uplifts you to give you that desire that no matter where your inabilities are, if you have the desire, you can overcome just about everything in life.

Now I said all that to make a point, and here is the point I want to make: There is no difference of ability or skill when it comes to your pursuing the Bible and the things of God. I want you to understand that. Where you may not be created equal in life, the moment you trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour, everybody is on the same playing field. If there is ever anything in my life that has captivated me, and I mean this, if anything that has fascinated me over the years,

and I have been in the ministry over 40 years, it has been watching people. It has really been a lifelong study for me. It was not something that I just decided to do one day. It just kind of came into my life as I got into the ministry, and I learned some things about the Bible. I saw my own deficiencies and what I needed to work on. When I started working with people, it became a captivating thing to me: Why some of God's people make it or are successful in Christianity and some do not.

Because unlike the world of sports or academics or anything in life, in Christianity, when you got saved, every man and every woman has the same Holy Spirit of God. Nobody got here with less of a Holy Spirit than the person sitting next to you. Everybody got the Holy Spirit of God. The Bible says that when you got saved, God gave every man a measure of grace. It also says He gave that man a measure of faith or woman. Nobody got shortchanged on that. Everybody starts out on an even playing field and has the same Holy Spirit, has the same measure of grace, has the same measure of faith, and skills or abilities or education or intelligence has absolutely nothing to do with it.

I have heard all the excuses. I have heard people tell me over the years, "Well, I have a learning disability." "I did not ever finish school." I have had people tell me every excuse in the world for not getting into the Bible or not being successful. "Well, I do not have good study habits." "I hate to read." "Well, I am not as smart as other people." "Well, I have never been inside a church all my life, so I am really at a disadvantage." And I absolutely, I hear this one all the time, "I absolutely know nothing about the Bible." You know that is exactly the qualities that you need to learn the Bible. Many times the very fears and the very excuses we have that we put forth why we cannot do it are exactly the things that God wants us to have in our lives so that we can do it.

It is incredible. William Tyndale, he lived 1494 to about 1536 somewhere in there, and he developed the second English translation. English had come into its own, and Wycliffe had done the first one in the 1300s, and Tyndale creates the forerunner of your modern-day King James Bible. It is off the same text. In fact, when the King James translators sat down and translated your King James Bible that you have in your hand, 95% of it was off of Tyndale's Bible. He put the second English Bible into English for the common man. He got a tremendous amount of flak for it. The educators and the scholars at Cambridge and all of those places in Oxford and England, they were beside themselves because here was a man who was a legitimate, quote unquote, scholar who wanted to take the Bible, which all the scholars wanted to keep to themselves, and open it up in a common language that would give every common man equal footing when it came to the Bible.

You know why? Because he understood that it was not about your intellect that got you anything with God. It was not about how much education you had. It was about the attitude of heart and a desire that you had to want to get something from God. He was looking out, he was in a conference, and they were giving him all kinds of flak. He is looking out the window at a boy that was behind a plow with a horse plowing a field. And he said, "Sir, someday that plow boy will know the Bible better than all the scholars of England." And boy, it was true.

So there may be different advantages or disadvantages in the world that we all have, but I want to tell you something: When it comes to you learning the word of God and having a relationship with God, your intellect has nothing to do with it. Your education has nothing to do with it. It comes down to your desire and your ability. Let me clarify this, do not get me wrong. If I want a lawyer and I need a lawyer, I want the smartest guy in the law school. I want a guy whose IQ in law is way above the garbage guy. If I need a doctor, I have brain surgery, which I am contemplating, you have to have some kind of, I want the best doctor I can find. I want the guy that academically was the head of his class. I want somebody who knows everything about anything better than anybody. When I go to the airport and get on a plane, I want the pilot to be the best in the flight school. I do not want like a Fudel Salvador one time, and we are all on the plane, and the pilot comes on, he has got a big old pipe, he has got one eye, he has got a patch over his eye. That is not what I am looking for. So I want to make it clear, in the world, I want the best when it comes to that.

But when it comes to God and the Bible, that is the great hairball that sticks in the throat of higher education in religion and theology: the very fact that you, as a common individual, could have a relationship with God on par with anybody on this planet. We sell ourselves short because we think that our disabilities or somebody is smarter or better or this. When it comes to salvation, you got everything that everybody else got. It is your desire.

SEC: Willingness Over Ability: The Example of Moses

Now, one of the greatest examples of this in the Bible is Moses. We think of Moses as a great leader, and he was. Moses was one of the greatest leaders that Israel ever had. But do you know that when Moses first started out, he was a failure at just about everything in life? He had all kinds of complexes. When he is down in Egypt, he is kind of torn between, he knows he is a Jew, a Hebrew, and he knows that he is in Egypt, and he is kind of caught between the two. He cannot really make a stand yet at one point or the other, and he sees an Egyptian guy mistreating a Hebrew, so he goes over there and he clobbers the guy and kills him, and then he is afraid. He buries him in the sand, and then he runs off to Midian, and he is gone for 40 years down there all that particular time.

Finally, when he meets God, the first time he met God was up on Mount Horeb, Mount Sinai. They are the same. He is up there, and God speaks to him through the burning bush. God had a job for Moses to do, and He picked Moses because Moses, He did not pick Moses because Moses was a great leader. He picked Moses because Moses was a weak leader, because God will not take a strong leader starting out and make him a stronger leader, but He will take weak people who have a desire to do what God says and make you strong. That is what He did with Moses.

He is standing there before that burning bush. That bush represented the nation of Israel. It was a bush that burned but it was not consumed. Israel has been burned down through history, but it has not been consumed. He is standing there, and God speaks to him and He says, "Moses," He says, "I want you to go to Pharaoh. I have some things that I want you to do. I want you to be the leader of My people and bring them out of the bondage of Egypt." Moses did not want to do it.

He alibied. He says, "Lord, I do not speak well. I am slow of speech. I am not the smartest guy in the world. You want me to go before Pharaoh? That is like asking you to go before Barack Obama today and tell him where he is wrong." He says, "I am not able to do that. I cannot do that." He argued with God in that burning bush. In fact, that is where the term today comes, "beating around the bush." That is what Moses did. He says, "I cannot do this, and I am not able to do this."

Out of that is the great principle for you and for me: Not one time did God ever ask Moses if he was able. God asked him if he was willing. God will never ask you or me or anybody else if you and I are able. He will simply ask us, are we willing? Because today, if you are willing, God is able. That is what He wants. He took Moses and developed him into a great leader. Moses was absolutely right when he says, "I am unable," but that is what God wanted.

I had a man in our church, and I would not tell you who he is. He is a terrible reader. He is very embarrassed about it. His great fear is that somebody in prayer group or whatever would ask him to say something or read something, and he would be terribly embarrassed about that. He came to me over a year or so ago, and he told me, he said, "You know," he says, "I have this terrible problem." He says, "I just cannot read. I do not read well at all. I cannot make..." He says, "I have just never been able to do that." I looked at that and I thought to myself, now, if anybody has a legitimate excuse after meeting with him, this guy did. But you know what he did? He came to me a couple of weeks ago, about a year and a half ago, he determined in his heart that he was going to read his Bible through one time in a year. He worked and he labored, and he came to me a couple of weeks ago, and he said, "You are not going to believe it, but I just finished my Bible reading it through in one year." It was an incredible aspect of determination. When I heard him say that and he told me that, he was so proud of himself. I was proud of him, but the downside of that is simply this: I know some of God's people right now who could read 400 words a minute, and you have never read that Bible through one time. You know what the difference between him and you is? Desire, willing, diligence.

SEC: The Mystery of Christian Growth: Diligence and Procuring

I have asked myself for 40 years, it has always been a puzzle to me why some of God's people make it and some do not. That thing about people has bugged me, I am not kidding you, over 40 years. Why two men or two women will get saved, they will have the same Holy Spirit of God, they both become new creatures in Christ Jesus. In both of their lives, old things pass away, all things become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

And yet one will grow to a sacrificial Christianity in their life, and the other will just keep his convenient Christian life. Now I am not talking about the people who have real strongholds in their life. I am not talking about somebody who is addicted to drugs and cannot get the monkey off their back, or people who are alcoholics who cannot get past it, and they have got themselves

so far down. I understand why they are the way they are. They have developed a stronghold in their life, and I will tell you, it is a struggle for them. It is a hard thing for them to break. I am not talking about them. I know why they will probably never break out.

Nor am I talking about in Christianity, wicked people. If you have been in Christianity any length of time, you know that there are some saved, born again, going to go to heaven with you, who are the most wicked people you ever met in your life. God bless them. I am not talking about that element. I am talking about good men and women that I have met in my life. Some of them I have won to Christ. Some of them I have sat down and put their marriages back together, put their lives back together. They never got into those dark times like someone who gets that real spiritual stronghold in their life. When I see them, I see great potential for God in them. But they just do absolutely nothing for Him after all that He has done for them, unless it is convenient and it does not put them out too much.

I want to tell you, I have looked at that, why one person will make it, one person will not. Hey, I know both of them have trouble with the flesh. All of us have trouble with the flesh. I have trouble with my flesh. All of us, all of them will make bad choices in life and do dumb things. I am not talking about this idea of a perfect Christian. I am talking about someone who struggled just like you and I do, has to face the issues of the flesh just like I do and you do, who make dumb choices just like I have made dumb choices. We have all made stupid decisions in life. But what really makes the difference between the two?

The Bible says that when they got saved, they got a new heart. The Bible says that when they got saved, now they have the mind of Christ.

Psalms 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

He pulls you out of the miry clay, everybody at the same time. He sets your feet upon the same rock. He put the same song in your heart. Why does one make it and the other does not? Baffled me for years. What happens? That is the \$64,000 question. That is another thing. Why is it \$64,000? Why not round it off to \$65,000? That is another thing I am working on.

But the answer to why some make it and some do not is in this very verse. Found in two words, just two little words: the word "diligently" and the word "procureth." Over the years, one of the things I have learned about the Bible is that there are some things that I simply cannot do with the Bible. Some things that I cannot teach you. There are some limitations to my abilities or really anybody's abilities when it comes to laying out the word of God. There are some things that no matter how much Bible I lay out or give you, how much time I spend one on one with

you, how much I try to help you or do help you, some things I just cannot teach you. They have to come from your own relationship with God.

Last week we talked about building the character qualities of God in your life. That is what I am talking about. As you grow, you become Christ-like, you get those character qualities in your life. There are some things that I just cannot teach you. Like I watch across here and I will see some of the acts of kindness that I see some of you people do for other Christians. Nobody ever sees it. The act of kindness I see some of you do. No TV cameras. Nobody is making a big deal about it. Nobody even ever knows about it, except the person you did something for. And maybe even they do not understand at all. But I have watched that. I have watched some of you go that extra mile for somebody when others will not go that extra mile.

I will tell you what I really see, many times I see in so many of you that uncanny ability to look at an opportunity and see it for what it is and seize upon that moment and understand that that one little act of kindness of what you are doing can do more for that person than a hundred Bible verses, because it is Christianity in action. I cannot teach you that. There is no way I can teach that. There is no book outside the Bible that contains that. It is that aspect that some of you, many of you have, because you, as the verse says, you have diligently on a seeking course for good. Diligently. To do something with what God has given you to somebody else.

You know, I am always enjoying reading stories about people who are multi-millionaires, billions of dollars, who are always giving back to their community. I think one in particular is You, You Kaufman, but the Kaufman Foundation. He made a lot of money in his life, and I do not know how rich he was, but he was substantially rich, but he never forgot where he made his money from. He never forgot the city and the town and the people who made him what he was. Long after he has been dead now, he left a legacy of his millions in dowries, in foundations, in things to help underprivileged kids, to help this, to help that, to make this city greater than it already is. When I look at things like that, I always think to myself, that is an amazing thing. And yet I want to say something to you this morning: If you are saved this morning, you have more spiritual value than You Kaufman ever had in physical dollars. What you need to do, and I would like a good lesson from him, is you need to take some of that millions of gold bullion that God has given you through the unsearchable riches. You need to leave it behind for somebody else that needs some stuff. You are a millionaire. You got everything. Your Father, you are the aristocracy of heaven. Your Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Sometimes you have to give out that thousand hills with cattle, one hamburger at a time, just giving people what God has given you.

SEC: Asking for God's Word: David's Example

You know, I had a lot of nostalgia putting this together for my own life because it brought back so many memories for me. I remember in my own life when I was very, very young and this just started, just gotten right with God. I wanted to know the Bible more than anything on this planet. I tried everything I thought was human sense to learn the Bible. Everything that I would hear somebody say. I heard somebody say one time that if you went to sleep and you played a tape and you fell asleep while that tape was playing, that you would memorize everything on that

tape. So I am thinking, man, so I got me a cassette player back then, and I would go to sleep at night, and I would put Alexander Scourby reading the Bible. I did that for six months. I never learned anything about the Bible. I got a \$200 battery bill. I was like the guy that took a steak and lobster diet, and he said, "How did you do?" He says, "I lost \$120 the first week." That is where I was at. It did not do anything for me.

I read a biography of Thomas Edison. Thomas Edison was an incredible guy. He invented all kinds of stuff. We do not know him for the light bulb. Hey, I want to tell you, he invented all kinds of stuff. I got reading in there, and I thought to myself, because it talked about how many hours he worked on stuff, I am thinking, if I could take the same deal that he has and take that same amount of hours and put on the Bible, man, that would be a great deal. So he got talking about deep sleep and light sleep. How that, if you fall into deep sleep, then you can wake up and do more because you do not really need the light sleep. Oh, I tried that. It was not until months later I found out that sucker was taking a three-hour nap in the afternoon. I was wore out, could not keep my eyes open. He said, "Speed reading course." So I took a speed reading course. It was a time in my life when I could read 600 words a minute. It did not do anything for me. I hear all these Christians talking about reading the Bible through once every 30 days. They really learned the Bible. You know, that is 55 chapters a day. I did that for two years thinking that would teach me the Bible. It did not do anything for me.

But I remember looking back at a period of time after all of that, and God used all of those failures that I had tried because I had the right attitude. I was diligent. I was just young and stupid and looking in the wrong places. So God said, "You know what? I am going to teach you a great lesson, Bob." I learned from that that it is not how many times I go through the Bible, but how many times the Bible goes through me. That was the key. I learned some things from that. I looked and sought diligently for the path to that book. I wanted it more than anything in life.

Looking back at my life, it is funny. It is kind of humorous to me. All my life people have hated me. I cannot think of a time in my life since I got into ministry that multiple people just did not hate my guts and hate everything about me, simply because I wanted to learn a book and love it and believe it and preach it. As I said last week, you want God's Word in your life and for your family? There will be a price tag that comes with that. I think that is another factor. Many times we want the Bible, but we do not want to pay the price to learn the Bible, because not everybody on this planet is going to be happy with you learning the Word of God. Very frankly, most people just are not willing to pay the price tag for it.

But you know, I am not kidding you. Never one time in my life did I ever think the price was too great to pay. Not one day in my life did I think that it was not worth whatever I had to go through. I do not know. I just wanted that book so badly that I never really thought about it much. I will tell you something else, the deeper I got into the book and the more I saw what it was, the less I cared about what anybody thought or what they did not like about the truth that it revealed. Most of the time I learned that it was the truth that the book was revealing about themselves. I found out that the focus, when you focus on that book and you diligently seek that book, it will absorb all the petty things that sidetrack God's people so easily.

God's people get their old life all out of whack of who gets to do what. Judgmental over other Christians because they do not match up to your standards. It is in every church. They get upset about what people say about them, what they think about them. It was during this process that I, too, that is when I developed many of the life principles that helped me through that all. They are really the ones that I just pass on to you. I do not get them out of a book someplace. There were things that God actually taught me as I grew up searching, my diligent search for the Word of God.

Principles like:

You cannot want somebody to do right more than they do. You know where I learned that? I learned that with Paul and the Jews. Paul got his ministry cut short in Acts 21 because he disobeyed God, and he went down to Jerusalem, and God told him three times not to go. You know why he went? He went because he wanted those Jews saved and right with God more than they did.

I have told you not to take things that people say about you or do to you, take them personal. You know why I learned that? The life of Christ. All the things that they said about Him, all the things that they did to Him, and yet He still lifted a cross and died for you and for me. Do not count yourself as some spiritual Pharisee. If you were alive back then, you would have been riding that crowd along with me, throwing rocks at Him and saying everything that they were saying. You do not fool me.

It is where I learned the Bob Ford syndrome. I told you about this a couple of weeks ago. I have got this little goofy thing that I do. I have read history so much and study. I see parallels between history and people and circumstances. So from my point of reference, as my Alzheimer's steps in, my point of reference is to always remember something by marking it with something in history that jogs my memory to it. I told you a couple of weeks ago, ask her who Bob Ford was. Nobody, I think one, two people knew who it was. Bob Ford is the guy that shot Jesse James in the back. He was a coward. So I told you that when you get into the Bible, when you get into dealing with the Word of God and people hate you for it and you have all kinds of issues because they do not like the book, cowards will always shoot you in the back. They will never take you on face to face. Bob Ford knew. He said after he shot him, "I would have never taken Jesse James on face to face because he would have won in a fair fight." So he shot him in the back, and they are cowards. The last thing that person wants to do is tangle with you face to face when it comes to that Bible, you see. Pray behind the keyboard.

Now I see some of you being developed the same way. The Word of God is everything to you. You are willing to pay whatever price you have to pay to not only get it, but to keep it. I want to tell you this diligence and procuring, as we see it here in a few moments, I want you to understand before we get to that, it is going to cost you something. I have seen so many young men and young ladies over the lifespan of my ministry lose their father and their mom because their mom and their dad hated them going to church, hated them serving God, and basically just abandoned them. I have seen some of you lose brothers and sisters because, as I said a couple of weeks ago, you may be of the same blood kindred-wise, but you are not of the same spirit when

it comes to the Word of God. You want to serve God and do something with it? They do not want to. It is going to cause you some problems. I have seen them lose a child, where the child grows up, mom and dad want to do what is right, the child wants to go the wrong way. I have seen them lose their friends. They will get all plugged into the Bible and start to get on fire for God, and then suddenly the friends around you begin to become unstable. They begin to look at you differently.

I have a simple rule I follow: "Those whom God have joined together, let no man put asunder, and those whom God have put asunder, let no man join back together." Your diligence is your desire for God in His Word that overrides the pressure to not be everything to God that He wants you to be when the expectation, I gave you this a couple weeks ago, Proverbs 11:23, when the expectation of other people is for you to be like them, and you want to be like the Lord. And yet there are others that have always been a mystery to me that will just fold up and give up, compromise so easily. That has always just been a puzzle to me.

Now in our verse here, I want you to look at a word. I want you to look at the word "procureth" because it is a great word, and it is one of the keys here. The word "procureth" means to get something by asking for it, getting something by doing something, getting something by request. To me, this is one of the great key words to it all.

James 4:2

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Philippians 4:6

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

I mean, are you kidding me? God's people ask God for everything. Some of us legit, some of us not. "God, I need a new car." "God, we need a new house." "God, I need a new job." "God, I need a job." "God on this planet, we need a good garden this year." "God, pray for our kid, pray for our family." "Lord, we pray for each other." "Lord, I pray for so and so that he might get saved." We pray for, we ask God for everything. But why? Why do we just not get it that when it comes to learning the Bible, that it is just that simple, sitting down and asking God to teach you His word?

See, I have come to the conclusion that learning the Bible solely alone is not based on study, though the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved." You have got to study.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

I have come to the conclusion that you do not learn the Bible solely by reading other men's works, though you need to do that. There are some great, incredible minds from the past and the present that you can glean extra stuff out of. It is good. But the final analysis, you learn and get the Bible down by simply doing two things diligently, and both of them are good. These two things will be the key to anybody who wants the book with such a passion that they diligently seek good, developing a time that when you and God sit down and you diligently seek Him and you ask Him for His word.

The greatest example of this in the Bible is Matthew 15:21-28, where you have the woman. Her name is not given, but she is only one of two women in the Bible who is called a great woman. Remember in that story, she comes to Jesus, and her daughter is vexed with the devil. She has got a legitimate problem. When she comes to Him, she gives Him the right title, she gives Him His Messianic—she got it down, man. And He rejects her. She goes to the disciples. She tries to get them to intercede for her. They go to Him, and she gets rejected again. So she goes a third time. The third time, the Bible says she worshipped Him, and she puts everything, and she has been rejected two times. Hey, I have met some of God's people who do not get their way one time with God and are out the door. One little disappointment with God, and boy, God is not who He says He is. This woman got rejected not just once, not just twice. She comes back the third time. And she asks Him again. I do not have time to get into the whole story, but she knew her Bible. She did what no scribe or Pharisee or Sadducee could do in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. She entangled Him in His talk, and she just pulled out an Old Testament verse and said, "Look, if You are who You say You are, You rejected me twice, third time's a charm, but this is what You promised to do if You are who You are." And He said, "You got it, lady. Great is thy faith." She was diligent. She did not quit. She did not give up. They simply were asking something of God, and they were diligent about it and going to get it. They were not going to stop their diligence until they got what God promised them.

Now here are the two incredible concepts and a real simple concept:

1. Asking of God for His word.
2. Once you get it, doing for God with His word.

When I was a young guy and I was learning my Bible, so wanting that book, I saw those two concepts in the life of the greatest man in the Bible as far as a relationship with God's word. His name was David.

Acts 13:22

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

1 Kings 15:5

Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

I told you before about the patterns coming down through life in the Bible of people. I have told you how Abraham was the friend of God. You want to learn how to be God's friend, study the life of Abraham. You want to learn how to love God's word and have God's word, study the life of David. Before Abraham was the friend of God, David had the heart of God, His word. I saw his desire to do right and to diligently seek the things of God. I looked at the life of David, put it in a capsule shell. It is a picture of your life and my life. He started out as a shepherd boy. The first time you meet about David where he really picks up a story, he is a shepherd boy. The last time you read about him, he is a king. What a beautiful picture it is of where life is going. Right now we are to be shepherd boys. We are to be feeding the flock. We are to be tending the sheep. But someday when Jesus comes back, we are going to be a king.

Oh, when I saw that, he was a man so ingrained with God's word that even when he was out of fellowship, I will tell you, there were some times he is out of fellowship. He still finds himself following Bible principles. He was one with that book. No matter where he was when he got out of fellowship, and he was several times, all it took, all it took was the man of God with the word of God, and it always brought him back to God. It gave us one of the greatest Psalms in the Bible, Psalms 51, that shows you the five things that it takes to get right with God through David's life. Hey, no matter how he deceived or manipulated his circumstances, and he did. And you know what? So do we. He is no different than I am or you are. He manipulated it at times in his life for what was for his best interest, and I do it and so do you. But at the end of his life and at the end of the book, his love for it and God, it always led him back to God.

I look at 2 Samuel 12 where he is messed up with Uriah the Hittite, killing him and taking Bathsheba for his wife and all of the things that David did and how he tried to cover that up and hide this and hide that and bring all these other circumstances in. It was a time in his life when he looked around and he said, "Well, I have done a pretty good job getting that whole thing taken care of. I got it made," but he did not. When God sent him that old prophet Nathan, and Nathan set him up and told him a little story about somebody stealing a guy's little lamb. Nathan looked at him, and David said, "Whoever this guy is, we are going to carry off his head." And Nathan pointed that bony finger and he said, "Thou art the man." He did not alibi. He did not make excuses. It smote him to his heart.

I think back at another time, he is out of fellowship, 2 Samuel 21 somewhere down in there. He is out of fellowship, and he is running from Saul who wants to kill him. David is desperate. He is a long way from God. This is what God does when you ingrain yourself in the Bible. All of us are going to get out of whack at some point or the other. All of us are going to run from the Sauls of life. He goes down there with a bunch of people, and he is down there, and he says, "Hey, Saul is after me. Saul is after me. Anybody got a weapon? I need a sword. I do not have a sword. Anybody got a sword?" And one of the guys says, "Well, we got the sword that Goliath had." And he says, "Give me that sword. That is a good one." He got that sword, and he is saying, "Now I can fight Saul, my enemies."

Now, I am just going to step outside the scriptures for just a moment and show you what I know from my life and what you ought to know from your life, what God did in his life at that point in time. He is proud of himself. He got a sword. He is out of fellowship with God. But he has got a

sword now, and he can protect himself. He is looking at that sword, and he is saying, "Oh boy, I am ready to go." And about that time, the Holy Spirit of God came down and said, "Nice sword. Whose is it? It is Goliath's. Oh, you got it now? Yeah. You are going to fight Saul with it? Uh-huh. Funny thing, David. You did not need a sword when you fought Goliath. You had Me. Now you do not have Me. So you need a sword." See where that thing goes? He had the Word of God in him so much that when he got stepped out of line, the Holy Spirit of God just brought him right back.

All of us, every one of us will have times of deception in our lives. What is the difference? What is the difference between a guy who makes it and a guy who does not? It is so simple. The real question today, when you look at this, the real question is simply this: You want to know about your deception and my deception and what makes the difference between a person who makes it and a person who does not? Here is the answer: Where is the end of our deception? When you take all week long and you get out of fellowship, and you are here this morning, and you are not where you need to be, and you know it, and you come here, and boy, the Word of God cuts you like a knife and nails you. Or you come on Thursday night, and you got your little world all planned out, and you get your little cage rattled. Or throughout the week you go on, and you got it made, and God will take something and nail you right down to the wall and say to you, "Thou art the man." Does it immediately bring you back to God? Where is the end of your deception? Or do you just continue to play it off like it is no big deal?

Hey, when the Word of God is in you, when you have it in your life, it is ingrained in you, and the Holy Spirit of God says, "Thou art the man. You are the man. There is nobody else." Does it immediately bring you to your knees? Take you to Psalms 51? Or do you just deceive yourself all the more and blame the message or the messenger? The folks who seek diligently good and procure favor and ask for it will be honest and make it right. Why the reason? You want to know the reason? It is so simple. You want to know the reason why some people will do that? No matter where they go, the moment God nails them when they are out of fellowship, it will bring them back. Do you really want to know? I will tell you why, because the book means more to you than the stupid things that we do. That is why.

All this issue today about the King James Bible, I get on television, on the radio, read everybody's books, talk to people about it. Let me tell you something. Do not fool this old man. It is not a theological issue. It is not a theological issue. You will never really love that book if you do not really believe it is from God to you. That is not a theological issue. That is a personal issue. You will never seek it diligently. You will never love it with all of your heart, with all of your mind and all of your soul. You will never ask God for it. You will never bury your life in it if the one coming out next year is going to be more reliable. Do not you kid me. Come on, that is good. Amen. If it is not God's special book, then there will be no special love for it.

I talked to a Catholic guy one time, and he was telling me about the Word of God, and he said, "Well, we follow the Pope." And I said, "Man, there is no hope in the Pope. You have got to get the Bible." He said, "Yeah, you know what? I heard what you said, and I will tell you right now, you love the Bible. All you have got is a paper Pope." I said, "Amen, brother, but at least mine is perfect and sinless. That is more than I can say for yours." You betcha. Somebody says, "You

worship the Bible." You bet I do. You worship God. You would not even know there was a God without the Bible God sent you. Would you give me that gas? I am telling you, there will never be an end to our deception until you live your life with a meaningful relationship that you have to have with that book, and that book keeps bringing you back.

"He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour." In my early days, my diligent search, asking God for His word, the first greatest aspect I saw that made David what he was, was him asking God for His word. I discovered one night late at night, Psalms 119:1-176, the longest chapter in the Bible. But it is a chapter that every verse in it has something about God's word for me. All the different aspects of God teaching me His word.

Psalms 119:9

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Psalms 119:11

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

Psalms 119:33-37

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

Now did you get the outline?

- 1.) There are some things, verse 33, that God wants to teach you.
- 2.) Verse 34, there are some things that God wants to give you.
- 3.) Oh, we are happy with those two. "O Lord, teach me." "O Lord, give me." Yeah, but look at verse 35. There are some things God has got to make you do. And those are the things that we fight with. There is the battle. Oh, I will take the teachings. Oh, I will take the giving. But oh, I do not want the making me.
- 4.) Then, after He teaches you, gives you, and He makes you do some things that you do not want to do, but you are willing and you are diligent. Then, verse 36, He will incline my heart and He will turn away mine eyes and He will quicken me in my way.

I saw this was David's key. His own prayer for God to give him what he so diligently sought, the word of God. I saw that. I wanted that. I have finally found the process. So I put together my own prayer out of Psalms 119. With 176 verses, the combos are endless. I made up a prayer. I was real spiritual back then. Seven was God's perfect number, so I made up 14 partitions, two times seven. Each one, I would ask God to give me His word, and if He did, I would ask Him. I would procure Him, and I would tell Him back, "If You give me Your word, this is what I will do with it."

I started right there. I am not going to give you the whole deal. You get your own. I started Psalms 119:9 and 11, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way," and I went down through that. My next one was in Psalms 119:27.

Psalms 119:27

Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

I told Him, "Lord, You make me to understand it, and I will tell everybody about Your wondrous works."

Psalms 119:140

Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

Psalms 119:161

Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

Psalms 119:162

I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

Psalms 119:163

I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.

Psalms 119:164

Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Now I am going to stop here for a minute and tell you something. That is why you cannot offend me. I do not get offended by anything. I do not care. I do not care what anybody says, what anybody does, what anybody thinks. I do not get offended. Somebody gets up and says the stupidest thing on the planet about something, or gets up and makes a big fool out of themselves. I do not care. I do not get offended. You know why? "Great peace have they that love thy law, nothing shall offend them." I preached places before when some old bitty woman came up afterward and did not like my sermon. She said, "Brother Bob, I just want to talk to you a minute." She said, "I was offended by something you said." And I said, "Ma'am, I will be glad to hear it, but let me give you the verse. 'Great peace have they that love thy law, nothing shall offend them.' Now what is your problem?"

Psalms 119:97

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

Psalms 119:98

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

Psalms 119:99

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

Psalms 119:100

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

Psalms 119:101

I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

Psalms 119:102

I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

Psalms 119:103

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:104

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Now you prayed out to God? I am talking about it. You know what you do? You go in a room someplace, you sit in a chair here, and you put an empty chair over there, and you pretend He is in it, and you read that prayer back to Him. You read that to Him. You say, "Lord, if You give me Your word, I will do this." Just follow the verses, put your own prayer together. "God, You give me this, and I will claim this. God, You teach me of Your word, I will proclaim Your wondrous word." Lord, and tell Him, read it to Him. Tell Him if You give me this, that is how you ask for His word.

SEC: Doing for God with His Word: The Warfare of the Believer

Now the second thing I saw with the life of David, a man after God's own heart, is once he had the book, he did something with it. You ever see what that was? He went out after the enemies of God. He went to war against those who hated God in His word. Oh boy, I just lost half of you right here. You see, David's life is an inspirational application, is a picture of the warfare of the believer. He does not get any rest, that is why he cannot build the temple. He has to fight. The temple does not get built until Solomon comes, which is a picture of the millennium. David is a type of you and me right now, that once God gives you the word, you do business with the enemies of God.

Did you ever see what got David into trouble? Look for a minute at 2 Samuel 11, look at the first verse. Here is what got him messed up. He was doing great till this, and I have seen some of you do great till this.

2 Samuel 11:1-2

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

You know what this is called when you preach on it? David's fatal furlough. He stayed home while the battle was raging. He took himself out of the front line and sent somebody else to do his fighting. Getting out of the battle, or in some cases never getting into the battle. This will be the single thing that will knock you out before you get started.

Did you ever notice when a Christian starts to fall away from God, the issues they start to have? They start to get upset about talking to church, or somebody, or me, or you. The first thing they do is they quit whatever ministry they are in. Quit coming to Sunday morning, quit coming to Bible study, too tired now on Sunday, excuses for Thursday. Stop whatever you are doing. Now when it gets to that point in their life, they are on their way to a fatal furlough. Because the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 8:8, "in this war there is no discharge," and you are AWOL.

Ecclesiastes 8:8

There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

SEC: The Danger of Spiritual Complacency

Now again, there is a great example of this in the Old Testament, back in Numbers 32. Israel has just wandered for 40 years. In that time, God has made them a formidable nation. Got them ready for the real work of occupying the Promised Land. Now they are ready to cross over Jordan, Numbers 32, and take the land that God promised them and the blessings that come with it. Now I do not have to tell you that that land was key to everything that they would ever have with God. That Promised Land was where Jerusalem was, is where the temple was going to be built. That is the covenant that God gave them of Abraham, and that is everything to them. What it is, it is a picture of God preparing you and me to do the real work of God, right now giving you the essential tools and the thing that you need in life. But the real reason God saves you is because He has got a work that He wants you to do, but you have got to cross over Jordan to get to it.

Now, Numbers 32, there are some people who do not want to cross over now. The tribes of Gad and Reuben come over to Moses, and they want to stay on this side of Jordan. Numbers 32:1-4, they come to Moses and say, "Hey, the land here is really good, and we got cattle here, and man, we got a lot of cattle. Let this be our inheritance on this side of Jordan." You see, the Promised Land is the ultimate place for God's people. It is called the Promised Land because God gave it to them, but once they got in it, they had to get into a warfare, and they had to claim the promises of God to keep the land. The promises of God were not on this side of Jordan. The promises of God were for the crossing over on the other side of Jordan.

Now Israel has come as far as they can come. They are going to go no farther, no more blessings from God until they cross over and really become what God wants them to be and the nation God wants them to be. But they know that on the other side is the battle, the warfare to keep them and keep the land that God has given them. It is a picture of Ephesians 6, or the warfare of the believer. They wanted a convenient Christianity. They wanted to stay on this side. They did not want to go over where the warfare and the sacrifices had to be made. These were the nations that have sworn to keep Israel out of God's land for them. Like so many of God's people today, they want the blessings of God, but not the warfare of God.

If we could go back in time and look through there and watch that busy street there going up and down their chairs, I guarantee you, Gad and Reuben had bumper stickers on their chairs that says, "More cattle, less battle." The lackadaisical attitude of staying on this side where it was comfortable, like so many of God's people. They were not standing on the promises. They wanted to sit on the premises. There were no more pillars of the church. They were now turned into the pillows of the church. Sound asleep while the world dies and goes to hell. They had lost sight of the cause of Christ. They had lost sight of the cost of serving Christ. They lost sight of the consequences of not fulfilling what God called them to do. Again, just like so many of God's people, they now have gotten as close to the real deal of God as they want. They are not going any farther. They are going to stay safe. They are going to play it safe. They are not going to make waves. They are going to have a nice, comfortable Christian life that is going to enjoy what you have and never take any farther that will upset your little world.

"He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him." In life, you will simply, in this life, get what you go after.

SEC: Conclusion: The Cost of Discipleship

Now, I am done. What a great principle that is. But let me close by saying this. Going to camp as a counselor and a worker, done it three years now, is one of the most rewarding things that you will ever do. It will change your life. I have never seen last year's particularly, but even a year before that, I have never seen anything change anybody's life more than going that because it makes you get outside your comfort zone.

Years ago, I was raised on camps. I preached my first messages in camps. But my share of counselors and camp leaders and all the things that go along with it. The thing that I hated was when I was tired and beat. You want to go to sleep. It has been a big day today. Tomorrow is another big day. You are already in your own bed. You are bone tired that there are kids who want to keep you up all night till two or three o'clock in the morning. Gals and guys, but the girls are much worse than the guys. They will irritate the fire out of you. You do not hate them. Really, you are there. You are not really mad at them. But for just a moment of time at two or three, you want to kill them. Now, I solved the problem when I was at camp because I am smarter than the problem. I had a T-shirt made up that simply said in the front and the back, "If you are so tired today that you cannot hear the sermons and connect with God, it was because I kept you up last night." The person who did it the most wore that shirt all day long. Then that night, the person who did it wore that shirt the next day. By the end of the week, not only were they all

embarrassed, but the shirt was so grody from everything that it was like wearing put on a dead man's clothes. But it worked. When you want to sleep and they will not let you, it is irritating.

Now, allow me to make the connection. I know I irritate some of you in your Christianity. You want to just fold your hands and lay back and fall asleep. But I will not let you. See, I am the clown in your camp serenity that is nestled down in sleepy hollow, who will keep you from falling asleep while the world goes to hell and we do nothing. You get your mind all made up and convince yourself you are okay staying on this side of Jordan. Then you come on a Sunday morning or Thursday night, and bang, you get a Sunday morning Thursday night wake up call. The harder you try to fall asleep, the louder I get, and the louder I get, the more obnoxious I become. It irritates the fire out of you.

Now, you see, let me get theological here. If I was preaching to a bunch of unsaved people, I would say it irritates the hell out of you. But somebody already did that. Somebody's preaching irritated to the fact that it got the hell out of you, and you got saved. So now I am preaching the fire out of you. That fire is the fire at the judgment seat of Christ that is going to burn up your work, wood, hay, and stubble if you do not get your head out of wherever it is at.

You know, I boil life down to about six or seven single concepts that are absolutely true. I mean, you could take everything in life and put them into these six little corners. I have done that over the years, and finally after 65 years old, I look back and I say, "You want life in a nutshell? Here it is." One, two, three, four, five, six, maybe seven. One of them is problems. One of them is problem 1,127. It is simply this: You only get out of God what you are willing to put into God. When you will not go any farther, and you want to camp on this side of Jordan, and you will not do what God wants you to do, and you develop the mindset that you want more cattle, less battle, then whatever your pursuit in life is, good or wickedness, it will come to you on that basis, either good or mischief. Because my dear friend, the blessings of God are on the other side of Jordan, not on this side.

Everything I do with every one of you, Saturday night when the high school kids were here, those little guys were up there preaching and doing their deal to their own people. I have one goal by getting them at that age doing that. Your kids, younger than that, taking their little prayer groups on Sunday morning like the adults do. I have one goal by doing that. I help start working with some of the single people and giving them tremendous responsibility to do this, do that. I do it with couples when you work with people or people that head up whole ministries for me and you do that. I do it for one reason, one reason only, because I cannot always be there. I do not want to always have to be there telling you what to do. You, every one of you, from you young kids to you middle-aged singles to you moms and dads to you old, dear folks out there who just signed up for Medicare like I did, for everybody out there, you need to understand that at some point in your life you need to learn how to cross that river under fire by yourself and get to the other side. Do not deceive yourself that the blessings are on this side. The blessings are after you cross over, and you will come to a point in your life where you will grow to a point, but then you will get stagnant because you are not willing. You will get the bumper sticker, "More cattle, less battle," and you will not cross over where the action is. That is where the blessings are.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, we do love You. Thank You for all You do for us, thank You for the Word of God that You have given us and for these good people who, O Lord, they just love You. I know they do. They are the best people in the world. Lord, we all get screwed up and messed up and get out of whack, every one of us. But Lord, let us learn from the lessons today of procuring, asking You for Your Word, letting that Word ingrain us and grill us so much to the point where even when we get out of whack, it is just all it takes. All it takes is one sermon. All it takes is one devotion. All it takes is one of the Holy Spirit of God squeezing our hearts, bringing tears to our eyes and bringing us back like He did David. Help us, Father, to be diligent and willing and go after Your Word because in it, Father, is all the blessings of God. Help us, help me get these people over Jordan. Help me get the ones that are already there to come back and help the ones that are not there yet get over. Help everybody cross that river under fire. Learn how to do it. Learn how to get across. Learn how to get their families across. Learn how to do everything that needs to be done. Father, we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.