

I. The Positive and Negative in Life

We finished up what I consider probably one of the best studies that we have ever taken out of Proverbs 11 on a balance in your life and really getting all of the things that God wants you to have in your Christian life. As we move on through this chapter and through the chapters coming up, we will continue to see how the book of Proverbs is laid out verse by verse, and that is really how we have been studying it. You have seen, and I made this very clear, that these verses are built on a positive and then a negative within each verse.

To me, I have always thought the reason that Proverbs is so relative to my life, and probably to anybody's life, is because it contains the issues of life. The issues of life are built around that one single aspect that the Proverbs is built around: the negative and the positive all in one verse. Because if you think about it, that is the way life really is. Life is positive things and life is negative things, and we have to deal with them. From the time we can walk and make our first conscious choices to the time we die, those two elements will be in everything that we do and experience, and there are no exceptions to it.

Sometimes in life, and I have talked about this before, the negative things just happen as a course of life. You really do not have any control over them. You do not have any control if you go to work and somebody has a cold and you get it, or the flu. We do not have any control over the weather in this country or this state that we have got so much rain that some of your basements are flooded. Unfortunately, and God forbid, you do not have any control that if while you are out of the house something goes wrong with the electrical thing and your house catches on fire. You do not have a lot of control when you are driving down the road and you are in a hurry someplace and you are going 45 in a 25 and you get a traffic ticket.

Sometimes when you go to the doctor and he comes back and he says your blood pressure is high or your cholesterol is too high or this or that, many times it is because of our diet. Sometimes it is hereditary and you do not really have a choice, and even though there are things you can do, those things are just part of life. But it can definitely ruin your day.

Then there are some things again that the negative things will come in our lives because we make bad choices. We have complete control over them, but we just choose to make bad choices. If you remember back through the book of Proverbs and you kind of formulated it into four or five major things that we have learned, if there is anything that we have learned in Proverbs so far, it will be the single great concept that life is about choices. Life is about choices.

Now, with that, another great thing that we have learned is the fact that the Christian life is not very complicated. We live in a world that likes to complicate everything. You listen to, go talk to a Christian therapist or a Christian psychologist or someone if you have got issues in your life and you know you are struggling and you have been diagnosed with this or diagnosed with that and have all these issues in your life, and you are truly a child of God. You know, you will go sit

down with somebody and you will come out of there and your problems will be more complicated than they ever were when you went in.

The Christian life is built around two great truths and two great facts based on what we find in the book of Proverbs. God gave us the Bible, and when we follow the Bible, life turns out to be positive. God gave us the Bible, and when we do not follow the Bible, life turns out to be negative. It is just that simple. It is not any more complicated than that. When you want to boil your life and my life down to a single thought and to a single thread, you want to realize that God gave us the Word of God so we would have the positive in life. When the world takes the Bible from us, or we give it up through our own choosing, then the world becomes negative to us. The Christian, based on his own free will, will simply make his choices either way, and the end result for you and for me will be a negative one or a positive one.

We have seen it all through Proverbs: the importance of a New Testament local church, God's simple structure for our lives. The church is here for many reasons. One of the reasons our church is here is to keep your life simple, to keep your life to the point where it does not get complicated. I have people all the time that come in with horrendous issues that to them look very, very, very complicated. But to somebody who knows the Bible, knows the issues, and knows the simple format of the Bible, I have never met, I have never, never got into an issue with somebody, unless it was right off into the demonic side of things. But in just your garden variety of problems of life, I have never found a situation that could not be dealt with if you just simply began to put some things in your life on a positive side instead of a negative side.

But it is the choices we make. Some choices we make, very frankly, they are reversible. That is really where you young kids have got to really watch what you are doing, because some of the choices you make in your life at an early age, yes, you can reverse them. But I want to tell you something, I have seen people that made bad choices in life that get to the point where those choices are irreversible. You cannot turn them around, or if you have to turn them around, they are incredibly hard to turn around. That is just where we are at based on the choices that we have to make.

II. The Bible as a Foreign Language

There is a TV commercial on television on one of the channels, and I see it all the time. It is a great illustration of man and his choices in life, his thinking process, and how he looks at things and then evaluates things as priorities in his life. Now, this commercial is completely in a worldly sense, but it is a great biblical truth that they just kind of stole from the Bible. It is about a company that is selling the idea of learning a foreign language.

Now, let me just say, learning a foreign language is a great thing. America is way behind the rest of the world on that one. Most teenagers in most other countries in Europe or South America, by the time they graduate, they are fluent in two or three different languages. It is a really good thing. But the commercial starts out by saying this: "Will a big screen TV get you ahead in life? Will a new pair of shoes make you a better person?" Of course, the answer to that is no, it will

not. But then they come in and they say, "Well, how about learning another language, because that will really make a difference in your life?"

It is a great commercial because it shows us the choices that we make. A brand new 55-inch TV will not make you a better person. A new pair of shoes will not make you a better person. But another language, learning another language, on a value scale one to ten, is a ten because it forces you to step out of your culture and learn things differently. But in a spiritual sense, a big TV, a new car, new shoes, or material possessions will not make you better or get you ahead either, will they?

But I will tell you what will: learning the Bible. The Bible is another language that only God speaks. Isaiah 55 says that God's ways are not my ways, His thoughts are not my thoughts. You do not just sit down and open up the Bible and figure out who God is. That Bible is another language, and I am not talking in any way, shape, or form about Greek and Hebrew, not in a sense at all. I am talking about the Bible that God gave you in your own language. The Bible itself is its own form of a language.

It takes time. I will just give this to you parents who have young kids: when you get 30 or 40 years of age and you want to learn another language, it is really hard. I mean, you want to learn Spanish or you want to learn French or you want to learn German, and you are 30 or 40 years old, it is really tough, it is really hard. But you take a baby and put him in a bilingual family and let him grow up in a family where they are speaking two different languages, I will tell you something, by the time that kid is two or three or four years old, he will speak both languages perfectly.

Now, that is a great lesson in life when it talks about training up your children. If you start speaking the biblical language in your family with your children while they are little, they will naturally pick it up and grow up with it, just like somebody learning another actual language. You wait until they are 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, or 20 for them to try to learn a biblical language, it is going to be tough for them. Now, that little nugget is just for you today, you can take that home with you. The Bible is its own language, and learning that language will make you a better person over all the junk that we buy in life. But you see, it is by our own choice, our own choosing.

III. Charles Tremendous Jones and Biblical Principles

Most of you probably do not know, does anybody know who Charles Jones was? Did anybody ever meet his wife? Clarice Jones? Charles Jones? Maybe you know him by his nickname, Charles Tremendous Jones? Does that ring a bell to anybody? Okay, well then I am not even going to use this illustration.

Charles Jones was a tremendous motivator, a motivational speaker, incredible. The reason why you do not know who he was, he is dead now, he died in 2008. But in the 60s and the 70s and the 80s, he was a phenomenal speaker at motivating people. Big corporations would bring him in, and he was a lot like a Paul Harvey, only I do not think that he was saved. But he was a lot like a Paul Harvey in the sense that he had just good common sense one-liners that would just lift up

and motivate and put a whole corporation and its executives or its people or its workers or any organization, it would uplift them and give them clear direction.

Now, I have got to tell you, most of the stuff that he had, even though as far as I could find out he was never saved, but I have got to tell you, most of the principles that he said and things that he said, somebody just stole them from the Bible. I mean, he was a great motivational speaker, and I have a list of his quotes, and I would listen to him and, boy, I would just write down, because I do not know how many times I have taken what he said to a secular corporate group of people, and, boy, you can put them right into a church with Christians because it is all biblical principles just applied in a secular world.

He said one time that nobody is a failure in life. Nobody will ever fail in life until you begin to blame somebody else for your failures. Now, that is deep. That is the book of Proverbs. He also said one time, "If you cannot be happy where you are at, it is a sense you will never be happy where you are not yet at in life." That is Philippians 4:11. He also said, "Things do not go wrong in our lives to break us and make us give up and become bitter, but things go wrong in our lives to build us up. You can be all that you intended to be through the adversity that you went through." That is Romans 8:28.

He said one time, "You will be five years from today, exactly who you are, except for one: the books that you read and the people that you meet." Now, he said that back in the 70s. I remember how all the preachers jumped on that because they wanted intellect, you know, they wanted the mindset of intellect, and to them, reading developed intellect, and they all wanted to be known as intellectuals. Oh, I heard that from every pulpit. I mean, guys were talking about that: "You will be exactly five years from today what you are except for the books you read and the people you meet."

I always took that and changed it a little bit because I think personally, you will be five years from today exactly what you are except for the book that you read and the person that you build a relationship with. He was a great speaker on motivation, and in a church service or in a Christian's life as he goes to church, you will be exactly five years from today what you are by the book that you read and the people and the person that you build a relationship with, and I agree with him. Another thing that he said, he said that leaders are readers. That is very true.

IV. The Importance of Instruction and Reproof

With that introduction into Proverbs 12, let us look at our first set of verses here, verses 1 and 2, and let us have some fun today with the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 12:1-2

1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

Now, Father, we thank You and praise You today for the Lord Jesus Christ, and we do love You. These are good people here today, and they have come out to hear the Word of God. Lord, I must

confess that if they are dependent on me to give them something, they are in bad shape today. It has to come from You, the Holy Spirit of God, as You just use this unworthy vessel as an instrument and open up that great book and by Your Spirit spread the Word of God into the hearts and the minds of these good people today. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, and we ask it. Amen.

Now, you know there are a number of ways that you can study the Bible, but in all of that, one of the absolute importance of studying the Bible is word studies in the Word of God. Now, I am not talking about going over and getting Vine's study of Greek and Hebrew words; that is worthless. Studying the Greek to get word studies is just a waste of time. You are better off to watch Daffy Duck and Mickey Mouse, you will learn something there. If God wanted you, God gave you a Bible in English, so if you want to study words, study words in English in the language that He gave it to you. It is just that simple. It is not complicated. But the older you get and the older you grow in the Lord, you are going to find the deeper that your word studies get, and God will reveal many things through those.

Word studies in the Bible are like on a scale from one to ten. Your number one scale words would be study the word love or the word faith or the word grace. Up in a range of number ten, the word studies would be words like rain or whirlwind, beguile, translate or translation. Tremendous word study: thunder, lightning. Now, those are the ones that are on a high-end scale, boy, when you have to get into some deep things in the Bible, but, boy, they contain tremendous truths.

We have seen as we have come through the book of Proverbs that Proverbs is built around key words. I have given them to you almost every week as we come through, and the key word we will look at today, and it will be a great study, is the word instruction. "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge," to be instructed in some things about God and His Bible.

Now, I think the word instruction is an interesting word because it is instruction. In other words, inner structure. When you take instruction from somebody, it builds inner structure in your life, not only in a secular world but in a Christian world. In a Christian world and in a Christian life, instruction is a very important word. It builds our inner structure, and it has four aspects to it as you look at it in the Bible as God gives it to us. Three are positive and one is negative.

There will be people who will receive instruction. That means you take, and that word is a great word to study in itself, the word receive, boy. That is a good word. You will find those who will not only receive it but then they will apply it. You know, I heard all my life growing up that reading the Bible will solve your problems. You know, that is not true. Reading your Bibles will not solve your problems, but applying what you read in your life will solve your problems. You have people all day long that read the Bible, they cannot figure anything out. It is when you take what you receive, instructions, and then you apply it to your particular issue.

Then the third thing is to retain the instruction. That is to keep them, lay hold on it, not let it go. Thursday night we talked about biblical principles and how important they are in your life. Retaining instruction means you continue with it, you keep it going in your life. Or the fourth

thing, and this is a negative, you can reject instruction. You can despise instruction. You can hate instruction. And yet you can go to church every Sunday, be there every Sunday morning.

The book of Proverbs, as it is throughout the Bible, instruction is a key word and it is very important. We go through the first 13 verses of Proverbs and we see it:

- Proverbs 1:8 says, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father."
- Proverbs 4:1 says, "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father."
- Proverbs 4:13 says, "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go."
- Proverbs 8:33 says, "Hear instruction, and be wise."
- Proverbs 9:9 says, "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser."
- We are in 12:1 today, and it says, "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge."
- Proverbs 13:1 says, "A wise son heareth his father's instruction."

Now we jump over into the New Testament on that word to study it, and in 2 Timothy 3:16, it says:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Now, you look at that word in verse 17 there, it says "throughly furnished." All the other new Bibles that come out say "thoroughly." It is "throughly" here, not "thoroughly." It has never been "thoroughly" in Bible doctrine, it is "throughly" because the instruction goes inside you and furnishes you with the things that you need through God's instruction to be the perfect minister that God wants you to be according to His will. That is why the verse says, if you love instructions, you will love knowledge, you will love to learn.

But did you see that it says, "but he that hateth reproof is brutish"? You cannot separate in your Christian life, in my Christian life, we cannot separate learning instructions by reproof. Now, most people want to learn, but they do not want to be reproofed. Why is it not a lot of people will not go to a good Bible preaching church or a Bible teaching church because they do not want to hear any reproof of where they are at in life? When you get perfected through the instructions in righteousness, there has to be a reproofing that goes along with that instruction. You know, as you grew up as a child, you learned the things you learned in the instructions from your parents many times by the reproof that you had to get from them. There is no difference in the Word of God. You will never, never get the instructions of God without the reproof of God, because instruction will come through reproof.

Did you ever notice back in the Old Testament, and, boy, this is another key word of the study in your Bible, it is the word threshingfloor? I am going to tell you, wherever you find the word threshingfloor in the Bible, the key to it doctrinally is going to be the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is likened to a threshingfloor when God comes back. But let us put that aside, let us talk about it in its practical application.

A threshing floor was where a farmer, when he cut down the wheat and brought the sheaves of wheat in, he wanted to get the grain out of the wheat. The grain was very valuable, but the grain would never reach its full potential of value as long as it was in the sheaf because it was connected with the chaff. The wheat grains of wheat were valuable, the chaff was worthless. So what he did is he brought it into the threshing floor, and it does exactly what the word said: they put it on the floor and they beat the fire out of it. They threshed it, they hit it, and through the constant pounding and beating of the threshing, you know what happened? The chaff got separated from the wheat, and then the farmer could take what was valuable in the wheat and separate it from the chaff.

You know what? We all have some chaff in our life. We all have some things in our life that are mixed up with the good things in our life, and the only way you get rid of the chaff is to go through a reproofing process. You have got to go through the threshing floor, the tough times that we go through in life that you think are so defeating because you do not have the positive principles of the Word of God, they defeat you. Those things that are negative in your life, the Bible says that when God, there is no darkness at all, even the light and the dark are the same to Him. There is no negative with God. The negative things in your life and my life are there to bring forth the value that is in us.

When you do not see it that way and you do not understand it that way, you go to church and you say, "Well, I am not going back to that church, he just stepped all over my toes." Well, maybe you needed to have your toes stepped on. Maybe inside you God sees a lot of value, but the chaff is keeping it from getting anywhere in your life, and we have to be thoroughly sometimes reproofed to bring forth all of those things. We look at adversity that we go through as shackles that stop us, only when you look at it through a negative aspect.

Daniel 3, what a great example that is of the adversity we go through in life and the purging. We know that fire purges. We know that all of those things that we go through are a part of a purging process. You remember the story in Daniel 3 with the three Hebrew children. Nebuchadnezzar is enraged because they will not worship him, and he gets so upset he goes down and he tells the guys, "You make that furnace seven times hotter." He goes down there and they bind those Hebrew children, and they bind them, and they open that door, and it is so hot it kills the guys that open the door. So to get another group of guys, they take those Hebrew children who were bound and they throw them in that fire. That is a picture of the world thinking that it is through the adversity it is going to bind you and keep you from ever being what God wants you to be.

Oh, Nebuchadnezzar finally goes down and opens up that door and looks in there, and he says, "Whoa!" He says, "We threw three in, but there are four in there now, and the fourth one looks like the Son of God." But the best part of that whole thing was when he looked inside there, he says, "I see four men loose." You know all that fire did, that adversity, you know all that fire did to those Hebrew children? It did not affect them, it did not touch them, it did not burn them. It just burned off the shackles of the bondage that the world put on them. That is what He wants to do through the adversity in your life when you look at it from a positive standpoint.

V. Life's Instruction Manual

Did you ever notice this? In everything in life you buy, you get a set of instructions. Did you ever notice that? I brought some today. It is amazing. It is amazing. You buy a car, you get an owner's manual. You buy a phone, you get two: you get a quick start that will get you going, and then you get one, it is all the health and safety warnings, how that after you use your phone for four or five years, you get brain cancer and you die. Tremendous. And each one goes through great detail. It starts out by saying, "To make a call, turn on phone." Now, I will tell you, if you have got to know you have got to turn on the phone before you make a call, you do not need a phone, just get a can with a string between the two. If you are that dumb that you have got to have directions to say turn the phone on, you are in trouble.

But it goes through everything: send a text, multimedia message, change the ringtone, shop for ringtones, take and send a picture, access mobile web, securing your device, frequently used status icons, all on and on it goes. You buy a phone, you get one. A while back I bought a lawnmower. Here it is. It is incredible. When I first opened it up, I thought I got the wrong one, this is in Spanish. And I started to read it, and then whoever does this, they think we are stupid. They really do. They think that we are so inept and dumb that we cannot figure things out. So when I started reading it, the Spanish is this way, but when you finally get to the English, you have got to turn it upside down, and the English is that way. Now, if you have got to know that there is a difference that you cannot read one by the other by turning it upside down, you do not need a lawnmower. You know how I know that that is not for me? I do not figure out any words in it. I do not have to have the Spanish write up and English upside down. So when I get to it, I recognize this is another language. Incredible.

Here is the grill. Memorial Day I bought a grill, and I really did not use the grill, I did not need the grill, I needed an illustration, and you guys did not even know it. But I needed the instructions, and look at these puppies, man, for a grill. Now, I paid \$40 for that grill. This instruction probably cost \$10,000 to lay out by design. It is incredible. And I stood back and I watched those guys put the grill together. I stood there and snagged these: table of contents, important safeguards, expanded view and hardware, assembly instructions, operating instructions, first use, lighting instructions, controlling flare-ups (some of your ladies that have cut that out and give it to your husband), and cleaning and care, product registration, replacement parts, limited warranty.

I will tell you, and you know, I was going through them, and I tell you, did you ever really look at any set of instructions for anything? It all does three things:1. It will show you an overview of what you just bought.2. Then the instructions will number or define each part. It will show you this is the axle, this is the wheel nut, this is the wheel nut wrench, this is the rubber bushing, this is a support strut, this is a hinge, this is a handle.3. Then it will take you through a step-by-step process to put it together that it will be absolutely perfect by the instructions that you got with no parts left over.

Now, did you ever see the similarity to the Bible as God's instructions to you and to me? You see, when God made you and made me, He gave us an owner's manual. If you want to find out how to have a positive in life, you have got to stay with the instructions that the Guy who made you gave us. It is the same thing. The first thing you need to do about learning the Bible, same thing

in there, get an overview of the Bible, see the whole big picture of the Bible. I have done that for you, I do not know how many times. Then the second thing you want to do is you want to begin to define each part. You want to be able to look at each part of that Bible, define it, understand it, see what it does. And then you are going to go through a step-by-step process: Sunday morning, Thursday night, discipleship one, discipleship two, how to study the Bible, whatever the case may be, to put it all together.

Now, you see how that works? In these instructions, it says there are things that are dangerous. In these instructions, it is the things that you need to be cautious of. In these instructions, it says warning. In these instructions, it says there are some things that are dangerous for you. In these instructions, it says cautioning some things and gives you some warnings. But they are the same, and for you to be everything that God wants you to be, you have to have the instructions.

I have people come in all the time that have marital problems, and I know when they come in and they are going through their marital problems, to them it is a very complicated and very hard thing because they are right in the middle of it. I get it, and I am always sensitive to that. But I am sitting there listening to "he says, she says," and I am listening going back and forth, and I will just go on, and I have a wall clock up there where I can kind of time it, and I just kind of let them go on and get it out of their system because they need to. And then I bring it around and I tell them this: "You know what? I know your problem looks complicated, but it is really not. Here is the deal: you are both Christians? Yes, we are. You are both saved? I am, I am."

Okay, marriage is something that God designed. It is not something that man designed. It was not born with cavemen. It was not born back in the pit down period where the Java man was chasing women around with a big club, much like they do in Westport. It was not by man's design. Marriage is by God's design. The first marriage is found in the Bible, and what God did is He wrote the marriage manual in the Bible.

Now, I always use this simple little instruction: if I come home and my wife says the dishwasher is broke, and I say, "Well, before we pay somebody to come out, service call and all of that, let us look at the manual." So we go through, which everybody has, 10 feet high stock of every manual that you ever had on anything, you cannot find it. So I finally say, "Well, you know what? I found the one to the grill." Now, how realistic is it for me to fix the dishwasher that is broke with the instructions for the grill? Well, how stupid is that, you, to try to fix your broken marriage without the handbook and the instructions that God gave you for marriage? See where you get into the problem?

Training up your children, God gave you a set of instructions for training up your children. Five stages of spiritual growth to raise up that child, train him up, follow the instructions, positive. Do not follow them, it is negative. Last week I talked about soul winning. I gave you eight instructions on soul winning, Proverbs 11:30. Building a church or building people, you just follow the instructions. Listen, there is an exact set of instruction for building people in the Bible. You bring them through seven stages. Building a church, there is an exact set of instructions how you build a church. There are five stages the church has to go through, and you have got to know where those stages are, and you have got to be able to follow the instructions.

When God put you and me together, made us, created us, gave us a plan for us to follow, for us the instructions of life to get all of it put together right, and He gave us a set of instructions to follow. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16 that they are called instructions of righteousness. You get into the book of, you want to say, "Well, I want to know what the church is supposed to believe." Where are the instructions for the church? Book of Romans. "Well, I want to learn how to do the ministry right." Well, before you learn how to do the ministry right, learn how not to do it wrong. That is 1 Corinthians. You want to learn to do it right, that is the instructions of 2 Corinthians. "Well, I want to get the instructions on the end time." That will be Revelation and half the Old Testament.

You and I will do one of two things in our Christian life when it comes to the Word of God being the instructions and life being negative and positive and being so completely uncomplicated. You and I will do one of two things: we will either follow the instructions and have a positive life, or we will not follow the instructions and have a negative life. See how easy that is? It is all built around one word: structure, instruction, inner structure, building you from the inside out, "thoroughly furnished" as the Bible says.

VI. Three Kinds of People and Instructions

Now, I have observed over the years, watching people follow instructions or not follow instructions, I have learned some things. I have learned that when it comes to instructions, there are three kinds of people, and this is absolutely true. It is true in the worldly things, but it is also absolutely true in spiritual things when it comes to following instructions. You know, I have learned, and it is true, and you ought to learn it, whatever your biggest problem is before you got saved, it is going to be your biggest problem after you get saved, and the only way you are going to get around that is through instructions and reproof.

1. First of all, you have people who think they do not need any instructions. They are smarter than the instructions that came with it. "How to put it together? No man in Japan is going to write those down for me. I am an American." They say, "I do not need those things." You know, in my years in the ministry, I have seen the same thing with young men and young ladies in the Bible. They get a little Bible under the belt, and suddenly they think they know more about the Bible than the pastor does or anybody else does, and they develop what becomes an unteachable attitude. They cannot teach them anything. They know more about it than anybody.

Do you realize that churches, Christians, need a structure of instruction to build their lives on? They do. Why? Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, and he knew he needed it. Proverbs 12:1, seven times before we get to the 13th chapter, are you smarter than he is? The idea that you know it all and do not need any instructions will get you in trouble every time. Hey, I have been in this Bible since 1972, that is before most of you were born, and the greatest thing that I have learned from the Bible is how much I do not know about the Bible. All the things that I have learned, if I have learned anything, it has only brought me to a place that I know that I do not know nothing compared to what is in there. My life, there is never a time that I do not need good instruction because it is the key, and I have learned this: there are no experts. There are no

experts in life. There are no experts in the Bible. All you have in the Bible, there are no experts, you just have students on different levels of learning, and you have to get instructions. You have to love instruction to love learning, and it is just the way that it goes.

In verse 2, it says, "but he that hateth reproof is brutish." Like a brute beast. We call it like a bull in a china shop. The issue is undisciplined pride. "I want to do what I want to do, and I do not care what you say or what the Bible says. I have no use for your instructions unless it fits my plan that I want to do." Of course, that gets you in a lot of trouble. Leadership is a great thing, but one of the things that you learn about being a great leader is a great leader is only a great leader if he learns to be a great follower. Some people never get that. In 40 years of ministry and 40 years of dealing with people in the Bible, I have never saw anybody that took that position that ever got anywhere in life. They failed.

2. Then you have the second kind of person, and you have to have a... Now you have the guy who is in too big of a hurry. He just wants to get it done. He just jumps in, and as long as it works, as long as it looks okay, he does not care about how many extra parts he has left over. He is totally irresponsible. It is all fun and games, never takes much seriously. In the Bible, there has to be an exactness. Only one way to put it together. Lots of aspects of studying it, but it only goes together one way. 99% of the Bible teachers try to put the Bible together, and because they are not exact, they have 20 verses left over that they do not know what to do with that goes against what they just taught.

I always tell you that you either rightly divide the word of truth or you wrongly divide it, and whatever you teach in the Bible, when you are done, there better be nothing left over that you have got to snip off to make your point. That is stupidity through pride. That is pretending you know the Bible when you do not. I get a lot of calls, a lot of phone calls from people all week who do not go to our church, and they are people who just, they have got it, they do not like the Bible. They know we believe the Bible, so they are always looking for things to call me up on the phone, and I just do not really have a lot of time for them. You know, it is one of those things where I just, if I am in a good mood, I will play with them a little while. If I am in a bad mood, they get shut off faster than they know what hit them.

But I had a guy a couple of weeks ago, and he found, he found the proof now that the King James Bible could not be the absolute Word of God. And he said, "I," and I love the way they all start, "Well, I finally found something that disproves what you believe." Well, big deal, what has that got to do with anything? He says, "Well, you know what?" He says, "I found two passages that show that the Bible really is in error and it is not perfect." And I say, "Okay, fine, congratulations." He said, "Yeah, I found a place in the Old Testament and then a place in the New Testament where they quote the place in the Old Testament, and the words do not match up." Oh, so what do you want me to do, do a fan dance or something? What do you want? I said, "You know what, kid, I worked through that problem at the first three years I was saved. The answer to that is so easy and so unbelievably easy to get and grasp that I do not even know why you are wasting that." He says, "Well, what is the answer?" I said, "I am not telling you." He says, "Why not?" I said, "The Bible says, 'Cast not your pearls before swine.' That is why. You do

not care about learning the Bible. Your whole life you spend to try to prove that it is wrong. I am not giving you anything."

I will tell you this, whoever told you God ever owed you an answer? God does not owe you an answer. "Well, I am not going to go to church until I get that." Then you will never get to church. "Well, I am just not going to believe God till I see that." Then you are never going to believe in God. God does not owe you an answer. He does not owe me an answer. By His grace, He will give us lots of answers, but I owe you nothing. I had a guy one time, he said, "Well, I am not going to church until I get an answer." And I said, "You know what? Then you will scream your lungs out in the lake of fire looking for an answer. How does that work for you?"

Proverbs 26:4

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

Some of those guys, you just, and I have watched young Christians, they get so, "Oh, oh, how am I going to answer this? Oh, he, oh, oh, oh, here is somebody who has put me something, he is asking." Hey, forget it, man. Go get your McDonald's has got a third of a pound burger with lettuce and tomato, it is the greatest thing you ever had. Go get one of them.

I had a guy one time, he just wanted to believe, and people are crazy today, they just want to believe what they want to believe about the Bible. They care nothing about instruction. They care nothing about being exact. This guy one time, he just wanted to believe that the great whore of Revelation 17 and 18 was not Rome but was the Jews in Jerusalem. I mean, they just want to believe what they want to believe. Somebody gave me a tape in one of his Bible studies. When he laid it all out, it was the most screwed up, messed up thing I ever heard in my life. When that guy was done, he had 35 or 40 verses in the Bible that proved him an idiot when it comes to Bible exegesis, that means teaching the Bible, and he just pretended that they were not there. Now, I will give him a little defense, and go to his defense, he is not the smartest person in the world when it comes to the Bible to start with. But listen, you may get away with flying by the seat of your pants when it comes about putting your lawnmower together, you will never get there by flying by the seat of your pants when it comes to that Book.

3. Then you have the third guy. This guy is absolutely meticulous when it comes to every detail of the instruction sheet. He separates all the pieces before him before he ever starts. He gets all the tools that he needs before he ever starts. He reads the instructions through two or three times to get familiar with them. He is very careful and goes through a familiarization with the parts and the tools each step by step through the instructions. He may think that he does not need the instructions. He may say, "I have done this before," but experience has told him, "Stay with the instructions." He takes his time. He does not get in a hurry. He looks and watches for all the key parts. He makes sure when it comes to the Bible that his trail of doctrine connects to form your teaching with nothing left over. He just does not run in and grab something and say, "Oh, look at what I got," and then teach it. This guy is precise, he is exact, and when he is done, there is nothing left over because it all goes together exactly as it lays out in the instructions, and he has a chain of biblical evidence that builds his case, and he

follows a plan based on those instructions in righteousness that he has gotten. He compares scripture with scripture.

That old boy back when that I was telling you about, about the Revelation, he was in his Bible, he was in his Bible study, and when he felt like maybe he was on thin ice and there were some people out there maybe that were starting with, they always do this, he threw in, and I will not tell you who it was, he threw in a great Bible teacher that he knew, and he said, "Well, I ran this by Brother So-and-so, and he agrees with me that I was absolutely right." Let me tell you something, if I believe the Bible teaches something, I do not need to run it through anybody. If it teaches truth, then it is truth. The very fact that you stand there and say, "I ran this through somebody else so I know it is true," only shows me you are not sure it is true yourself. When you have got to name drop some big guy to show everybody you are right, you are not sure yourself in a Bible when it comes to anything, and it is truth, it is true. If it is right, it is right.

When it comes to God, the Bible, your life, or your own personal walk with God, or building people or building a church, you might think you know all about it, but, boy, your dreams turn to nightmares and disappointments real quick because you just will not follow the instructions or the instructor that God gives you. You are like a model car or a model ship or a model plane, lots of parts that need to be taken out and glued together to make it look like the picture on the front of the box. Instructions, inner structure, that word will make or break us as Christians.

Boy, I have seen this. I see some of God's people get saved, begin to grow, and then get to a point in their life where they just cannot get over that next hump. They just hit that spot in life and they bounce back. They make a run at it, bounce back again and again and again, and they just cannot get around it, and in time they totally begin to retrograde, and pretty soon they are back right where they were. The answer is simply that you think you do not need the instructions anymore. Oh, you used them for a while, but when you got to a point, you thought, "Well, I will do it now without any instructions to follow."

I have seen some of God's people on the other hand follow the instructions in life to the letter, like Samuel, letting none of his words fall to the ground, like the Bible says in Matthew, every jot and tittle. Boy, I have seen you compare number one with number two. God has been saved 10, 15, 20 years, but does not go by the instructions. Somebody saved four or five that meticulously follows instructions, number two is light years ahead of number one. I told you Thursday night, in the Navy, in the military, that little crusty guys are the officers, the chief petty officer has been around for 20, 30 years, they call them book men. Well, the enlisted men want to cut it off here or wear their t-shirts out, tail shirts out, or not polish their shoes or not have a tie on or not do this or not do that. Right? They follow regulations by the book right down the line. When it comes to being a child of God, it has got to be by the book.

VII. The Favor of God

Look at verse 2: "A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD." Now, if you want a good study on that, go back to Genesis 37 sometime and look at the life of Joseph and his father and his

brethren, coat of many colors and the blessings. That is a great example of a man having favor with God over other men.

When you follow the owner's manual of life in all things, when you learn the instructions of the Father, when you get that inner structure in your life, your life now is a positive one. Even in the midst of negative things of the world, you learn how to live above the circumstances because along with the instructions of the Father comes the favor of the Father. I want to say to you folks, if you do not hear anything else that I have said this morning, you do not get anything else out of this, nothing in the life of a Christian will beat having the favor of God in your life. That is the positive that overrides all the negative.

Psalms 1:1-3

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Your little kids growing up, there is always a story that they tell little kids about King Midas. King Midas was, in a worldly sense, there is nothing more than a story stole from the Bible. I have told you many, many times, everything in this world that is bad was a good thing that has been twisted. You know the story of King Midas, he was a greedy king and he loved gold, and that is all he wanted was gold. One day he got a chance to make a wish, and the wish he made was that everything I would touch would turn to gold. And he got his wish. Oh, and he had a time, man, everything, his furniture, everything was turning to gold, and he is having the greatest time in his life until his daughter came in and he touched his daughter, and that lovely, sweet flesh and blood little girl that he held and loved so dearly turned into a statue of gold. Now, that is the world's version of it.

Mom and Dad, you all ought to be like King Midas. You ought to have the favor of God in your heart so much, in your life so much, through the instructions and the reproof that for God everything you touch turns to gold. Gold is the premier thing at the judgment seat of Christ. You know what? When you have, when you are the spiritual King Midas and you are touching things, the gold for God at the judgment seat of Christ, it is all right to touch your kids and have them turn into gold because that gold will show up at the great, at the judgment seat of Christ: gold, silver, precious stones. See, the world takes it and makes it in a bad sense, "Oh, he touched his daughter and she turned to gold." Every parent here ought to have that Midas touch, that when you do your ministry, it is gold at the judgment seat of Christ, and your children as you grow them up, train them up, they turn into gold, into gold. That is the positive that overrides the negative.

When you live your life by the instructions of the Father, then you have the favor of the Father. When you forsake the instructions of the Father, verse 2, you are left with the devices of this old world that will only produce the negative.

Proverbs 19:21

21 There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Boy, is that ever true. Two kinds of Christians: one will search the scriptures all their life to find God's instructions, the other one hates the instructions and will spend all their life formulating devices to get around the instructions, yet be in church every Sunday. Oh, kid me, you know, I have never understood this one thing about God's people, and I have actually seen it really too many times in my life. I have seen God's people who actually get God's favor in their life, and they get to a point and they throw it away. You can never understand that.

I have seen Christians who were struggling in life, their job was terrible, their finances were terrible, they had many pressures in their life, seemingly couldn't get past any of it. And I have actually watched them come to church, get into the Bible, get with God, get the Book, begin to take instructions and apply it and retain it, and I have seen God 100% of the time turn everything in the negative life around to a positive. I have seen Him giving them a really good job, took them out of that bad job that they had, gave them a good job with potential, good job with advancement, promotion. I have seen them struggling in their finances, and when they got dialed into God, God gave them a significant financial increase and gave them somewhat of a comfortable life. I watch God stabilize their world and their family, give them the desires of their heart through the instructions of the Father and reproof. They got the hand of God on them and God's favor, all simply because they began to make the right choices.

I have seen it, and I have also seen this: I have seen at some point they will go no farther. They take the money, they take the job, they take all that God did for them and all God gave them, and simply forget who really did it all for them. They will take everything that God gives them and give absolutely nothing back to God. At that point, they leave the instructions of God, pick up their own lives, their own way, and the things of God now take second place to it all and what they want to do. I have seen it, I have seen it too many times. Listen, when God puts His hand of favor on you, it is positive, but when God takes it off, it goes back to negative, and in time they lose all that God gave them. I have never understood why and how a child of God who had God's favor would so foolishly and so easily let it go. That is human nature at its best.

"Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn."

Four great aspects out of Proverbs focused on today:

- Life is not complicated; it is either negative or it is positive.
- We are today exactly who we are by the choices we have made in life, based on the negative and the positive, by the Book we read and the person we know, or doing in our own way.
- The Christian life is never complicated; it is always very simple. With the positive in life comes simplicity. With a negative in life comes the complexity.

- It is simply that way: you will either take the instruction of the Father, be everything that God wants you to be, or you will forsake the instruction of the Father, and you will be what you want to be.

We will hold up there today and let us have a word.