

I. The Value of Instruction and the Love of Learning

If you have your Bibles this morning, I would like to invite you to turn over to the book of Proverbs chapter 12. As you know, we have been coming through the book of Proverbs, working our way through chapter by chapter, verse by verse. It has been an incredible study. The book of Proverbs, as I told you before we started, is always one of my favorite books in the Bible. If there is any one book that I wish I could just get in my mind a total recall, that I could always recall the principles, it would be the book of Proverbs.

I believe the book of Proverbs is the core value system of the Bible, and that everything else in the Bible comes back to the Proverbs that are found in there. Last week we took a study out of verses 1 and 2. We have been doing a lot of word studies, and I have been talking about the value of word studies. We looked at the word "instruction," and "instructions of the Father," building our inner structure, as we saw how the word really defines itself. Building our inner structure in our lives comes from the instructions of the Father through the Word of God.

In Proverbs 12:1, it says, and we talked about this last week:

Proverbs 12:1

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

It is kind of hard just to preach one verse one week and then move into the next verse the next week, because they are all kind of interconnected. So I want to take a few minutes and talk about the love of learning as we move into Proverbs 12:3.

When God made man, God put into man the desire, the ability to want to know, to explore, to learn about things. He put that instinct into man when He made man. I do not know if you have ever thought of it in this light or not, but all civilization's advancements have been simply based on that simple concept: man's desire to have knowledge and to take that knowledge and develop it and to explore it.

Every invention that we have today, every modern convenience that you have, from electricity to your washing machine to all of the things, came into being because somebody wanted to pursue something to know more about it. Samuel Morse started the telegraph and invented the telegraph way back in the 1800s, from which everything that we have in communications comes today.

Thomas Edison was given credit for developing the first light bulb. He was an incredible individual. I read one time when I read his autobiography, and everybody had to read it because he was an incredible mind toward wanting to understand things. Somebody said, "I hear that you failed 1,000 times. You had 1,000 failures before you finally got the light bulb to work." He looked at the guy and he said, "Well, I do not look at those as 1,000 failures. I look at that as just 1,000 ways not to build a light bulb." The difference is, he always was looking for the truth.

Marconi developed radio that we have today. The Wright Brothers. You get on a 747 or get on a plane today and fly across the country or around the world, and you never think about Kitty Hawk down there, those two little guys who had a bicycle shop making the first plane that flew for just a couple of seconds, and where it went from there. All because somebody wanted to take that concept and would not rest until they developed it.

Lewis and Clark. We are living right in the area where at one time, about 200 and some years ago, a couple of guys named Lewis and Clark explored this whole country, mapped the whole country. They were looking for a passageway from east to west to get to China, and they thought that there was a natural land bridge there. Of course there was not, but they were incredible in their search.

How about the space program? Most of you do not remember that in the mid or late 1950s, we and the Russians were in a space race. They sent up the first satellite. It was called Sputnik. Sputnik was no bigger than probably a basketball. That was the first satellite. We counted and sent one up that was about the same size, and the race went on. Look where it went from the 60s to now today, 2015, the space station. All because man wanted to know. He wanted to learn. He would pursue those things.

In 1900, we developed radio waves, which led to TV waves in the 1930s and the 40s, which led to microwaves in the 1960s, which led to infrared rays and all that we have today. Going back in history, you have the Bronze Age that entered into the Iron Age, that developed steel, and then all the way down to titanium and aluminum. We always have an "oops" when we do something stupid or wrong. I would have loved to have been in history, but I think the biggest "oops" in history was when they had bronze swords. Bronze is a fairly soft material, but when it is up against human flesh, it is pretty good. But when some nation developed iron, iron was five times stronger than bronze. The greatest "oops" in history is when two guys went to battle and a guy went to cut somebody with his bronze sword, and he hit the steel sword, and it cut that bronze sword right in half. Oops. He just found out he entered into the Iron Age. It went to steel, titanium, and aluminum.

Man has an insatiable appetite to ask why and to know how things work. In the 1800s, we had the agricultural age. It moved in the 1900s to the industrial age. Now today we live in what is known as the information age. It has been said that a man today with a newspaper has at his disposal more information than a man who lived in the 15th or 12th century would accumulate in all of his life. It all comes down to man having that inner desire to learn, to want to know.

II. God's Design for Man's Pursuit of Knowledge

From a Bible standpoint, God did all of that, that desire that He put in man, so man would find God in his pursuit for knowledge and truth. That was His original intent. He put Himself into every creation that He made.

Romans 1:20

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

So He put Himself in it, that when man would look up and he would see, or he would look at this and study this, that God's Holy Spirit would use that for God to reveal Himself.

Psalms 19:1-6

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

There never was one person who, the first time they looked up and saw the heavens, saw the vastness of it, got out someplace where the Milky Way is like a painted street down the sky, that just was not in awe of what was out there and was not filled with questions of how, why, and who.

Many times in our studies I have given you the three-point process of learning:

1. Knowledge: That is facts.
2. Wisdom: That is facts applied.
3. Understanding: That is understanding how God fits into the equation.

An unsaved man can have knowledge, and an unsaved man can have wisdom. But an unsaved man can never have understanding when it comes to the things out there, because it all shows, it all goes back to what God is doing in God's plan.

III. The Key to Serious Bible Study: Passion for Truth

Last week we looked at the word "instruction" and "loving knowledge." Today, in a minute, I want to look at another two key words that go right along with last week. Let me begin by saying this: the real key to the Bible is one single aspect. It has nothing to do in one respect with God or the Bible itself or even the Holy Spirit of God, though there are key ingredients in it at some point. But the real key to the Bible is the single aspect of you and I having a passion to learn it, a love to learn. Everything that we do with the Word of God, a desire to know, to understand. Then at that point, based on our attitude of heart, the Holy Spirit of God takes that and develops it. Boy, you are on to some great things in the Bible.

When it comes to the Bible, real Bible study is just a pursuit of truth and knowledge and a love for it. So many people study the Bible, but they do not love the Bible. So many people will spend hours in the Word of God, but there is no love for that book, of what it really is to you and what it really means to you. You will see that God wrote the Bible to man. He wrote it on the same basis that He created everything else. The Bible was written in a way that a serious Bible student will continually ask "why?" "Why is this this way?" "Why did God do it that way?"

In case you have not figured it out yet, that is exactly the way I run my Bible study on Thursday night. I learned that 35 years ago, that a key ingredient of helping you develop yourself is to understand and have a place where you can ask questions. Too many churches are always telling you what to believe, telling you what to think, never giving you an opportunity to exercise what God has built into you to say, "Hey Bob, why is this?" "Hey, how come it works this way?" "I do not see it that way."

When a man has fully fixed his heart to the Word of God and it becomes number one in his life, and everything runs through the Bible, you will come to the place in your life where you realize the Bible is always right and we are always wrong. I do not ever sit in judgment of the Word of God. I let the Word of God judge me. It is the final authority in all things of faith and practice. On that basis of your attitude of heart and your love for the pursuit of truth and knowledge, now you can get some serious Bible study done.

I talked to you Thursday night, and I told you that we were going to talk about serious Bible study today. We are going to talk about a level that a child of God needs to get to where you can really learn some things from God, and I want to show you today how that works, and it will ultimately lead to you getting understanding and seeing God's hand in everything.

God has put the Bible together in such a way that some things in the Bible seem to contradict. Did you ever notice that? And yet they do not. Here is how it works, and what I am going to give you today is the basis of serious Bible study. You saw an example of it that kind of primed us for this morning Thursday night when I think it was Nikki asked that question out of Genesis chapter 48 about the boys, the firstborn and the second born, and the second born getting the blessing over the firstborn, how that did not look right because that is not the way it goes, and I showed you an example of that.

In the Bible, as you read and you study it, what you begin to do is you look for what does not seem to fit with other places in the Bible. This is called contrast. Then you ask God why. You go after it until God makes it clear how they can look like they are both saying something different, but yet they are both absolutely correct in your Bible. Now you are way past Bible 101, and the tragedy is that most of God's people never get here. I will tell you why that is: because it takes not the Bible, not your relationship with the Holy Spirit, God teaching you—those are absolutely vital—but first and foremost, it takes you having an absolute love and a passion for that book and wanting to learn it.

IV. The Parable of the Wise Man and the Pursuit of Truth

One time there was a young man who lived in an Asian nation, and there was a great wise man who was in his village. He lived up on the hill, and everybody in the village revered this man. Everybody wanted to go to him when they had deep problems or questions that they could not solve. The young man watched it all of his life, and by the time he was 18 years old, he had come to the conclusion that in his direction in life, he wanted to be like that wise man.

So he went to him one day and he said, "I want to submit myself to you. I want to allow you to take me. I will do your chores. I will fix this. I will do that. I will earn my keep. I want you to teach me the secrets that you have, that I too can be as wise as you are and someday be able to deal with people and situations and problems with the wisdom that you have."

The old man thought for a little bit and he said, "Well, that would be fine. Tomorrow morning you show up. Go home and make your final preparations or leave at home and say your goodbyes. Be here at eight o'clock in the morning, and we will start the pursuit that you are after." The young kid was ecstatic. He goes home and says goodbye, and he tells everybody that he knows he is going to be the wisest man like this guy, and everybody is applauding and thinks it is the greatest thing.

Well, he shows up at eight o'clock that morning, bag and baggage, ready to go. The old man said, "Well, put your stuff down here." He says, "I am going to give you the first lesson in having wisdom and the secrets and the knowledge that I have. Come on with me." So the young man said, "Oh boy." He got down there, and he took him into a lake that he had behind his house. The old man waded out, and the old man was taller than he was, and the old man got out here, and the kid was just about up to here, and he was standing there, and he is saying, "Wow, this is great. There is some kind of ceremony here that we are going to go through."

Right before he could look up and ask what was going next, that old man grabbed his nose and his mouth and his head and put him under that water. He held him under there, and the kid is screaming and kicking and trying to get out from under. That old man got his foot on him, and he just held him down, holding him down and holding him down, just about the time that he is ready to die. That old man lets him pop to the surface. This kid is throwing up, spitting up water, choking. The old man drags him by the collar, puts him down there, and he puts him down there on the land, and the kid is coughing and choking and having a fit. The old man is just standing there with his arms crossed looking at him.

That kid jumped up and he said, "What are you doing? I came to you. I thought you were the wisest man that ever lived. What kind of stupid stuff is this? I have said goodbye to everybody. I was serious. I want to be like you and have your wisdom, and you are playing some goofy little game with me. I do not get it."

The old man looked at him and he said, "You know what? You want knowledge? You want wisdom? You want truth? You want to have a life of pursuing truth and knowledge and understanding? Here is the key, kid. When you want truth, when you want knowledge, just like you wanted air when you thought you were going to die, that is the only time you are going to get it. If you do not have a passion for the things of God, if you do not have a passion for the

Word of God, if you do not have a desire inside you that you want that book more than anything else in life, you will never get there. You will never get there."

You will learn some things about the Bible, and you will be a good person. I am not saying that, but I am talking about serious Bible study today, serious Bible study today.

V. Reconciling Apparent Contradictions in Scripture

Things like you are reading your Bible in Acts 2:38, and it says this:

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now you read that, and then you read Romans 10:9-10, and it says this:

Romans 10:9-10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Now look, they do not match. Romans 10:9-10 seems to absolutely contradict Acts 2:38. One says you get the Holy Spirit by being baptized in the name of Jesus, and one says you just get it by believing who Christ is, and that is how you get saved. They do not fit together. They do not match, two completely different verses as it appears on the aspect of salvation. You know what? 100,000 people a month go to hell on those two verses. I am telling you.

So you want to ask yourself this when you read it. 1 John 3:9 says:

1 John 3:9

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Now that seems to contradict 1 John 1:10 that says:

1 John 1:10

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Now see, they do not fit. One says you are sinless, and the other one says if you say you have no sin, you are a liar, and the truth is not in you. There is such a problem with that, that you have that, you know what they do? In all the new Bibles, they do not know what to do with that because it is such a glaring contradiction to them. They have never learned serious Bible study. So the easiest thing to say is it is a mistranslation, and on every new Bible on the market today,

they take out the word "commit" and put in the word "practice." See? That solves their problem. It does not solve a thing.

You want to ask yourself why Mark 16:16-18, where it says:

Mark 16:16-18

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Now that seems to completely contradict what Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:20 when he says:

2 Timothy 4:20

Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

They do not match. One place says that you can heal somebody, and then the other place says the greatest healer that ever lived could not heal a guy that was sick. You want to ask yourself why Matthew 25:1-10, you know the story about the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish. It makes it almost clear that somebody lost their salvation. Yet 1 John 5:11-13 says that you cannot lose your salvation. See the problem you have? That is a complete contradiction, a contrast in the two verses in your Bible.

Now you see why people begin to have such a tough time with the Bible? How do you reckon, how do you reconcile those passages? But that is how you learn. You ask yourself why, how, how does this work? Here is one: How did Nicodemus get born again in John chapter 3 when the Holy Spirit of God did not even come until Acts chapter 1 and 2? Yet we use him as an example of new birth all the time.

Ask yourself why they spoke in tongues in Acts, but nobody speaks in tongues after Acts for 1900 years, and it shows up after 1900 years in Topeka, Kansas. Now why is that? I have a better one for you. How in the world did it get from Jerusalem to Topeka? Ask how come in Acts chapter 1 and 2 they are called "tongues," but in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 they are called "other tongues," and it is in italics. What happened?

Now you see that? Those are legitimate questions that come up, and you look for them when you are in serious Bible study. We have a book back in our bookstore called Problem Text, and it is volume one and volume two. It is probably the least sold of all the books we sell. We do not sell many of that. You know why? Because that is some serious stuff, man. Most Christians never get to that level.

This is called in 2 Timothy 2:15 the ability to rightly divide the word of truth based on a love of truth and a love of learning. When you love truth, when you love knowledge, when you love instructions, you will not study the Bible to find mistakes in it, because there are none. No, you

are asking God to show you, to instruct you, to be able to reconcile both passages that seem to contradict and do not fit by learning how to rightly divide the book. You are asking the question, not how to jam both verses together to make them fit, or go to the Greek to explain it away, or just to chalk it off as a mistranslation in a faulty version like they do with 1 John 3:9. No, not at all.

You are studying to show thyself approved unto God, and letting God through His instructions show you how and why both verses are absolutely correct and mean what they say the way they read, even though they appear to contradict. You are asking God to instruct you because you love knowledge and you love truth, and you leave the book as God's Word completely. You learn through instruction to put both verses in a proper context with the right material to show you the right truth, to teach the right doctrine that God intended it to teach without changing anything. Now that is serious Bible study based on our desire and our passion to pursue knowledge and truth and get instruction from God.

God put the Bible together that way because He knew men that loved to learn would stay with it and ask till they get the answer, that they would have a passion and a desire. Most people do not know who Edmund Hillary was. Edmund Hillary was the first guy who climbed Mount Everest. Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world, right at about 30,000 feet. To give you some kind of point of reference, that is like standing in your backyard and watching your jet fly over that you cannot even see the jet body, but you see the contrails coming out of the engine. That is probably about 30,000 feet. Standard flight altitude for cross-continental flight is around 30,000 feet. That is really high.

Imagine climbing up a mountain to that level, at that height, and everybody in the world says, "You know what? This mountain is unclimbable. Nobody can climb this mountain. Nobody can do this. No human being can do it." But he had a passion for it. He tried it several times. He worked it out, and finally in 1953, he conquered that mountain. When everybody else said it could not be done, he got it done. Now you want the Bible? You go after the Bible just like he went after that mountain.

VI. The Two-Edged Sword: God's Word for Lovers and Haters

Now I need to say this. In Hebrews 4:12, that Bible is likened to being a two-edged sword, and a two-edged sword will cut both ways. God put these things in the Bible in His Word to teach us who love to learn. But I want you to understand something: He also put them in His Word to snare the ones who hate His Word and despise it and do not want to learn it.

One of the most terrible, greatest passages in the Bible is found in Ezekiel 14:1-8. If you do not have it marked in your Bible, you have to mark it. It is God dealing with the leaders of Israel over them coming to God after they have already rejected the Word of God.

Ezekiel 14:1-8

Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by myself:

And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

Do you see that? That Bible says if you want a lie to believe, God will give you one. When God gave you a book that He wants you to accept and take it just the way it is, and you come up with the idea, "Oh no, no, I have something better. I am going to do this. I am going to do that," and you reject the clear teaching of the Bible, God will give you the verses, brother, that you need, that you want to take, and you want to believe what you want to believe.

He says in Ezekiel 14:7, "For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separated himself from me, and set up his idols in his heart." Notice the guy is still going to church. The guy is still part of the nation of Israel, but he has separated himself from God. "And he set up the idols in his heart and put up the stumblingblock of his idols before his face." That means you want to believe what you want to believe no matter what the Bible says. "I the Lord will answer him by myself and I will set my face against that man and will make him a sign and a proverb and I will cut him off from the midst of my people and he shall know that I am the Lord."

There are two ways in the Bible to have a personal encounter with God. One of them is to love the book. The other one is to simply not love the book. Hey, you want to believe speaking in tongues and healing and losing your salvation is okay, and you want to do it? He will put the verses in there, 80 of them probably, just to mess you up. You want to believe that you have to get baptized to be saved and go through that whole stupid process? He will give you plenty of the verses because you reject the declared teachings on it.

I had a guy years ago when I was a youth pastor, his two teenage boys were in my Sunday school class, and he was an intimate scholar, or maybe it was an enema scholar, I am not sure which it

was. He taught at one of the big Bible colleges out here south of town, Southbury Bible College, then and back then too. I have to say, this guy was an absolute genius. His recall on history was impeccable. It was incredible. He was a great guy as far as being able to, man, he was one of the smartest guys I ever met in my life. He was into the Greek and he was into the Hebrew and he was in all that stuff. When I came to be the youth pastor, obviously we did not get along very well. But I have to say, he was one of the gentlest, most humble men I have ever met in my life who hated the Word of God.

I mean, you see this guy, you think of a guy who hates the Word of God as snarling, with fire coming out, with horns. No, no, no, this guy was as pleasant and as soft-spoken, and he was as mannerly and he was as humble as you ever met in your life. But he hated that book. His two boys were in my high school class, and they were struggling with some things. I was working, trying to get them, and I was getting some progress with the one. He came on pretty good, and he got a hold of it. The other one, he struggled, but he was coming in to see me, and I was bringing him through the Bible, showing him, giving him the principles.

After about three or four months, obviously his dad must have asked him what I was doing, what we were talking about. Now, this kid has some serious issues, which only the Word of God can fix. So when his dad finds out that I am teaching him out of that book, you know what he did? He gave him a book out of his library that shows you how the Word of God was full of mistakes. So instead of that kid coming in now wanting to fix his life, the kid comes in with a book saying, "My dad gave me this, and I want to ask you some questions about that Bible." He completely lost the sense of where he was going, and now he wanted to find fault with the Word of God, just like his daddy did. That kid today is gone, man. His daddy is a mess, gone. He bounced around all over the place. But that is the way it works, you see.

Now this is the number one reason why men today cannot learn anything from God and the Bible. Other books, sure. But the Bible, no. They do not receive the instructions of the Bible as God's absolute truth.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

If you do not believe it is God's Word, it is not going to work in you. With that in mind, these guys love the instruction of men more than the instruction of God. They hate reproof. They are brutish, like we saw last week. What they wind up doing is setting themselves up as the final authority instead of the Bible. They are established by their wickedness. God takes their own wicked heart and deceives them, as I have showed you in Ezekiel.

VII. Being Established in Christ, the Word, the Home, and the Church

Now with that in mind, let us look at our second set of verses today in Proverbs 12:3. We will see how far we get. But Proverbs 12:3 says:

Proverbs 12:3

A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

Now Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus today. We thank You for the good people that have come out. We pray, Father, Your blessings upon our time and all that we do today. We love You. Lord, we thank You and praise You for all we do in Jesus' name. In His shape we ask it. Amen.

Now we are going to look at two more key words today. The first word we are going to look at is the word "established." The second word we are going to look at is the word "rooted" or "root," "the root of the righteous." But we want to look at the word "established" first.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 3:2, and these are two great verses, he tells that church that he is sending them Timothy, "our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith." Then he tells them over in Romans 1:11, that he is longing to see these Christians that he may "impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."

The real issue today with God's people, the church, is the fact that they, in their faith, they may be saved, they are on their way to heaven, but they have never been established in anything. Most of God's people do not know anything about the Bible. Most of God's people do not know why they believe what they believe when they do believe something in the Bible. Many times they do not even know for sure what they believe in any case about anything. In most cases, they certainly do not have a passion or a love to learn. Everything is made easy for them. They do not need the Bible anymore. Man has replaced it for you.

One of the greatest tragedies today. We make a joke around here about the churches that have the big screens. We have one, it is right here. We just have to take that down, we have everything we need. We laugh about it, we joke about it. It is kind of a funny joke around here. But whether you know it or not, those things undermining do a terrible thing. They will put the songs up on the screen so you do not have to get a songbook in front of you anymore and sing. You do not have to, you are hearing a sermon ever again now. Now open your Bibles this morning because it is on the screen. You will never find anybody ever saying in most cases, "Now turn to this passage and look at this." Watch it on the screen. There is a Bible and a rock in front of you. So when you are getting ready in the morning, you just simply look at your Bible and say, "Oh, I do not need mine. There is going to be one there."

Now I do not know what you know about human nature, but the Bible had to be the only reason you are here today. If I ever get to the place where I start taking the emphasis off the Bible so you do not have to bring it, you do not have to mark it, you do not have to open it, you do not have to turn to it, you better boot me so far, take me in an air mare stamp to get back. The only thing we are here for today is the Bible.

We have a pulpit. You will find that pulpit back in the book of Nehemiah when they want to get up and preach to the people. In Baptist churches down through history, you go to a Presbyterian church, the pulpits are hanging up here someplace or over on this side. You will find that in Baptist churches for the last 1500 years, when they got themselves organized and got going as Baptists, you are going to find that the pulpit was always in the center of the church. You know why that is? It is out of Nehemiah because they want everybody to know that the centerpiece of that church is the preaching of the Word of God.

Now we have gotten rid of the pulpit today. Pastors now teach their people sitting on stools. We have one in the back. You can try it sometime if you want. Go to the first one. The second one is the ladies. I was afraid some of you did not get that as it came out. But you know what we have done? We have streamlined churches, church services. We have streamlined it and made it so slick. We have streamlined the Bible right out of it.

Oh, let me get going on this. Study Bibles. Now, you probably are sitting here this morning and you have a study Bible. I am not fighting with you. I mean, use them the way that they are intended to be used, they are okay. I think the old Scofield Reference Bible is probably for a hundred years has been one of the greatest study Bibles there is. I understand. But everybody has one. You had a Rory Study Bible. You had the Scofield. Then you had a new Scofield, which is worthless. You had a Dakes. All the big guys started coming out. All the big professional guys that everybody looks to and thinks they know the Bible, they all put out a study Bible.

To them, it is all a money-making deal. Because in most of their churches, they know that they have a bunch of people who would not lift a finger to study the Word of God, but they will spend \$100 to buy a Bible that has somebody else's notes in it so they do not have to study it themselves. I know how human nature is. I have told you a million times, the best study Bible you ever have is the one you have that is yours that you put your own notes in. It is just that simple. They have streamlined them right out of the Word of God.

Today I want to talk about four areas that I work as pastor here to ground you in and to root you in and to establish you in. Because I think they are vital. These four areas are absolutely essential to your Christian life. You need at some point in your life to look back and say, "Okay, I am established." Now I know that some of you are new in the faith, some of you are growing. I get that. I am saying, this needs to be a goal in your life, but it will be a goal you will never get as long as you take a blasé approach to learning.

The word "establish" in the Bible is a great word. It is defined as to set, to fix, to settle permanently, to make firm, to anchor something that was wavering or doubtful or weak. If anybody today needs to be established, it will be God's people.

The first thing I want to talk about, or the first aspect that you need at some point in your life, is to be established in who you are in Christ. This will be your foundation.

➤ Established in Who You Are in Christ

1 Corinthians 3:11 says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The day you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life, that foundation of Jesus

Christ. The rest of your life, you build on that foundation, but you build toward being established.

Psalms 40:1

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.

You need to have your going in life established.

Psalms 112:5-8

A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.

At some point, this is where you need to get. You need to get to the point where you understand how God looks at you. That is important because we all do dumb things and we all do stupid things, and you have to learn at some point in your life when you do something wrong, how do you handle it? What do you deal with it like? Where do you take it? You have to learn the fact of how God looks at you. You have to realize that before you were saved, God looked at you as a sinner. But then you have to realize and understand that after you get saved, God never looks at you as a sinner again. You need to be established in that.

Then you need to see how you need to look at Him, the Lord. He is not some grandfather up there in the sky that is sitting in a rocking chair with a long white beard. He is not some God that is impervious to what is going on down here. He is not some God that just kind of sits back and lets things happen or puts things in motion and then forgets about them. You need to understand these things. Everything in your Christian life and your relationship with Him will depend on it. Being established will start right here with this concept: who you are really in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you asked the average Christian that has been saved five years or more—I always throw that in there, give everybody first five years of the period just to get your feet on the ground—and you asked them what really changed about them the day they got saved, they would not have any idea. I mean, what changed about you the moment the Holy Spirit of God came inside you? I mean, the split second when you asked Christ, what was different about you before you asked Christ into your life than the split second that you did? What changed about your body? Anything? What changed with your soul? Anything? What changed in your spirit? Anything?

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.

He says, "behold, all things become new." Now what are those new things? Notice "things" as plural. What are they? Do you know? We have discipleship here, and we encourage everybody that gets saved to go through discipleship. It is the basic foundational thing that really gives you some key understanding, and it is always available to anybody. We have a number of people who do it.

But I want to tell you something, as important as that is, I think the greatest series of studies we have ever put together here that gets taught all the time, and it kind of just developed itself into discipleship too, there is a study we have on the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. We have some really good people, men and women in this church, who can really teach that material very well. After salvation and the basic discipleship one, this class will be the absolute bedrock of you building a relationship with Christ based on you beginning to understand what changed about you the day you got saved and why, from the second before to the second after, you are a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things became new, and learning what those things are. The tragedy today is the average pastor, the average Christian, the average Bible teacher has absolutely no clue what they are.

➤ Established in the Word of God

The second thing a child of God needs to be established in is the Word of God.

Hebrews 13:9

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

Proverbs 16:1-3

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.

Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

You know, at some point in our Christian life, we need to start to put our Bible together. Did you notice Proverbs 16:1 is probably one of the greatest keys in the Bible to do that? It says, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." You get your heart in the right place and get the right attitude of heart about that book, the answers will come from God. We have men and women in this church who really know their Bibles very well. We have more learning it all the time, men and women who come in and come here. We have them moving from Washington state, coming over from Utah, coming up from wherever because they want to learn the Bible.

In Ephesians 4:11-15, the book of Ephesians was written to the New Testament church by Paul. It is really the handbook or instructions on not what the church should believe—that is the book of Romans—but Ephesians rather is the book of instructions written on what the church should be, not what it believes.

Ephesians 4:11-15

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Ephesians 4:14 says no more being a child when it comes to the doctrine and knowing the Bible. You see, a child will believe whatever he is told. A child is very naive. A child is very trusting, too trusting. A child believes whatever he is told, so he is easily manipulated, he is easily deceived, he is easily exploited. A child cannot discern truth from error. A child will make bad choices. He sees a handgun. He does not know its full potential. He thinks it is a toy from what he has seen on television. So he picks it up, makes a bad choice to play with it, and tragically shoots his sister or his brother or himself.

When it comes down to the tons of heresy and bad teachings today, the average child of God is tossed to and fro and blown in the wind of bad doctrine. Paul says he is carried away by every wind of doctrine. I have always thought that was interesting because in Acts chapter 1 and 2, when the Holy Spirit of God comes, it comes as a mighty rushing wind. It shows you that when the devil imitates the Holy Spirit of God in bad doctrine, it comes as wind, a false wind.

You have it everywhere. Internet Christianity. Man, beside the goofy stuff that is on that Internet. Christian conspiracy theories. Man, I get two or three emails a week, somebody wanting me to look at this conspiracy. I got one last week, I believe, saved man, believe him that at Richard Gebauer's Air Force Base, they have set up stockades and pens and tents to lock up all the Christians and put them under lock and key on that vast Air Force Base up there, and the CIA and the government are behind it to get rid of all the Christians. I think that is a good idea. Now, I know that is not true. Do you really want to know? I know that is not true. Obviously, from the obvious. The average five, ten Christians you meet are not worth locking up. They are not a threat to anybody.

Everybody wants something new today. Every man is stupid teaching that comes down the line, they fall for. Something new. Wow. Look at this. That Bible says there is nothing new under the sun. Nothing new out there. It is because you do not know your Bible. Oh, I got tongues. I speak in tongues. But then there is the tongues of angels. Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Lose your salvation. No rapture. That is a big one today. The ashes of the red heifer. Oh, you have to have the ashes of the red heifer. Blood moons all over the place. What really happened to the Ark of

the Covenant? Well, who does not know about it? Indiana Jones is in Washington, D.C. in a warehouse. The Holy Grail, the cup that Jesus drank from, over in Scotland someplace. Oh, I get it all the time. "Where do you think the Holy Grail is?" I type back, "I got it. Take my coffee out of it every morning." The junk is endless.

Somebody says, "Have you ever found the lost books in the Bible? What about the book of Enoch?" When The Passion of the Christ came out, or the crucifixion last movie that came out, they all got on there and they said it is based on the gospel. The Internet was flooded. There were 50 gospels out there today, and the gospel of Judas. They were coming back. The Judas was the bad guy saying, "Read the gospel of Judas. He got a bad rap. He was really a good guy."

I had a guy about six or seven months ago call me on the phone, and he says, "Do you know we are not the real Jews? Over in Jerusalem are not the real Jews." I said, "No, I did not know that." He says, "Yes." He says, "Where are the real Jews?" I says, "That is incredible. Really? I have never heard that before." "Well, brother, I have been enlightened." "Now do you mind if I ask you a couple questions because I am really into this?" He said, "Absolutely." I said, "When did they get lost?" He says, "Well, in 606 B.C. when Sennacherib came down and Nebuchadnezzar came in, they scattered him. They migrated all over the world. Then later on they migrated in England, and then they came over here, and now they are over here. We are over here. I am a Jew. You are a Jew. We are all Jews."

I said, "That is incredible." I said, "You believe the Bible?" "Oh, absolutely." I said, "You believe Jesus was who he said he was?" "Oh, absolutely." I said, "Well, they answered it. If they were dispersed in 606 and all over the world, and the Jews in Jerusalem, I want to write Jews, did Jesus make a mistake in the first coming of Christ when he went to the Jews in Jerusalem?" He never thought about that. I said, "If that is the case and they were the real Jews there, history is traceable. Where did, show me where they went away. Was Himmler wrong when he gassed six million of them? Was Titus wrong in 70 A.D. when he came down?" Those are historical facts. It is absolute idiots. The only people dumber than they are are the people that believe it.

Ephesians 4:14 says, "by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." You bet they do. 24/7, man. God's people just fall for it all the time. You know why? They are not established in the Word of God. Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Not undo him. The goal of your life is to be just like Jesus Christ in every way, shape, or form.

But you know what is wrong with Christianity today? We have the people who do not go the places they should not go. Do not say the words they should not say. Do not, not in public anyhow. Do not do the things that Christians are supposed to do. But that does not make you a Christian.

Next Sunday I want to have a Bob Alexander look-alike contest. Five or six of you are going to get into that. You are going to prepare all week. You are going to listen to my tapes all week long and get my mannerisms down. You are going to get everything I do down. You are going to get your hair cut, grow a mustache. You are going to do everything you can do to look like me and to mimic me. You are going to try to fool everybody up here with a Bob Alexander look-alike

contest. I am going to be hidden in the back someplace. You are not going to know if I am really up here or not. Next week it is incredible. Wills looks just like me anyhow. Right, son? You betcha. You do a great job. Five guys are up here, and you cannot tell them apart. They have my mannerisms down.

Finally, you try to trick them every way. Finally you bring my wife and put her right in front and you say, "Barb, pick the real Bob Alexander out of there." She says, "I will be honest, I have been married to him for 55 years, and I tell you, I just say, I do remember how long it was so I made it longer and make it shorter would never work. And I cannot tell." So you all pick and choose, and you all pick and choose, and lo and behold, Drake wins the contest. But you know what? Even though he looks like me and he dresses like me and he talks like me and he has my mannerisms down, he is still not me. Because the real thing that will keep anybody who wants to imitate me from ever really being me is you can get everything I do down. But the thing you have to get to be me is my mind. If you never get my mind, you will never be me. You can dress like Christ. You can talk like Christ. You can be all the things that Christ is. Until you get His mind, you are just a cheap imitation of Bob Alexander. That is where Christianity is today. Grounded and established in the Word of God.

Every time the Lord Jesus was faced with a situation, He went to the Bible. When the devil tried to get Him, He simply says, "It is written." When His scribes and Pharisees came after Him, He says, "Have you not read?" When somebody did not want to believe it, He says, "Tell them, Cal, what did I say? You do greatly err, not knowing the scriptures."

➤ **Established in His Home**

Psalms 102:21-28

To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.

I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

Your family is the guarantee of the continuance and the furtherance of the gospel that started in you when you got saved. It totally, solely depends on the establishment of your house. There should be no end to the years of your ministry when you have a legacy of children and

grandchildren carrying what you started in their lives on. The end result in Psalms 102:21 is to declare the name of the Lord in Zion.

In any family, Christian family, you have three main components that need to be established:

- You have the role of the father. He has a specific role that he has to follow.
- You have the role of the mother. She has a specific role that she has to follow.
- You have the role of the children. They have a specific role that they have to follow.

The establishment of these three will fix a wavering family because it will establish them. These three will make firm the things of the Lord to the children that will ensure that they continue the ministry in future generations. Giving your children a vision of God and what He has for them. Not by telling them, but by mom and dad through their role models living out the example before them. Giving them the instructions. The instructions in the Bible are the role of a father, the role of a mother, and the role of children. The instructions of five steps of training up a child right. Each step will come with its own set of instructions.

You lose a child because you get saved late in life or do not get plugged in late in life. It is not always the end of the world. There are five steps that you go through to get that child back. Each one will again have its own set of instructions. Proverbs 11:24, we saw a couple weeks ago, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind." I have seen families with a mom and dad who turned out kids that had no desire to go to church, no desire for the things of God. I have actually watched in that particular spot where with that mom and dad right there in that family was the end, the absolute end of any furtherance of the gospel going anywhere. Every generation will get worse. A couple of Thursday nights ago we talked about it. We have talked about it much.

➤ Established in His New Testament Local Church

Psalms 90:16-17

Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

This church is the work of our hands, and it needs to be established in your life.

Acts 16:4-5

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

You know, a couple of Thursday nights ago somebody asked the question, and we talked about the importance of the New Testament local church. It is the only institution instituted by God and ordained by God in the New Testament. All things, everything in your life needs to revolve around the local church.

Three things spiritually that you should always center your life around in a spiritual sense. I am not talking physical, now I am talking spiritual.

- 1.) God
- 2.) The Word of God
- 3.) The local New Testament church

You cannot have one without the other. You cannot have two and leave one out. You have all three or you have none of them. The only institution ordained by God in the New Testament, all things, everything in our lives should go through that structure. The New Testament local church is God's structure by which you establish yourself in the ministry. It is the structure used by God to save you. Now I know the physical church cannot save you, I am talking about the spiritual church being born again into God's church. The New Testament local church will equip you. The New Testament local church will train you, and the New Testament local church will establish you.

The New Testament local church in Acts, we know, is the model of the church at Antioch. I am always looking for models in the Bible. In Acts chapter 13, I think, is one of the greatest models and one of the most amazing models of how important the local New Testament church is, of us submitting ourselves to this structure as God's institution.

Acts 13:1-3

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

You know, about 8 or 9, 10 years ago, I do not know when, I was reading that one day, I saw one of the most incredible, amazing examples of how important a local church is. I have really never given it to you before. Just something that I just, I have always thought about, kept on myself, and always focused on myself. But I want you to notice something. After Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, and that takes place in Acts chapter 9, we kind of lose Paul for the next 10 or 12 years. He is absent. Then finally, when he does show up the next time we see him, he is at the church at Antioch.

In those missing years, I do not know if you know this or not, God got Paul after he got saved. He took him through discipleship 1 and 2. He took him through the whole thing. What he did is he gave Paul the revelation of the New Testament local church. Now we who know the Bible know that the Bible says that was a mystery that God revealed to no man. In Galatians chapter 1, I think it is verse 12 or 17 down through there, he takes Paul up in Mount Sinai in Arabia, and Paul spends three and a half years up there by his own admission. He takes Paul right up where he took Moses. When he gave Moses the Ten Commandments to establish a nation of Israel, he

took him in Arabia on Mount Sinai. When he hounded Paul to give him the declaration for the New Testament establishment of the church, he took him to the same spot, to the same place, gave him the New Testament commission.

The Bible is very clear that no other man got this revelation. Galatians 1:12, Paul says, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He says God took me up on that mountain and gave it to me and only me. "I am going to declare to the Gentile world what the church is." Well, you would have thought that he would have been so hot to go on that, that he would have just got him a big bus, painted his name on it, and headed on down the road starting churches.

You know what he did? After God called him and only him, gave the message to him and only him, and gave him that direct revelation, he shows up in a local New Testament church. He submits himself to that church, teaching the Bible and going along and helping that church grow, and he patiently waits. Now wait a minute. He has got the message to start all the churches in the world. But he goes to this church, he submits himself, and he waits. He waits till the Holy Spirit of God moves through the leadership and says, "Separate Paul and Barnabas." He did not go in there and say, "Boys, I got the message from God. Now I know he did not give it to you, but he gave it to me, and I got a job to do. So I am just stopping in here for a little bit to fill up my canteen and maybe get a couple of those a breath. I got a mission." Uh-uh. He knew how important the church was, and he knew that if he was ever going to establish the concept of the church, he had to submit himself to it. Did you hear what I just said? So the man with a great mission to the world goes to a church and then waits till the Holy Spirit of God tells the leadership that says, "Paul, we think you need to go." Well, did not he already know that? Submission. He understood the importance of the New Testament local church. Even though God had told him on Sinai, he still sets the example and joins a church and waits till the Holy Spirit of God moves through the leadership. Now are we any better than Paul? Have we got a greater Paul? You got a greater calling, do you?

When you are established within a New Testament local church, you will be established also in the eyes of others. People will seek you out. They will want you to work with them. They will want you to disciple them. They will see how you have labored and see what the people that you have produced and turned out. It is absolutely incredible.

VIII. The Unmovable Root of the Righteous

Now the reason for us to be established is so that we, when it comes to the things of God, are unmovable. Proverbs 12:3 says, "but the root of the righteous shall not be moved."

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

You know, in a combat situation, they have what they call offensive positions and defensive positions. The greatest defendable position in a combat situation will be what they call the fixed

position where you are dug in solid. As my old drill sergeant used to say, "like an Alabama tick." You have complete control of the ground all around you. You have the best defensible position.

Nowhere in history is this illustrated more than in the 1942 early battles of World War II on the Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal, when the Americans just had a foothold on that little island, Guadalcanal, and the airfield, Henderson Field, was vital to keep the Japanese from attacking into Australia and taking over the whole Pacific. Those little contingents of Marines were holding on to that thing, and the Japanese outnumbered them five to one. They had no Navy to back them up. They had no food. They had no water. They had nothing. They were on their own, and the Japanese outnumbered them greatly, but the thing they had in their favor was they dug in and had a fixed position.

This is where you first heard the great term "Banzai." The Japanese would line up four or five thousand at a time and come in waves on those Marine fixed positions, and the Marines with three or four machine guns and 40 or 50 riflemen just cut them down. In the morning, you could not walk over the Japanese bodies. There were so many. The next night they would Banzai again, and they would cut them down. The next night they would cut them down. Pretty soon we needed some more Japs, and they held on to Guadalcanal, and the fixed position is what saved them. It gave them complete control, and in a spiritual warfare in Christianity, your best defensive position in a spiritual warfare is the fixed position. You keep control of all the area around you because you use the book to define the battle. You never lose control. You are dug in. You are unmovable with what you believe. You are steadfast in your doctrine.

Ephesians 3:17-19

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Colossians 2:6-8

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

When you are rooted in the book, when you are established in the Word of God, in your church, in your family, nothing will move you. You are steadfast in your doctrine. You know what you believe, and you know why you believe it. You not only know why you believe it, but you can go to the mat with anybody with that Bible. You also know why you believe it based on knowing who you are in Christ. Now through the book that God gave you, now through the church that

God gave you, now through the instructions that God gave you, you are established in the Word of God and the Christian faith, and you are never going to be moved out of that.

You see, this is the absolute importance for a child of God today to establish himself and be rooted and unmovable, steadfast in what we believe. That is what this church is all about. I showed you three or four weeks ago, maybe a month or so now, we talked about, I took you back and I showed you how, where we came from and where we are at today, and how God has built, and I gave you a motto for our church. That motto you see people wearing them on their shirts, it is up here, AAA with a bar through it, zero. It is an old motto out of the 39th Infantry Division in World War II that means "Anything, Anytime, Anywhere, Bar Nothing." That became the motto of this church, that we have built men and women to the point, and continue to build men and women to the point, and we will build you as men and women to the point that you can go anywhere, anytime, any place for God, bar nothing. It is what it takes. It is a sacrificial Christianity over a convenient Christianity.

Well, I gave you the motto. We have always got guys and gals in this church that always take it an extra step. This week I got a text from our famous French evangelist, John Busquette, who is my right-hand man on research, anything I need I call him. He has dubbed my books back there, and he is invaluable. He said, "I thought you would like this, I put this together, this is, we got a creed, we got a motto for our church, now is the creed." I made a copy for everybody that wants it. Do not take one if you do not agree with this creed. This is not for your talking points.

➤ Church Creed

In times of uncertainty, there was a special breed of Christian ready to answer our Lord's call. A common man with a common Bible. And an uncommon desire to succeed. Forged by adversity, he stands alongside the countless martyrs who have paid the ultimate price for the Lord. I am that man. My Bible is my symbol of honor and heritage bestowed upon me by the martyrs that have gone before. It is the truth that I have sworn to protect. By choosing the Bible, I accept the responsibility of my chosen profession and way of life. It is a privilege that I must earn every day. My loyalty to God in His holy words is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow soldiers, always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work nor seek recognition for my actions. I voluntarily accept the inherited hazards of my profession, placing the salvation of others before my own comforts. I serve with honor on and off the battlefield. The ability to control my emotions and my actions regardless of circumstances sets me apart from other men. Uncompromising integrity is my standard. My character and honor are steadfast. My word is my bond. We expect to lead and be led. In absence of orders, I will take charge, lead others to accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations. I will never quit. I preserve and thrive on adversity. My Savior expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies through His Word. If knocked down, I will get back up every time. I will draw on every main ounce of strength to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight. We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The souls of the unsaved and the success of our mission depend on me. My training is never complete. We train for war and fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my Savior. The execution of my duties

will be swift and violent when required, yet guided by the very principles of the Holy Word of God. Brave men have fought and died that I might have a Bible that I can love and teach and preach. It is a heritage that I am bound to uphold in the worst of conditions. The legacy of my Savior steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed. I will not fail.

Now that is what our church is right there. That is the creed that we build men and women that can stand on their own two feet, established who they are in Christ, established in the Word of God, established in their home, and established in the ministry of this church. Father, we thank You and pray.