

# Proverbs 12:10

Sunday 8/16/2015

We are looking forward to every year. It's hard to think how it could get better, but then every year it does get better. So we just thank the Lord for that. Today, we are going to be back in the book of Proverbs, Proverbs 12 to be exact. As you know, we have been for the last year or so coming through the book of Proverbs, verse by verse, word by word. We decided to do that because of basically where our church is at with so many ministries that we have going and people working with people and helping me and all the different opportunities that we get to preach and to open up the Word of God with people.

I felt like it as a church, it was time to go through probably the single book in the Bible that really deals with the issues of life. I do not know of another book in the Bible that covers everything that you and I will ever face in life. The book of Proverbs, as far as I am concerned, is the soul of the Bible. It contains the very essence of everything that you find throughout the rest of the Bible. You are going to see an example of that today.

We were off the last four weeks, really five weeks. I was gone last week and Bob filled in for me and did a great job. But the four weeks before that, we had taken time and were going through the 18 steps that has put America where she is at today based on the Supreme Court's decision on gay marriage and where we are at as a country. I think that was very helpful to you. I know many of you will use that material and it will help you in dealing with people and talking with people, and it already has.

But today we are going to be back in Proverbs 12 and we are going to pick it up in Proverbs 12:10. The verse says this:

*Proverbs 12:10*

*A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus and we ask You, Father, to help us today as we glean from Your Word. We thank You so much for our church and for the men and the women that I know personally here that love You and love the Word of God, and for the many blessings that You have bestowed upon us and the ministries and the people we keep meeting and reaching and that You keep bringing our way. We just love You for it, Father, and help us to always stay true to Your Word and to preach it, Father, with the zeal that will affect others. We will just thank You today and bless us and give us what You have for us and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

## I. The Importance of Proverbs and a Working Knowledge of God's Word

You have heard me say many times, and in fact I started off this morning with it, the importance of the book of Proverbs. It contains the issues of life and how that Proverbs in the Old Testament will be the principles behind the stories of life. I do not know of anything that you and I will ever

face that we will get into, that we will have to deal with, that we cannot go back to the book of Proverbs.

The book of Proverbs is so deep and has so much depth to it that if we spent three or four years going through it, which we may, if we spent three or four years going through it, I guarantee you we could start back in the beginning again, come through it again, and find just that much more material that we missed the first time. It is an incredible book. Everything goes back to the book of Proverbs.

When you have the ability, and this is where I try to get you to be, when you as a Christian have the ability to pull all of it together—the stories in the New Testament, the issues of your life—and take it back to the fundamental book of Proverbs and put it all together, then you are now able to really learn some things about your Bible.

I have a phrase that I use, and I use it, not in the Bible, it is my own invention, but it has come to my way of thinking over the years when I look at the Bible, when I look at people. It is a simple phrase simply called a working knowledge of the Word of God. A lot of people know things about the Bible, but that does not mean you know the Bible.

For me, and my goal for you, it always has been since day one—we are going to have anniversary Sunday next week and it will be 12 years now we have been a church—nothing has changed from the first service we ever had. My goal for you is to help you get to the point where you can take the Bible and you can take the issues of life and the things you have to struggle with, or the people you work with, or the people you have to deal with, or just reading your Bible and getting into Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or Romans, or Thessalonians, or wherever. When you find those principles, being able to go back and pull it all together and come away with a complete understanding of what is going on with that particular situation. To me, that is called a working knowledge of the Word of God.

It is having the Bible work for you. It is knowing how to get the Bible to work for you. It is knowing how to orchestrate the things in the Word of God that bring about your understanding of what you are dealing with, what you are up against.

Somebody said one time, I read this years and years ago, that the Old Testament will reveal the New Testament. That basically, the New Testament is contained in the Old Testament. And I totally believe that to be true. I heard a guy preach one time, he did a neat little thing. He says, "Now you take the word Old Testament. You got three letters in Old and you got nine letters in Testament." And by a stroke of coincidence, that is how many books you got in the Old Testament, 39. Old Testament, three, nine. And he says, "You know what?" He was preaching, doing a good job too. And he says, "I believe that the New Testament is contained in the Old Testament." And he did a little thing which I thought was neat. He said, "Now you take that 39 books in the Old Testament." And he says, "You take three and nine and you multiply three by nine and you get 27." And 27 will be the number of books in the New Testament. The point he was trying to make, he made it very well that day, was the fact that the Old Testament contains the New Testament. The New Testament many times will be revealed through the Old Testament. It is a great way to understand your Bible. You will find over and over again that you have an

Old Testament verse like Proverbs, and it will unlock a New Testament passage someplace and show you the whole concept of the whole context of what you are looking at.

## II. Proverbs 12:10 and the Treatment of Animals

Now you look at Proverbs 12:10, and we are going to spend some time with it. I want to show you exactly a great example of this. Proverbs 12:10 says this: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." You read that verse in Proverbs coming through it, you would probably blow through that so fast you would think there is absolutely nothing to that. That is not just a good, honest, true statement. It is a true statement from a practical sense. It is simply saying that a good man will take care of his animals.

We talk about and see it all the time. There is hardly a week goes by that in the Kansas City Star, you do not read a story about animal abuse. I, for one, I cannot watch Animal Planet. I just cannot. You have these dogs that get hurt or get sick or they get bit with a snake or they get hit with a car or something happens, and they keep you. I cannot watch it. I just cannot. Animal abuse to me is a terrible thing. It is a terrible thing. Hurting them and killing them. As I said, there is hardly a week goes by in the Kansas City Star, there is another article about it. Animals that are just based on a man's cruelty and a man's lack of respect for life and for anything that is right will hurt an animal or kill an animal just for the fun of it.

The last part of Proverbs 12:10 says, "but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." What he is saying there is simply that everything a wicked man does, everything he does is out of his cruelty. He will have a mindset behind it to hurt somebody, to do something that is not right. He is slothful. He is unrighteous. He is all about himself. You have to be of a sick mind to consciously hurt something that cannot defend itself just for the purpose of showing off.

I remember a while back, it has been a couple of years ago, some guy had a bunch of his friends over, and they were grilling out and they were all obviously drinking. He took a little kitten and put it on the hot grill just for the fun of it. Like a big guy that he was. I would like to see him go to Africa and try that with a Black Panther. We will see who gets put on the grill quicker.

I hear stories all the time and you see pictures of them throwing dogs out of cars, and they do not want them. I get upset when I see some redneck driving around town with his dog in the back of the pickup truck. I think that is stupid. You have your seat belt on and if somebody rear ends you, you will not go through. She does not have an airbag. They have nothing. Why do not you put the dog in the seat behind the airbag and you get in the back and let him drive? It drives me nuts. It drives me nuts.

Leaving them in a hot car. It is a week, a week goes by that somebody does not lose their dog or their animal because they are going to someplace, they leave them in a hot car, it gets 140 degrees in there in 20 minutes, and they come back and they say, "Gee, I never thought it would hurt them." I am never considering that, hey, animals have feelings too. I am the first one to tell you, I know you can take it too far. I know you can. I understand that.

But it first says that a righteous man would not do that to an animal. A righteous man, some of you, I know you guys, you are like me, when your pets get sick, you worry about them. You take them to the vet. There have been many a time I would like to have got my animals on my Blue Cross and Blue Shield. I worry about they do not have water, they do not have food. I have neighbors that go off out of town and I have to give, I have given their dog water and food. Of course, maybe they are smarter than I am and they know they do not have to do it because stupid me will go over and do it. I do not know.

But we all buy our dog's toys. My dog has more toys than most of your kids have. We buy them bones and we are not just satisfied with bones. We have to get the bones with the peanut butter in them, or something in there that they spend all day, come with a direction they have to read to get it out of there. We buy them little jackets. KU, MU. I see people in the wintertime walking their dog, the dog has a jacket. They have seat belts that when you take your dog and he sits in the seat, you put a seat belt on him. People buy it.

A righteous man will regard the life of him. He knows that all things that God created from Revelation 4:11 are for God's pleasure, for His purpose. So he takes pleasure in the little things, cute things of life. We all love them. Being the same man, you should give a respect of animals and understand their purpose in life and respect it. In a practical sense, it is true. Most generally, people who really get attached to their pets and care for them are fundamentally good people.

I said, I know you can go to the extreme. I have known people that cared more for animals than they do the souls of lost people. That is too far, you see. You have this PETA group out there, that you cannot do anything with an animal anymore without getting in trouble. But the verse says that the righteous man regarded the life of his beast. And, hey, I can understand that. If you take care of your pets, you worry about them and you will watch out for them, it is a righteous thing. If that is true, hey, I am a candidate for sainthood. I worry about my dogs all the time.

When we went to Ohio, we got to take our dogs to a place. My two labs get a condo. I have never lived in a condo. They have indoor, outdoor. They have two beds side by side. When I get there, the first time I went, because my guys have never been away from it, I tell them, "Make sure they know how to get from the inside out. I want them to be, you know." And I worry about them. I worry about them. That is just me. And I know some of you are the same way. So in a practical sense, it is true. Good people, good men, who take responsibility for an animal that cannot necessarily take care of itself, he will regard the life of his beast.

I have seen some of you guys that put on a tough exterior, and nothing ever, that you just never show any real emotion or anything. And you get that little puppy. And the next thing you know, it just melts your little heart. Does it not, Bob? It does. I get it. I know. I have never met a, I have met a lot of people I did not care for, but I never met a dog I did not like. It is just the way it is.

### III. The Canaanite Woman: A Key to Prayer

Now, believe it or not, this verse here in Proverbs will be the key to unlocking one of the greatest stories in all of the Bible on our prayer life and getting your prayers answered and getting what you want from God when it is the right thing to want.

Here is a story, and we are going to turn over to Matthew 15 here. Here is a story in Matthew 15, and it is one of the strangest stories. I have got to tell you this before we start. One of the strangest stories in the Bible. Matthew 15:22-28 is a story about a woman who has a need. It is a great picture of you and me when we have a need and bring it to God, because that is exactly what she does. In this story, it is a picture of our prayer life. She had a need, she brought it to God. She had a petition, she took it to God. You and I have needs and petitions, we take it to God. It is an incredible story about our picture of our prayer life. She comes to Him three times. And all three times He flatly rejects her. One of the greatest stories in all the Bible. In this story, you have a great illustration on prayer and our prayer life. It is one of the greatest things you will ever see.

Let me just say this in preparation for getting into this passage. Romans 8:26 tells us that we do not know how to pray.

*Romans 8:26*

*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

That verse says that there is an infirmity that we all have. In fact, in the Bible, when you study it out, there are three basic fundamental infirmities that every man and every woman has. If you really, really, really want to move your Christian life up a couple levels, find out what those three are, go to work on them. But one of them you already have, and that is the Bible says we do not know how to pray. It is an infirmity we have.

Now, I call this message, and I do not title most of my messages or really any of them, but I would call this message Jesus Having a Really Bad Day. One of the strangest places in the Bible. We have a song and I always, when my kids and I, we have a little disagreement about something and they do not like this or they do not, they get a little whiny sometimes about things. And I would always sing this song, "Does Jesus care when my heart despairs?" And they would always say, "Oh, Dad," and I always try to put the spiritual element in. In this story, He does not care. You sing, "Does Jesus care when my heart despairs?" Obviously from this story, He does not. It is incredible. It is incredible.

We had a thing started back in the 70s called Dial-A-Prayer. Dial-A-Prayer was the thing where if you had a need, you had a telephone, you just dial a number. You used to see them on billboards, Dial-A-Prayer, and somebody would actually answer the line. They had people staffing it all the time and people would actually answer the phone and you could tell them and they would pray with you over the phone. I think it is a good thing. The atheists caught on to it and they called one called a Dial-A-Prayer for an atheist and it is a phone number you call, but nobody ever answered. I think that is the number she got because nobody is answering. It is an incredible story. Incredible story.

Now let me just say this. Places like this that I am going to show you that seem to go contrary to what we know God to be, that seems to be out of character for what we know it to be. These places, when you study them out, will yield some of the greatest truths that you will ever

discover about God and a relationship that you want to have with Him. I am just telling you. When you find a place like this, and there are a number of them in the Bible, when you find a place like this that you find total brick wall, this lady trying to do everything she can to get something from God and it is no every time and even gets to the point where you are going to see here where it gets quite insulting. There are some lessons for us that I want us to learn today.

## IV. The Canaanite Woman's Encounter with Jesus

Let us read it here. Let us read the passage. Start in Matthew 15:21.

*Matthew 15:21-28*

*21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

*22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

*23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

*24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

*25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

*26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

*27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*

*28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

Now, if you are any kind of Bible student at all, and you are reading this passage, you should have picked up a couple of things to show you something special about this story. There are some things when I read it, and it should be with you too who have been saved for quite a while and getting into the Bible, that stand out. That is always the thing you look for. When you get into a passage or a story in the Bible and you want to solve what is going on, you do the same thing a detective does when he comes to a crime scene. You look for clues. You look for fingerprints. You look for DNA. You look for fabric fibers. You look for this, and then you put it all together and slowly the story of what really happens stands out.

Well, the first thing here is found in Matthew 15:28 when He says, "O woman, great is thy faith." That ought to be the first thing that jumps out at us. You know why? Because in your Bible, there are only two women that are ever called great. That ought to be the first thing that grabs you. One of them is found in 2 Kings 4:8, that would be the woman of Shunem. The other one is here in Matthew 15:28, this woman here. You ought to have that in your Bible by now, but if you do not, you need to get it in. There are only two women in the Bible that the Bible says they were great.

Now, let me take it to the next level. One of those women represents the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, and the other woman represents the church in the New Testament. The woman in 2 Kings 4:8, that would be the woman who represents the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, and the one where we are at in Matthew 15, this woman is going to represent you and me as a type of church, a Christian.

The second thing that I would grasp out of that coming down here is that it says that she is a woman of Canaan. She is a Canaanite. She is not a Jew. She is a Gentile. She is from the land of Ham. She is a servant of servants. Now, that should have gotten your attention because the first man in the Bible that is saved exactly like you and I are saved is a servant of servants in Acts 8, the Ethiopian eunuch. If that were not enough, in Mark 15:21, a guy by the name of Simon, who is a black man, was pulled out of the crowd to help Christ carry the cross to Calvary. And if that were not enough, in Acts 13:1-2, when you have the model church there at Antioch and it lists the five guys who are the leaders, two of them are servants of servants, Simon and Lucius of Cyrene.

But most importantly here, as a Gentile servant of servants, she does what the scribes and the Pharisees have failed to do. Did you notice that? This lady, I understand why she is great. We are going to see even why she is great a little bit in a greater way, but I get it. This woman does what the scribes and the Pharisees have failed to be able to do. The Bible scholars of her time, she gives Christ His proper biblical titles on all levels. She comes in Matthew 15:22 and says, "O Lord," that is His connection to God the Father. She says in Matthew 15:22, "thou Son of David," that is His connection to Israel. And she says in Matthew 15:27, "Truth, Lord," that is her connection to her relationship that she believes He tells the truth. She outdid the scribes and the Pharisees before they ever got out of bed that morning. That is so true. The common man will always get Him when a learned man could not find Him all day long. Those are some incredible things you ought to see. If those things did not grab you and get your attention, then I may suggest that you are spending a little too much time with other things.

## V. The Three Rejections

Now let us look at this story. The first thing I want to do is I want to look at the rejections because I think they are incredible and I think they are the key to the story.

- Rejection Number One
- Rejection Number Two
- Rejection Number Three

## VI. The Importance of a Relationship with God's Word

Now what follows here is a great illustration of the real meaning of having a relationship with the Word of God. Let me say most Christians' relationships with God are tremendously inadequate. Now I know most people do not like to hear things like that. I get accused many,

many times of being negative and not positive. I understand that that is a negative statement when you say that most Christians' relationships with God are woefully inadequate. So let me be positive about it. I am positive that most Christian relationships with God are tremendously inadequate.

You cannot have a relationship with God without a relationship with His Word. All my life I have had an open door policy because I believe it is the pastor's job to teach people the Bible. That is my job. I know other people do it but they do not do it because of the fact that I will not do it. I enlist my people to help me but my door is always open to anybody. And I have a standing offer that I will spend an hour a week with anybody who wants to come over and study the Bible. Now that sounds wonderful. Oh, an hour with Bob to study the Bible. But when they get there, when they have gotten there in the past, here is how I do it. Obviously I want you to learn how to learn your Bible. You know what? Somebody teaching you the Bible is good. But you know you will never really learn your Bible just by coming on Sunday morning or even coming on Thursday night. You know where you really learn your Bible? When you go home and you take apart what we talked about and you really make it real in your life and get it into your Bible, that is where you learn.

So when somebody comes over and says, I think they have the illusion that, "Well, Bob is just going to sit down and screw off the top of his head, screw off the top of my head and pour everything in and I am just going to get all of this." That is not how I do it. I always tell them, "Look, you pick something you want to study. I do not care what it is. A book, this, that, whatever it is. You spend two or three weeks going through it, writing down everything you do not understand about it and then bring it into me, we will sit down and you and I will put it all together and I will add to it and I will push that whole thing together for you." What better deal can you get than that? You know how many people do not take that up over the years simply because they do not want to do the work. They do not want to get in the Bible. They want to just come and have somebody feed it to them. Just give it to them. They do not want any work involved in it. I mean no, no, no that is too much work for me.

What you know about the Bible, dear friends, will be in direct relationship to what you know about God. You say, "Well, I know God." No, no, no, no. You think you know God. You have not got a clue because you do not know anything about His Word. Putting the Bible together is putting God together in your relationship. As I said earlier, learning things about the Bible is not learning the Bible. No book, no relationship. It is only in your mind.

I sometimes think how lonely God must be. Years ago I had parents that I was good friends with and they had a boy who was absolutely worthless. I mean he was absolutely worthless. If you wanted to take him out to shoot him he would not be worth the bullet. I mean he was absolutely worthless. He did not care for his parents. He was disrespectful to his parents. He was everything in a negative fashion to his parents you could be. The only time he wanted anything to do with his parents is when he ran out of money and he came back to get something from them. And I watched his parents. They wanted to have a relationship with him. They wanted to have a time with him. They wanted to build and talk and do things as a family. He did not want that. All he wanted from them is when I am in a jam and I need some more bucks because no bucks, no Buck

Rogers and I cannot get out and do what things I want to do. Then I will come back and I will talk to you to get some money.

I have thought to myself many times over the years. That is how God must feel sometimes with some of us as God's people. He wants a relationship with us. We do not want one with Him. We just want things from Him when we need it and the only time we show up is when we need something from Him. Listen. It is no wonder so many of God's people get screwed up and make a mess out of their Christian lives. Listen, the deeper you get into that book, God's mind, the deeper you get into God, every aspect of Him. After 20, 30 years, you know exactly how He works. You know how He thinks. You understand His patterns. You know how almost in every given situation how He works.

You look at two people who have been married for 70 years. You see them at the mall. They are helping each other down the mall. Cutest little thing. They are about the same size now and they picked up each other's mannerisms. If they had a game show on television, "Know Your Spouse," and you put a young married couple on and then put this older couple on, this older couple would blow them out of the water. You know why? Because after 70 years of marriage, you know what each other is thinking, what each other is going to do in any given situation, in every response, you absolutely know because you have had a relationship for 70 years and you know how that thing is going to work out. In a spiritual sense, that is exactly what you develop after years working to build a relationship with the Word of God and God. And you cannot have one without the other.

I have told you many times, my number one goal for you, for me, is for you to learn your Bible, is to be able to have a working knowledge of the Word of God. I have had people tell me all my life, "Well, I do not want to really get deep into the Bible. I do not want to get into the deep things of the Bible." Then you will never get into the deep things of God. It is not simple. You see, in our mind, we try to think, "Well, I can separate the Bible over here and have a relationship with God over here. I can have a really deep, meaningful relationship with God, but I do not have to work with the Bible." It does not work that way. Your relationship with Him and His depth will be in direct relation to your depth in that book. You know why? That book is His mind. How are you going to get to the depth of His mind without getting to the depths of His book? It is just that simple.

## VII. The Five Ps and God's Principles

Now, this is what she does in Matthew 15 in our story here. This woman knows her Old Testament, and she knows that no matter how many times she gets rejected, she stays with the promises of the Word of God. This woman has what I call the five Ps down. The five Ps are something I developed in my own life years and years ago. I do not think I ever gave them to you, but I always have. Whenever I have something, these five Ps always have to be there. This lady has them figured out too.

➤ 1.) The right position.

- 2.) The right perspective.
- 3.) The right persistence.
- 4.) The right promises.

Now look at Matthew 15:27: "And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She had been rejected three times. The last time flat out disrespectful. And she said to Matthew 15:27, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She says, "You are right, Lord. That is a great point. I am a dog. You are right on the money. You are right in everything You said. I am a dog. But Lord, I am Your dog. I am Your dog. I am a dog. But according to Deuteronomy 22:6, Exodus 23:19, 1 Corinthians 9:7-9, I know Lord, that has not been written yet, but it is in Your mind. So I got it back there. And oh yeah, Proverbs 12:10, 'A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.' You say You are a righteous man. I believe You are a righteous man, O Son of David. And I am Your beast. Now fulfill these promises, O righteous man, that You are." And this is where she got Him. You know what? She nailed it. Because it is with this statement that she gets her prayer answered.

Matthew 15:28 says, "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

The principle is this, and it is a great one. She understood the number one greatest concept about God that we need to hold on to and remember no matter how dark it gets and how bad it gets. God never violates His own principles. If He said it, He has to do it. Sometimes we get so caught up that it does not get done in our timeframe the way we want it because we are so selfish and we have really no working relationship with God. But God has promised us some things in His Word and He is obligated to bring them to pass. But sometimes He does it in His own timing for His own reason. And when we really do not know Him, how He thinks, how He operates, never discovered His patterns, do not know how to predict what He is going to do in any given situation from the principles in the Bible, we get discouraged and then we get mad and then we lose faith.

She is a great woman. She is great because she stayed with the book. She stayed with the principle. She stayed with everything that God had given her as a promise, what she knows to be true. She never got caught up that it did not happen when she wanted it to happen because she knew that Him being a righteous man and her being the beast, the dog, He had to take care of it if He is a righteous man.

## VIII. Five Reasons Why Prayers Are Not Always Answered Immediately

Many times as here in this passage, God will not just give us what we need and what we want even when He knows we really need it. Many times He will use the situation to see and prove the sincerity of our love. In fact, out of this great story based on Matthew 15 and Proverbs 12, you

will find five reasons why we do not get what we want when we pray when we want it. One of the greatest studies on prayer in all of the Bible and remember the Bible says, Romans 8:26, we do not know how to pray for what we ought.

Now let me give you these five things very quickly.

1. Sometimes we do not get our prayers answered because He wants to see if we are really earnest about it, see if we are really sincere what we are praying about.

We use prayer today like an L.L. Bean or a Pro-Bass catalog. We just order things from it from God. "God give me this. God I need this. God why do I not understand why You are not doing this? God have You said I could call claim You, I am claiming this to that." And that is what we go through. Our prayer life is not based on the Word of God but rather the will of man. There is no real understanding of God's mind because there is no real understanding of His Word. No biblical thought to our prayer, no connection to anything biblically that may be going on because there is nothing going on. We are in a jam and we just need God to get us out of this jam so we can get into another bigger jam and sometimes He will just hold off and get us to come to the end of self. He will use the situation to get us to see how far out we really are from where God really wants us to be and yet many times or not most of the time we are in church every Sunday and we carry the right Bible.

2. Sometimes we do not get our prayers answered because He wants to show us how helpless we are on our own.

I was in Ohio, Danny was telling me a story. I did not see it. I think it was one of the football coaches was speaking at the, it may have been at the, I do not remember what it was but it was a great story. He can tell you where it was. I think it was a coach. He is telling a story the way we are. A guy had a very important business meeting and he had to get there and he was late and he drove into the parking lot and he, the place was packed and he is driving around and he is driving around. He is getting frustrated. Finally, he looks toward heaven. He says, "God, if You get me into this meeting and I do not be late, Lord, if You get me a parking place, I promise You, I will do whatever You want me to do. I will do it this, I will do that, I will do this, I will do everything." And he said, "Oh Lord, just help me." And the moment he opened his eyes, the lady in front of him began to pull out and he said, "Never mind Lord, I took care of it myself." That is what we do. That is what we do. We take care of ourself. We all like to be in control. That is our number one problem and that will be our biggest issue. So sometimes God puts us in a situation that we have absolutely no control over and just lets it go for a while. Out of control for us, but totally in control for Him.

Like here, she has absolutely no power or control over this situation with her daughter. She is absolutely helpless. She went to Jesus. She went to the disciples. She has done everything humanly possible and she could not get what she needed. You know, that is the way that God always wants us to be. He wants us to be helpless. Hey, I have no doubts. When I get to heaven, I am sure there will be things that God, I will see that God wanted to do with me and I will ask God, "Why did You not do it?" And God said, "You know what, Bob, I could not do it because you were just too strong." Christianity weakness in the right context is never a bad thing. In fact, the stronger you get in your relationship with Him and the Word of God, the weaker you will be in His life. And that is exactly where we all should

be.

I have learned over the years that God has His job that He does and I have my job that I am supposed to do. What happened with most God's people when they do not build a relationship with God and the Word of God, you cross over, do not do your job and try to start doing His. He will never cross over and start doing yours. But many times when we cross over, we stop Him from doing His. Let God do His and just do yours. Quit trying to do God's job.

3. Sometimes we need to get the selfish aspect out of our prayer.

Now this lady looks like her prayer is 100% legit and it probably is. But you know, sometimes we have an ulterior motive tagged on to a legitimate prayer. I always like to watch Congress. Congress will have this bill that they have to pass and it is a legitimate bill. It has to get done. And everybody knows that it is going to pass and it has to get passed because it is very, very important that it does. And what those rascals will do is they will take every pet bill that is worthless, that is some interest group, that is some pork, that is something that has nothing to do with nothing like building bridges under a freeway for turtles to get to the other side. And they will tag it on to a really good bill because they know that nobody reads the bills and they pass it that way. We do the same thing in prayer. We will have a legitimate prayer. We will put it out and then we will start putting a little add-ons in.

See, the difference between God and Congress, God reads the bill. Romans 8:28 says He reads the heart. He separates out the real motive from the false motive. And sometimes He has to get that out before He will do what He does and that is come down and give us the answer that we need.

4. Sometimes He wants to show us that a refusal is not always a permanent thing.

A lot of times not getting the prayer answer when we want it has to do with God's timing. Sometimes God has something or somebody that He wants to come out of your situation that you do not see. And He wants to use the issue that you are going through. All you see is your own situation. He sees the big picture. All you see is, "Oh what I am going through." You fail to see the big picture of what God is doing on the large screen. And in His timing He will get it all together. He wants to get you and me through our issues to somebody else who has a need. So He times it out to put all events together so you can reach someone through your trouble. But we are so self-centered and focused on ourselves that we can never see His timing and working so we miss it.

It is that old concept that I gave you back in Acts 8 a while back when we preached on soul winning at Proverbs 11, prepared sinner, prepared servant. God has tremendous amounts of prepared sinners prepared to hear the gospel. What is lacking is prepared servants to take it to them. People who absolutely know nothing about how God works. How many times I have heard somebody in an argument with somebody who did not do what the person really wanted and that person would look at them and say, "What am I, a mind reader?" As a Christian that is exactly what you ought to be. You ought to read God's mind because you are holding it in your lap today. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." We have the mind of God, the Word of God. The only way you figure out what God wants you to do on whatever level you are going to do it is to read His mind and find out what He is going to do and what He wants you to do. It is just that simple.

5. Going through something like this will be intended to make you stronger with God, not weaker.

Remember the real mark of a mature child of God will not be when everything goes well and he has everything he wants. That is the standard thing today. We do not want any trouble. We do not want any trials. We do not want any, we do not want to take a stand for God because it might bring us some grief. We like our Christianity nice and soft and effeminate where we never offend anybody and nobody ever gets mad at us. That is not much of a Christianity.

The real mark of a mature child of God is how much you can take and then take some more and then take some more and then ask, "Is that all You have got?" The real mark of a child of God is when it all falls apart when you do not get what you want. Do you have a good enough relationship with God that you just know that no matter what He has got some promises that He promised that in His timing He will get it and if it does not get there in a time you think you need it then He will also cover the bases on that and He will get you right where you need to be. It builds a relationship with Him. It builds a trust with Him. It builds the ability that God will come through for you over and over again.

After He comes through with you, I had a guy one time that went into the ministry. He was a good kid. He had been with me about 15 years, did a lot of good things, learned the Bible well, was a pretty good kid all the way around and suddenly he got a chance to go to a church and be part of the ministry and like all young guys stepping out for the first time he was really scared and he came into my office one afternoon and he was really broke down and cried and he says, "Bobby," he says, "You know what?" He says, "I am just really, really scared." He says, "I am going out in a situation." He says, "I have never done it before. People are going to expect things from me." And he says, "I just do not." He said he was losing faith in what he and what he had to do and I get it. I understand that. It is a natural thing and I told him, I said, "Look, here is how you look at that." I said, "I have known you for 15 years. I remember when you got saved. In fact I won you to Christ. I remember when your wife got saved. I won her to Christ. I have watched you go through everything in life basically do everything by the book. God brought you to this point. God taught you this, taught you that, gave you this, you have handled this, you have handled that, you have handled this, you have handled this. Here is how you have got to look at it. For the last 15 years God brought you to the point where you are at now. The way you have got to look at it is put those fears aside and focus on the promises and the principles. God did not bring you this far and invest everything He did in you to have you fail now." And that is how you look at it. God comes through for you 40 times. It gets a little easier to trust Him on the 41st. He comes through for you 100 times. It gets real easy to trust Him on the 101st. But when you never let Him come through because you have no relationship, I understand where the fear comes in. I understand exactly. But you can change that because the real mark of a mature child of God will be not when everything goes well but when everything falls apart.

Now we will see what we are really made of. In our Christian lives you are, you know, you become so in tune with the book and God that you know what He is doing even when you do not fully understand what He is doing. There is nobody in that Bible that started out that was a great Christian when God first started dealing with them. I do not care who it

is, Moses, Noah, Abraham, any of them that ever knew what God was going to do when God told them what to do. They just believed what He was going to say. The Bible says that Moses endured as seeing Him who was invisible. Many of us are like most of God's people. You just hope He knows what He is doing and worry about it all the time that He really does. Not me. I have been through some things in life and I want you to know the one thing I am sure of today is the fact that He was there yesterday, He is here today, and He will be here tomorrow. He will always be there because He never violates His principles.

So now you can see. I broke this story down in Matthew 15. It is almost 40 years ago. One of the first things I found when I started into the New Testament in the book of Matthew and I found that story and I laid that thing out over 40 years ago and it is still with me today just as like it was 40 years ago. You know why? Because it is a true story. That thing is true. God will never violate His principles and you see what a great story it is and how it fits with the book of Proverbs and it builds for you what I talked about when we started, having a working knowledge with the Word of God. Being able to take your relationship with God, what you learn from the Word of God, and let the two of them mold together that when you face something or you deal with something or you pray about something and that prayer does not come textbook the way all the great guys in the pulpit tell you it will and it does not come that way. You can trust God to know that in God's timing and God's way God is obligated and you hold His feet to the fire with the very principles and the Word of God that He gave you.

We will hold up there. Let us have a word of prayer.