

Proverbs 14:12

Sunday 1/10/2016

This particular verse, it is just one verse. It is not a passage. It is not a chapter. It is just one simple little verse, but it speaks 10,000 words. It is absolutely so rich in content that you could probably preach on it and never cover all of its impacting principles. It is just one of those amazing verses.

It is something that, honestly, it is not a verse that you would claim as a promise. It is not a verse that you would necessarily, around a campfire with a marshmallow and a hot dog, give up as your favorite verse. But it is so true of everything in life. It is one of those incredible verses. It covers every aspect of life on planet Earth, and it touches everything that man will ever get involved in. It is one of the most useful principles that you will ever find in your life.

It is an ironclad principle. There is no wiggle room in it. It is absolutely what it is. It will work in any and all areas of any child of God's life, anywhere, in any culture, in any time in history on planet Earth. It is incredible.

The verse is found right here, and it simply says:

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Woody, would you stand up and ask God a blessing on us today?

Father God, I was thinking you could just say a little bit to your Son Jesus, and that sacrifice for me, Father. Say to the Lord, Father, I am sorry, God, take that sacrifice for the ground, Lord. I praise you, let us open up our hearts and our minds today, the Word of God, give it to Bob as he brings the message to us, Lord. And let us not let it fall to the ground, Lord, in the same Jesus name.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

I. The World's "Wisdom" vs. God's Truth

I always like to find out where things start. I am a kind of guy that I am just never satisfied with the answer. I always want to go back and get all of the ramifications to it, the hows, the whys. That is just the way I have always been.

I need to say that in the modern world of philosophy and science and psychology, this concept of this verse 12 here will be called in a formal way, epistemology. That will be a study or a theory of knowledge, a theory and a study with regards to its methods, the validity of something, the scope of it, a study or a theory of what distinguishes and justifies true belief from just an opinion.

When you get rid of the \$25 word and you come up with it as we use it in life, you hear it used all the time. You just have never really thought about it. But it is the simple sayings that people

come up with that try to put everything in a very meaningful way for themselves, yet without God. You have heard it many, many times. You have heard somebody say that if you follow your heart and your dreams, you are going to be okay in life. You have had somebody say, when you have a decision to make, just listen to that still voice down inside you, follow your conscience. You have heard them say that heaven and hell is just in your mind, that life is what you really make it.

You have heard them say that God is too good and too loving to ever, ever reject a man and send him to hell. Or you have heard it this way, that if you live the best you can on Earth and you do the best you can and you really try, you will be all right. You will hear, and I have heard this so many times, that there are many roads to heaven, just like there are many roads to a major city. I had a sister-in-law one time, we were talking about it, and she actually brought that up and she simply said, "There are many roads to God, just like there are many ways you could have come from Kansas City to Ohio."

I remember in World War II, United States Marine Corps, they probably had it worse in that Pacific theater than the European guys who fought in Germany. At least in the German theater there were places where they could be pulled back to England or they could get a break here, could get a break there. There was no place in the Pacific. When the war started in the Pacific, we were already behind the eight ball. We did not invade Europe until we well had the means to defeat them. But in the Pacific, they were in at the get-go and it was a tough road for many of them.

You look at the great battles that they fought like the Battle of Guadalcanal, which was one of the first major land battles of World War II in the Pacific. It really was, believe it or not, that early, the determining factor. You have places like Tarawa, Peleliu, Okinawa, and then of course Iwo Jima with the famous flag raising that we all know so well.

The Marine Corps has come to the place where because they have been through so much, they have got that same philosophy and you hear it all the time. I have heard Marines say, "And when I get to heaven, to Saint Peter I will tell, another Marine reporting, sir, I have served my time in hell." They actually think that going through those battles, and they were terrible battles, probably war is the closest thing to hell on this Earth that you will ever get into.

I talked to an old World War II vet one time and tried to win him to Christ. He was an old Marine and had been in major battles and conflicts in World War II. When I began to witness to him and I told him about Christ dying and a heaven to gain and a hell to shun, he actually told me, "You know what, son, I never have to worry about going to hell. I can do whatever I want to do and never worry about going to hell because I served my time in hell in World War II." He actually believed that.

That sounds good, but the problem with that is you do not go through hell, you stay there. Audie Murphy was a great World War II hero and actually one of my heroes in life that I have always enjoyed and always had a great admiration for. After the war, he made a movie about his exploits in World War II and it was called *To Hell and Back*. We actually get the idea that hell is on this

Earth. There are some horrors in war, and there will be some horrors in life, and people get the idea that that is hell. I get it, I understand.

But the Bible says there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but it is not right. I realize that everything that the world says, it sounds reasonable. It does. It sounds good. It sounds logical. From a human standpoint, it really makes good sense. But one of the greatest truths of the Bible, and it is so true in life, is simply this: what seems right is not always right. I will take it one step further: what feels right is not always right. As someone said, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

You know and I know that there has to be one absolute standard by which we judge things that are right or wrong. This is the fundamental problem with the world's system. It has no absolute, and it will tell you that there are no absolutes. So it relegates itself to a pragmatic approach to life, to what we call situation ethics. "If it feels good, do it." "If it feels good, it must be right." That pleasure and good is the highest order of life that we want to achieve. Therefore, what could be wrong with it?

You know as well as I do, a lot of people with good intentions and the best of motives will make some terrible mistakes in life. You take a nurse, we have a number of nurses here, and nurses are really the backbone of the medical field, much like NCOs are the Army. But you know what? There are nurses who have made some terrible mistakes. I remember reading about a nurse where the guy died because she gave the wrong blood type in a transfusion. She did not mean to. I have read the story where a guy went in to have a leg amputated and a doctor cut off the wrong leg. He did not mean to.

How many times do you find in an urban scenario where a police officer goes on a call and something happens and the wrong person gets shot? I have even seen and heard of situations where a SWAT team goes up against a drug house and somebody gave them the wrong address. The dentist who pulls the wrong tooth, they are all good-meaning people. They did not get up that morning and say, "I am going to inflict pain on people today by doing the wrong thing." They had the best intentions.

From a world's point of view, I get it. It seems logical that a man who believes in God and lived up to what he thought was right, that he would be okay. Every major religion in the world teaches that. The world even adopts that philosophy. It would seem that if all religions acknowledge God and all religions have a Bible and all religions talk about the cross and the resurrection and Jesus, you would think that there would be various ways for a man finding God. That God would look down and be satisfied with the very fact that any man was trying to get to Him. He would just simply say, "There are a lot of roads to the cross to get saved." But He will not.

The verse clearly says that there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Jesus Himself in Matthew chapter 7 verse 13 and 14 said:

Matthew 7:13-14

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Jesus Himself said, "Just because you look for Me, just because you want to do it your way and you want to come to God, it has to be My way." The end thereof are the ways of death.

Now let me explain this. There are two kinds of death. There is a physical death, and that will be an unsaved man that dies and goes to hell. But then there will be a spiritual death, and that will be a child of God that when he lives his life, but spiritually he is dead as can be. You are going to understand that a little better as we come through here.

II. Human Deception and Its Roots

It is a fundamental concept of human nature that men and women, but let us just use it in the men concept today, men are so easily fooled. If you notice it, they are always fooled by the things that they love. How many men were ever dumped by a woman? I know women were dumped by men, but it goes both ways. But a man will see a woman and she will meet his expectations, what he wants. He will never look at the inside character. He will never look at the woman of Proverbs 5 or Proverbs 7 and compare her with the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. He will see by his line of sight what he likes and he will fall in love with her and wind up being a disaster.

Men are fooled by riches. Luke 16:11 talks about the true riches versus the world's riches. Men will get deceived and get fooled by possessions. They will think that what they have is going to make them happy. They will think that getting more of anything or a lot of different things is really the key to being happy. They will buy boats, they will buy three or four cars, they will buy big houses, they will be able to do anything in life that they want. At the end of the day, it is all a pursuit for happiness. At the end of the day, they all get fooled because there is no happiness in possessions.

You will see it in the Bible. You will see it in power. Look at Pharaoh, look at Caesar, look at the scribes and the Pharisees. Men will get fooled by thinking that power is going to make them happy. I laugh at politicians. Everybody says, "We have to vote for so and so because he is a Christian." You cannot be a good Christian and be a politician because if you are, one, you will never get voted in, and two, if you do, you will be assassinated in the first week.

All these godly professing Christians, I have never seen them out street preaching with Christ. I have never seen them on Thursday night Bible study. I have never seen them talk publicly about winning somebody to Christ. I never see them stand up and give an address and say, "There are some churches out there that you need to be very careful of because the devil has a church." Well, you lose all your votes. Politicians are about power. I do not care who they are.

I am not the smartest guy in the world, but my claim to fame is to be the fastest one in the slow class. I do understand that there is something wrong with somebody wanting to be president or somebody wanting to be a senator or somebody wanting to be a congressman, and you will

spend \$300 million to get a job that only pays \$100,000 a year for four years. There is something fundamentally wrong with that. That is because when they get that job, they get what they think all the money they spent is worth: tremendous power. They can wield that power and make a lot of money, make a lot of influences, and they deceive themselves. The only ones stupider than them are the ones who vote for them.

The reason that they are deceived is that they really, through pride, think that they are smarter than the devil who is going to deceive them. I see that with a lot of God's people. God's people, bless their hearts, they just stink in their personal life with their kids or their marriage or this or that. They just think the devil died. They think the devil does not give a flip or does not. The devil will never miss any chance that you give him. As my old grandmother used to say, "You give the devil an inch and in time he will become a ruler and he will take everything in your life."

It is a thing where you get deceived by the very deception you are using to deceive somebody else. "I love this car." You have deceived yourself. A woman says, "Oh, I just love this house. Oh, I love this dress. Does this dress make me look fat? I love this dress." If I told you the truth, you would not love it anymore. This deception is us loving things that cannot love us back. There is no profit in that. There is no value in that. It is so true that this is the reason why we get deceived.

III. Why People Go to Hell

Without a doubt, and this is a real tragedy, it is a constant maxim that the majority of the people in any generation, in any country, at any time in history will probably die and go to hell. That is a hard fact. Jesus Himself said, "Few find it." They go to hell because of three basic things.

1. Men fall in love with themselves.

2 Timothy 3:1-4

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Men fall in love with themselves. Everybody wants to look nice, and I think that you should. But this goes for men and women. If you spend more time on Sunday morning getting your outside body ready to come to church than you do your inside body, you are in love with something that is not right. Because they love themselves, they all get self-deceived. The majority of people in this life that go to hell really think that they are smarter because they have been deceived and deceived themselves that there is a way that is right when it is not. They actually think that they are smarter than Moses, Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, smarter than God.

1 Corinthians 3:18

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

So it becomes a universal delusion that men can save himself and justify himself by his own self-effort, by his own good works, by following the golden rule, by holy water, by religion, by getting involved in peace movements, by thinking that you can earn heaven by your works or going to church or the sacraments, or just living a good life and helping others. Matthew chapter 23 and chapter 24 states the case very clearly that the quickest way to hell is through religion. The second quickest way to hell is through higher education without God. Just study the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. They all had religion, they all had higher education, but none of it had to do with God.

IV. The Devil's Deception and God's Absolute Standard

This way that seemeth right unto man is put out by the devil to deceive the fools of life. Proverbs is a definitive book, you know this by now, on the wise man and the foolish man. So this great verse is put in this book. Proverbs will show you how a wise man never gets caught into these traps and how a fool always will.

In life it will appear attractive to look at religion, this concept of good works, doing good. It will look real good. It will look really good on paper. It will sound so good. Somebody said one time that hell is for two kinds of people: hell is for people who never do anything, and then hell is for people who do everything. They do it or do not do it without any concept of the Bible, Jesus Christ as He has laid out in the Word of God. The end will always be the way of death, physically or spiritually.

This is the fundamental truth of life on planet Earth and the counterfeiting of the things of God to justify ourselves, but in truth will only deceive ourselves. It is simply amazing to me what people will do with God in the Bible. I sit back sometimes and I am just amazed at what God's people do with it. How the clear Bible is clearly there. I love to watch people how they use the Bible and they are so right on the Bible when it is to their advantage. But when they want to do something else and it is no longer to their advantage, how they can step outside it and justify themselves when the same Bible that said "stand for this" is the same Bible that says "you have got to stand for this."

To answer all of this and to this verse will simply be, and I know this sounds so simple, but this is why the majority of the world and people who call themselves Christians are probably not. Few ever find it. The answer will be to this great verse of being able to find out what is real and what is not, simply the principles that are found within the Word of God. I know that is an oversimplification and it sounds so simple, but I am going to give you something this morning that will simply be probably the greatest piece of information you ever got other than when somebody gave you the Gospel on human nature when it comes to God. I cannot impress this on you enough. Remember what seems right will not always be right and what feels right will not

always be right because there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

V. Judging by Fruit: The Absolute Standard

The way you define right or wrong in anything you do is to judge it. You put it under a microscope. I hear already the crowd from the cheap seats, claiming Matthew 7:1-2, "The Bible says judge not, lest ye be judged." I hear that all the time. "Do not judge me." Well, I cannot help it that you are in the wrong dispensation. That is not my fault. I cannot help it that you are in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 7. It has absolutely nothing to do with Christianity. It is a Sermon on the Mount that deals with the constitutional millennial structure of the kingdom of heaven. That is not my fault that you cannot get that.

My Bible says in 1 Corinthians, which was a New Testament church, in chapter 2 verse 15, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." Now you see that is a contradiction. Bible says over here Matthew chapter 7, "judge not, lest ye be judged." The other place says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." Which one do you take? You take the one that is the dispensation that you live in, the church age. I do not want the kingdom. Nothing like a Bible to clear up a seminary education and get you straightened around.

I must tell you this. I do not judge people. I never have. I really do not. I have as many issues as the next guy. But when it comes to my involvement into something, notice the verse says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." It did not say "judgeth all people." I do not have a right to judge you, nor do you have a right to judge me. But what I do put under the microscope is what anybody does in their life that I look and deem that is going to be a problem in my life. I judge that. When it comes to my involvement with them, I do judge the things that are in their life as it pertains to me. I do not want to allow that in my life.

When it comes to this verse, some things appearing to be right when it is really not. Here is the key. You have to use the standard of the absolute principles of the Word of God, and it will judge the thing, not on how it looks, not on how it sounds. There is one standard absolute judgment in the Bible that is 100% foolproof that if you use it, and again, this is the greatest information you are going to ever get outside the Gospel, if you use it, you will never go wrong.

The Bible simply says, "How do I know? What is how I know what is right and what is wrong? How do I know that this is on the up and up? How do I know this is really what I should be? How do I know that I should not hang out with this person or I should hang out with the person? How do I know he looks good, he talks about God, he carries the Bible, they go to church, they do this, they do that." But you know, how do I know? The greatest determining factor of whether it is real or whether it is bad is simply by the fruit it produces. The Bible says, "By your fruit, you shall know them." When you as a Christian want to know if something is good and the real deal, just be a fruit inspector. That is your standard.

I know that sounds simple, I am going to even develop it more for you. The number one aspect of true New Testament Christianity or anything connected to Christianity will be fruit bearing. That is the bottom line. When God made Adam and Eve, He said, "Be fruitful, multiply, and

replenish the Earth." Adam's only concept and commission was to be fruitful. When God got you saved, He put you into His family. He saved you for one reason. "The fruit of the righteous is as a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." You are to bear fruit. You bear fruit in your family, you bear fruit with the people that you are around, you bear fruit in your church. Fruit bearing is the absolute key to understanding if the thing is real or is it not.

This is real easy because in Joshua chapter 1, you are going to find that the Word of God, once you get saved, that the Word of God is going to bear fruit in three areas of your life. That Bible is going to impact you in three places. When I look at something or somebody and I have to decide if this is for me, this is what I look at. This is what I examine.

When it comes to the Word of God, the Bible says in Joshua 1:8 that you have got to have the Word of God in your mouth. Deuteronomy 6:6 says, you have got to have the Word of God in your heart. And in Psalms 145:6, you have got to have the Word of God in your hands. So I just simply look at the fruit of what comes out of a person's mouth, what they say, what comes out of their heart, what they think, and what comes from the work of their hands, what they do. There is the fruit. You will never go wrong. You cannot fake that. You may have people who talk the talk, but at the end of the day, it is the fruit. It is the fruit. It is not just any fruit. It is New Testament Bible-based fruit.

You see, you are to be a fruit bearer. As I said, Proverbs 11:30.

Matthew 7:15-20

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

That is about as clear as it can get. Now you want to know the validity, the truth, the real deal of anybody, anything that wants to have an impact in your life? Be a fruit inspector.

Now let me define fruit for you. Obviously when we think of bearing fruit, we often think of soul winning. I know right now some of you good people here, but in this church for two or three years and you have not yet won a soul to Christ, I know where you are going. I know some of you are leaving. I understand. I know you are not going to come back going to Texas. I get it. That was great timing.

But the bottom line is simply this, it is more than soul winning. It is your care and your burden for other people. You do not always bear fruit directly. You can bear fruit indirectly. The thing that makes, and I am going to brag on you for a minute, and I know you have got your problems

and most of you are idiots. I get it, but I am an idiot too. That is why we get along so well. But the bottom line is the thing that I love about you is most of you, if not all of you, is the fact that you really are just willing to give to help somebody else out. Your giving and helping that person right now without ever sitting down and laying out the Bible or winning them to Christ will probably be the key element down the line when they do get saved because you displayed the character and the quality of God, which was giving of yourself to them without ever opening up your Bible.

So it is more than just soul winning. Soul winning is a team effort. It is not about when, because I am the preacher, I win everybody to Christ, or I have two or three of you that win people to Christ, or you are just an avid soul winner and you win people to Christ. That is not what it is about. It is about that everybody in this room has a burden to see people come to Christ. We all have to do a different part of a different job to let that happen. It may take six months, three months, two years, four years.

They are not here today, so I can say something to them to not embarrass them. Darren Oring and his wife were two of the sweetest people on the planet. They would do anything for anybody. Thursday night when I asked to get help, Darren was right there. Darren stayed with it all day yesterday, called me, gave me a report, and then had to get up and go to Wichita this morning, right on down the line. His wife is a sweetie. They are just good people. They are just like so many couples in this church, so many singles in this church. They just are really good people. I love them to death.

But you know how long it took to get them to come to this church? How many years did they play volleyball before they came? Do you remember? Four or five years. Before they ever came to church. Three or four, five years of every time the volleyball came around, somebody made sure that they called them to get them, and they wanted to play, and they came, never came to church. We are not saved. We are in the world, but we are just good, lost people. It took four years, maybe five years. I know it was a long time. They would come to volleyball and go over to the deal, and I would sit down with them. I would buy them dinner some nights, and I would do this, and I would watch you people put your arms around them and love them.

Then Darren got saved, and everybody said, "I do not even remember who won Darren to Christ," but everybody would say, "Wow, you won Darren to Christ." No, no, no. Everybody for four or five years that had a burden for that family is what got that family saved. That is soul winning. That is soul winning. It is in discipleship one and discipleship two. It is in training others. It is taking them under their wing and helping them and explaining things.

You know as well as I do, there are people who come into this church who think they are saved and they are not. I do not get up here and sit out in their face and say, "You know what? I do not really think you are saved." I have learned that it is a lot better, and they accept it a lot better, when I just love them, when you and I just love them, and then God tells them they are not saved. What a novel idea. You know as well as I do that when you started to disciple them, when you started to give to them, they come about lesson one and lesson two, and then suddenly they said, "I do not know if I have ever done that." And they get saved. That is soul winning.

We get the idea that soul winning is just a spectacular standing on the mountain screaming and thousands just falling on their faces and trusting Christ. That is nice. That is good. They make movies about things like that. But in a real life in ministry, that is not the way it works. It comes with people just like you who have a burden for others who will pay the dues and pay the price to be faithful. In time, they will get saved. You have the Word of God in your heart. You have the Word of God in your hand. You have the Word of God in your mouth. It bears fruit. Everybody can see it. Everybody can see it.

In Christianity and in life, you have good trees and you have bad trees. You have good people and you have bad people. One bears fruit, the other bears the wrong fruit. It is just that simple. The verse says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." There has to be an absolute standard for us to be able to determine, and its fruit.

VI. Practical Application: Fruit Inspection

This is my favorite part. I am going to show you how it works. I have some three or four examples here. I think that it will illustrate my point very well.

2. The Bible

You take the issue with the Bible. If you have not figured it out yet, we believe the King James Bible is the absolute perfect Word of God, inspired by God, preserved by God. Someone says, "Well, I do not believe that." I get it. I am still your friend. I think you are stupid, but I am still your friend.

Why do I believe that? If I did not know that the King James Bible was the absolute perfect Word of God by the hand of God from the mouth of God, was the absolute perfect, inspired, preserved Word of God any other way, I know it was because it is the only Bible in the history of the world that has bore any fruit. The Bible says, "By your fruit, you shall know them." It has stood the test for 400 plus years. It has bore more fruit in that time than any other Bible in the history of the world from 1600 to now. During that time, in the great Philadelphia church age, three quarters of the world had come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. That is fruit. That book bears fruit like no other book.

We went down to the World War I museum here, a bunch of us, and took Jim down there and Kathy down there the other weekend. I think that is something that everybody that has any care about the Bible and history ought to do. It shows you the impact of this book. At the beginning, they have a 15-minute movie. It is probably the best 15 minutes you will ever spend as far as understanding World War I. It will show us that the major dynasties in Europe right before World War I, it shows you that America is really at that point a non-player. The real power is in Europe. The real power is in the dynasties, the empires of Europe. You had the German, you had the Russian, you had England, you had the Austro-Hungarian, and you had the Serb, you had the Ottoman Empire, which was the Muslims. You have Italy, and you have France. America is nowhere.

Britain was the largest. Britain was absolutely, had more colonies, had the biggest navy. She was absolutely so far ahead of all the other empires. I had to laugh in the movie. He goes through a number of things that tells you why they were. There is only one thing. It is because they had a book. That book was this book. That book bears fruit. They had fruit around the world where the saying was that the sun never set on British soil. Great Britain is no more than a little island over there off the coast of Normandy. Yet they had colonies around the world and had a navy that was unparalleled, that was the envy of every other empire. All because they had a book.

I told you before, her ships gave a new terminology to the world. They were called dreadnoughts. I have told you this before. People hear that and do not even know what it means. It goes back to God with England, and the dreadnought battleships were simply based on the phrase "dread nought," for God is with you. He was.

World War I was a terrible war. It was a war that really, and you saw in that film that America in the world was in the industrial age. The industrial age brought forth a whole new way of killing other men. So they got airplanes now. They got tanks. Artillery could shoot farther. They could launch gas shells now when one shell could kill 5,000 men. They had machine guns that would shoot 6,000 rounds a minute. Wholesale slaughter, wholesale killing to the tune of 16 million men died in World War I.

Afterwards in 1920 they wanted to end war. So they started the League of Nations. It did not work very well because they had World War II. Then they started the UN in 1945. They had not worked anymore. They have had 600 wars since then. Someday they will figure out there will be no peace till the Prince of Peace comes back. But why did all that happen? It all happened because of a book. It all happened because of an absolute standard by which God was going to bear fruit through this book. This book right here, the one you are holding in your hands.

At the end of World War I the empires are gone. Russia had a revolt. She is out. The Ottoman Turks picked the wrong side. They are done. Italy picked the wrong side. They are done. Serbs are done. All Europe is reconstruction. At the end of World War I there is only one empire left, and it is England. Just by a wild coincidence she defeated the Turk, kicked him out of Palestine, kicked him out of Jerusalem. Now the nation that bears the most fruitful book has Jerusalem and starts the process for God's people and fulfilled 40 prophecies in the Old Testament for those Jews to go back in 1948. Have some fruit-bearing book you have. It will bear fruit in your life. It will bear fruit in any church's life. That book fixes the fruit-bearing process.

There are a lot of God's people who struggle with the King James Bible. I get it. They struggle with it not being an absolute perfect Word of God. I get it. I understand that. I want to be the first one to tell you most of them are not bad people. There are some bad ones out there but most of them are not. Most of them are very nice, very congenial, very fine people. But you know what the difference is between them and you? I cannot even put you into this, between them and me. You have to decide for yourself.

You know what the difference is? When you go to the doctor and you know he checks you all out and he wants to give you a flu shot or he wants to give you this or that or he does some little procedure, he always tells you this: "This is going to sting a little bit." So I am telling you what I

am about to say is going to sting a little bit. You know what the difference is between them and me who believes this book is the most fruitful book that the world has ever seen? You know what the difference is between them and me and maybe between some of you, but you have to claim that for yourself. I will tell you the difference. I want to bear fruit for God. That is all I live for. From the time I get up in the morning to the time I go to bed, Monday through to Sunday, that is all I think about and all I do. I know I am a mess and I do a lot of stupid things, but underneath all of my goofiness I have one desire, and that is to bear fruit. Because of that one thing in my life or maybe your life, it just happens. I cannot stop it. I have now a kindred spirit with the most fruitful book that the world has ever seen. The fruitful spirit of God that wants me to bear fruit draws me to a book that is the most fruitful book the world has ever seen, God's Word.

They do not believe it or they struggle with it simply because they never bear any fruit. When you do not bear any fruit, the Bible means nothing to you. When you personally do not have a desire to bear fruit, what do you care if the King James Bible is the absolute perfect word or not? The only reason it is in its final analysis is so that you can bear fruit. So you become a kindred spirit with some other book. I have never met anybody who believed in NIV or any new translation. I have never met one in my life that was an active fruit bearer. It is all academics. It is all high church stuff. They will argue about they do not like the King James Bible. They will argue about, "Well, this is a better translation." But at the end of the day, the reason why I do not get caught up in that is I am a fruit inspector and I look at the fruit. Somebody who claims to have the Word of God but never bears any fruit, and the book that they have has not ever bore any fruit. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what I am dealing with.

Saved 10, 15, 20, 30 years and not one time have they ever won a person to Christ. All my life I have seen kids who grow up, hit the age of accountability, and the very parents who get on me because I believe a book and they do not, cannot even win their own kid to Christ. You do not believe the book that I have. You think that we are idiots for what we believe, but when your own kids hit the age of accountability, you have to bring them to a clown like me who has a book like that because that book bears fruit and you cannot. Told you it stings. That book bears fruit. That book bears fruit, and anybody who is a fruit bearer has to be drawn to that book because you look at all the other Bibles out there, there is absolutely no fruit. Not one revival. When Billy Sunday preached across this country, it was this book that he used. Even when Billy Graham, when he started in the 1950s and had great revivals, it was this book. You know what happened to his revivals when he dumped this book? Now he has to tell all 2,000 people that are his personal workers, "When we give the invitation, all 2,000 of you plant yourself out there in the crowd and when I give the invitation, all you 2,000 come up and start coming down. You are going to really be personal workers, but we are going to make everybody think that thousands are coming so they will want to come too." I thought that I must have missed some. I thought that was the Holy Spirit of God's job. If I ever give an invitation and some of you come up, come down here to help it out, I will kill you. It was not like that when he had the perfect book that produced the fruit. Now he has a barren book that produces nothing, so to keep your legitimacy, you have to finagle ways to bear fruit. God help us.

3. The Church

Here is the second one. "By their fruit you shall know them." Which church should I go to? In a newspaper, in the Kansas City Star this morning, they will have a list four or five pages with all the churches and a big headline, "Go to the church of your choice." Do not ever do that. Do not ever go to the church of your choice. Go to the church of God's choice. You say, "Well, how do you do that?" Because there is a way that seems right. How do you do that? Check the fruit.

There is a church on every street corner in America, and that is another great study, the history of denomination. We had to do that sometime on Thursday night. You have Baptist churches, you have evangelical churches, you have Christian churches, you have Pentecostal churches, you have Charismatic churches, you have grace churches, you have community churches, you have village churches, you have the Presbyterian church, you have the Methodist church, you have the Catholic church, you have the Congregational, you have the Episcopalian church. There is a mess of them out there.

Now I get here, "Bob, you are saying that all of them are wrong?" No, you are missing the point. What I am saying is the Bible says there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. The greatest way to go to hell is with religion. You look at the fruit.

The Bible will give you the truth on everything. It never changes. The Bible, one of the reasons I love it, it is the only constant standard in my life that I have that never changes. When your world falls apart, the Bible will be there. When whatever situation relationship you are in, if your husband does not love you, then your kids will love you. When your kids do not love you, your dogs will love you. When your husband or wife do not love you and your kids do not love you, and even a dog does not love you, this book will still love you. Everybody else in your world may change their mind about you, this book will not. Why keep it? Why keep it?

When the Bible takes a clear stand on some issue, a clear doctrinal issue, and you find a church that changes the message or the doctrine of God to fit the changing society of the world, get out. Get as far as you can, as fast as you can, away from it. We have churches now that actually, the pastor will stand up and say, "We need to embrace homosexuality. Those people are people too." Yes, they are people too, but the Bible is very clear on it. In that case, you just check the fruits. Think about that one for a little bit, it will sink in here while I get a drink.

The Bible is clear on it. It blows my mind that a man would stand in a pulpit and give any. I am not saying you do not love him, I am not saying you do not try to win him to Christ, but what I am saying is there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, and in the world's eyes homosexuality is right, and it is not. Getting up in the pulpit and justifying it, telling your people that it is okay, that they are born that way, why do you not just throw your Bible away? Get as far away from that as you can, as fast as you can.

We live in a Christian world today where if Billy Sunday was around he would die of a heart attack. He is already dead. He single-handedly brought in prohibition. The churches were in line in every revival in the 20s and the 30s to stop booze in this country and they did. Now it is all through churches, Baptist churches, social drinking. They do not even understand Deuteronomy chapter 32 and how it lays out. They do not have a clue, you know why? Because they lost their

Bible and there is a way which seemeth right unto a man. A little bit will not hurt you. Moderation. I do not want to quit. I only have one beer a day. The can is a 55-gallon drum, but what is the point?

You see it in everything. Gambling, women pastors, philosophy. Every church, every big church, almost in this city across this country. You have a problem, you go see the pastor, they have a staff, therapist, counselor, philosopher to help you through your problem. No Bible, nothing from the pastor. They have some pseudo guy up there who is going to fix your problem with Freudian psychology, sprinkling with a little Bible on top. Colossians 2 for that one. Higher education, Matthew 23, 24 for that one. Traditions and the rudiments of the world, Colossians chapter 2. These things are not the fruit of a New Testament Bible-based church with its roots to Antioch. These things are a lay of the sea in church with its roots in the rudiments of the world. When the fruit of a Christian will not match the doctrine of the Bible, you have got the wrong church. Hence the push today to get rid of all the doctrine in churches. Yet doctrine is the foundation and the key to everything in the Christian life if you are ever going to bear fruit.

4. Religion / Cults

The third thing is religion. I call this the American cults. There are seven of them. You have the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, Church of Christ, Unity, Seventh-day Adventists, Christian Science. That is six, I will get to the seventh in a moment. These are what, if you know anything about history and have any kind of understanding, these are the American cults. These are the cults that were come out of America. All the other really deep religions, even though they are wrong, they come out of Europe or the Middle East. For some reason, all of the great religions, even the bad ones, are centered out of Europe because it goes back to that hotbed of Christianity and Antioch.

America, if you are a Catholic and God forbid, if you, let me use an illustration. If you are a Catholic and you die and go to hell, God forbid, I hope you do not. But if you are a Roman Catholic and you believe in all of that and reject the Bible and salvation and you go to hell, at least you are going to hell on a trimmed out Harley Davidson. You can all get that. Saddlebags, American flags off your little handlebars, leather chaps, big seat for your big seat to sit on. Just think of that dressed out Harley rolling down a thing, flames on fire. That is how you go to hell. I do not want you to go to hell, but if you go with a major religion like that, at least you are going in style.

You go as a Jehovah's Witness, a Mormon, or a Church of Christ, usually a Seventh-day, or a Church of Science. It is like going to hell on a moped with a chain broke. They are ridiculously stupid. Most people have no clue. They do not understand that when America started in the 1700s, God had a plan for America. God knew from the nation of Israel that if God did not keep injecting Himself into this country, that this country would never make it and accomplish whatever God wanted it to accomplish. So you find in history of America, not Europe, in America, you find for anybody who wants to read, you find that God injected Himself into America from 1700 to the mid-1900s into what is commonly called in anybody who knows anything about it, seven great awakenings, seven great revivals in this country, starting in

England when Unitarianism began to come in from Europe, and God brought it in and then moving east or west through the Midwest, all the way out to California by the middle 1900s.

You will find that in every case, as God brought up a revival, a great awakening, the devil brought up one of these seven American cults to counter it. So you have one in 1740, cult pops up, one in 1800, a cult pops up, one in 1840, cult pops up, one in 1860, cult pops up, 1880, a cult pops up, 1920, a cult pops up, 1950, a cult pops up. The devil counters the seven great awakenings with seven of the most absolutely lame, ridiculous religions on the face of this planet. You say, "Why do you say that?" Because they are the easiest ones to see that they bear no fruit. They did not start till the middle of the 1800s. That means if you are a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon or a Seventh-day Adventist or whatever you claim to be, it means that nobody, listen to me, nobody on planet Earth anywhere, nobody on Earth, nobody on Mars, nobody on Venus, I am not too sure about Jupiter, but nobody on Mercury, nobody in the whole universe ever believed what you believe because it did not start till 1850 years after Jesus Christ died. No fruit.

So you know why they stray around doing what they are doing now? So God's people who are stupid will think they are legit. You see a lot of action, you say, "Oh man, they must be the real deal, they are moving all over the place." They have to, they have got a lot of catch-up. 1800 years behind where nobody, nobody believed what they believe. I am telling you.

Now the seventh one I say because it is what I call a Christian cult, it is the charismatic movement. Charismatic movement starts, they want you to believe that all down through the history of the church, people are, nobody spoke in tongues from the end of the book of Acts till 1900. The great Philadelphia church age, there was no healing, there was no crooked legs braided straight, there was no leprosy healed. You had people like Mary Slessor who spent her whole life as a missionary to the leper colonies over in India, not one of them did she heal. She ministered and won them to Christ because the Charismatics had not showed up yet. No spudgy speaking in tongues, no fruit, and everybody sees it today because of all the goofy stuff that goes on and they think, "Oh this is." You are such a fool, you do not even know where they came from. It is incredible where people get into, and in all cases you have absolutely no biblical fruit for 1900 years.

You always spot the thing, my friend, and you see the thing and understand the thing by the fruit of the thing because the New Testament Bible-based Christianity is based on fruit bearing and will always associate it with the things of God that bear fruit. When you do not, stay away from it. I do not care how nice the guy is who is a pastor. I have had people say, "Well, I just cannot leave that church because the pastor is so nice." Let me tell you something, the nicest man you would ever meet in your life will be the devil. Read Job 40-41, he will speak soft things to you, he will speak comforting things to you, he will play with you, he will be so nice to you because he knows better than you do, there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death, and he knows the quickest way to get you in hell is through religion. The second way is through higher education.

5. The Christian (Individual)

Now you look at any Christian. I am 65 years and I am an old man, but I have observed some things. I get it. My softball days are coming to an end, I know. You are in bad shape when you go to the gym and it is harder to get out of the machine than it is to do the exercise when you are in it. But I have watched some things over the years and I want to say something to you and this really speaks well of our church. Many times people will cause major problems in a church.

I talked to a pastor last week and he told me he had a business meeting with the people and he said, he was laughing and he said, "Man, the thing broke into a real fight." He said, "I do not know what to do." I said, "What happened, man?" He said, "Well, this church is 100 years old, the average age in it is 75." He said, "Some of the ladies wanted to start a kitchen, a pantry to give food to people. So we had a business meeting." They have to have a business meeting about everything. How thick the toilet paper is going to be. They have to have a business meeting on it. He says, "Bobby, it had turned into the biggest fight you ever saw in your life." He says, "The trustees had their cups here, the deacons had their cups here, and the church members had their cups here and they fought over moving their cups and intermingling the trustees' cups with the deacons' cups with the people's cups and it broke into a fight." He said, "I thought I was back as a judge in divorce court trying to mediate between who gets the picture frame and who gets the dog." He says, "It was absolutely unbelievable."

I have known churches that split because they decided they are getting new choir robes and the church was split on the color of the choir robes. So they went ahead and got this color and half the people left the church over the color of the choir robes. I am telling you. In 40 plus years of ministry, I am telling you, the people who cause problems, the major ones, will always be the folks that never bear any fruit. Not a stick. Folks who bear fruit will never give you problems, ever, because their focus is not on themselves, but the souls of others and the greatest drive they have is to bear fruit for God. Those things do not matter to them.

In the Bible, we are likened to a husbandman. A husbandman is someone who takes care of a vineyard. When a person takes care of this vineyard with me and you become a husbandman, you tend to the well-being of the vineyard for one reason. You want to produce as much fruit of that vineyard as you can. You are not concerned about the drinking cups, the color of the choir robes, who does this, who does that. "So and so is sitting in my seat." I have known people in churches that their granddaddy built the bathroom, and granddaddy had been dead now for 30 years, and they protect that bathroom like granddaddy is still sitting on it. That is pretty funny.

A husbandman bears fruit. He makes sure that the vineyard gets pruned. It gets watered. It gets everything it needs because the one goal in his life is for that vineyard, this vineyard, to bear fruit. The rest does not matter. That is where your focus is. Every Christian will wear one of two T-shirts. One will say, "Look at me." That one will say, "Look at Christ." Christians who get saved and then they will put limitations on what they are going to do for God. They get saved and then they put limitations on how far they will go or how far they will grow with what they will do. I must tell you, you only go for God to the extent that you are willing to grow for God.

Colossians 3:1 says that if we are risen with Christ, we seek those things which are above. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The Bible makes

it very clear that any tree can bear two kinds of fruit. We saw it in Matthew 7:17. Every good tree bears good fruit and every corrupt tree bears evil fruit. "By your fruit you shall know them." Christians are like trees, a tree of life or a tree of knowledge of good and evil. A Christian will bear fruit or he will just put out knowledge.

In the Old Testament in Genesis 1 when God created everything, did you ever look at the trees?

Genesis 1:11-12

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

That fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, that tree is a picture of Christ. He is the olive tree, Romans chapter 9, Romans chapter 11. Whose seed is in itself, that is the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:16 when it deals with the work of the Holy Spirit. As a child of God when you and I get saved after His kind, Christ, you now have the seed of the Word of God that is sowed inside you and the Holy Spirit of God takes that seed and reproduces other trees, other young Christians.

The reason why God's people never bear any fruit is simple. You are saved but you have not the seed of the Word of God inside you. You are filled up with worldly things. There is no storehouse of the Word of God. There is nothing in your mouth, there is nothing in your heart and there is nothing in your hand that will produce fruit. The more Bible you get inside you, and this is why I give you the Bible every time I can, every way I can, every chance I can, in every direction I can. The more Bible you get inside you, the more you become like His kind and in time you bear fruit of the tree of life. You do not just become a tree of knowledge of good and evil where you just put out information.

My advice, just mine, stay away from non-bearing trees that do not bear any fruit. In any life no matter how good it looks, it sounds, it smells, it tastes. Remember rule number one of life, there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. The only way, the only absolute way to find out the real from the phony is by their fruits. The Bible says, "By your fruits you shall know them."

Years ago, I think it was around 1955, I would have been five years old, in Massillon, Ohio. I lived in Canton. Massillon was like Raytown and Kansas City, right next to each other. In 1955 there was a terrible fire in Massillon, Ohio and it engulfed one of those wood frame houses that was built during the war and it went up really quick. By the time the fire department got there the house was really ablaze. The mother was outside, hysterical. The first truck pulled up and the police rolled up there and the rest of the trucks were on their way. This woman was hysterical about the fact that her little baby, a girl, a six-month-old, she could not get to her because of the fire and because of the heat. She was hysterical, begging somebody to do it.

One fireman looked at the other fireman and they doused themselves with water and they ran into that burning building. The heat was so intense, the smoke was so thick, they found the stairs,

the fire was all around them, pieces of the ceiling were falling down. They went up that stairs and got to the top and the smoke was so thick they had to crawl on their stomachs underneath it to try to keep some air. They moved along that way and the one fireman got so he had to go back and he left to try to get some more help. But that one fireman in the lead, he kept on going. He looked up and he could see what he thought was the baby's room with his little things on it. He pushed that door open and the smoke bellowed out and he could not get up. He had to stay down and he reached over there and he could not see, he found the crib and he reached up and he was searching for that baby and he found that little baby laying there and he grabbed that little baby and put it into his jacket and he began to crawl back out and rolled out, got to the steps and the ceiling was falling down. The steps had now caught on fire and he came down those steps and some of his pants was on fire and he got out there and they walked out the door and he ran out the door and the fire hoses were all over him and people were cheering and the TV cameras were there and reporters were there and everybody is just so thankful he has got that baby out of that burning house. He walked up there and he opened up that jacket to bring it out and the mother came over and hugged the guy and grabbed that little baby and opened it up and she screamed and she fainted.

In the terrible darkness of that place with the fire and the heat and everything that was going on that he could not see, when he reached up into that crib, he grabbed the baby doll instead of the baby and that baby burned to death. I have to tell you this, folks, there is a lot of people out there who have got the wrong Jesus and their intentions are good. Their intentions were just as good if not better than that fireman. He risked his life to go in and save that, but he got the wrong baby. There are people who go to church, there are people who go religiously every Sunday and do everything they are supposed to do and they think it is the right thing and they do not understand that there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. The only way you can ever determine what is real and what is phony is by the book that God gave you that is the only absolute standard that you have. There is a lot of God's people out there that have the wrong Bible just like a lot of unsaved people have the wrong Jesus and they get deceived and they lose out on everything that God has for them and they are going to wind up at the judgment seat of Christ and the fire at the judgment seat of Christ is going to devour all the good they have for them just like the fire devoured that house in 1955 in Massillon, Ohio.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Every head bowed and every eye closed.

Father, we thank you today for the Lord Jesus. We thank you today for all that you have given us and for the good people of this church and what a powerful verse this is.