

Proverbs 14:13-17

March 10, 2024

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, I would like to invite you to turn back to Proverbs chapter 14. We have been coming through chapter 14 as we have been coming through the whole book of Proverbs. Today, we are going to look at several more verses here, and you are going to see how each one will really carry a solid, yet unfortunately, a sometimes very tragic truth with it.

As you know by now, Proverbs is a book written in a very unique style. It really is. It is a book of one-liners of truth that are just loaded. You could just take one verse at a time. When we actually started Proverbs, I really wondered if we would ever make it through the whole book by the time the Lord came back. There is just so much in it. We are still only to chapter 14. There are 31 chapters in it, so we are moving along here, but we are learning a lot from it.

It is a book that I gave you the outline when we started. I think the outline is absolutely crucial in understanding how the book is relevant to you and me. Most people do not know this. Most people never figure this out, but every book in the Bible has a natural outline to it, not one that man came up with. When God put the Word of God together, He put some natural divisions in it. When a person finds those natural divisions in each book of the Bible, it really makes it a lot easier because God shows you the way that He wants it to be broken down and really the way He wants it to be studied.

I showed you the outline when we started, how that chapter 1 through chapter 7, every chapter starts out where He addresses "my son" or "my little children." Those first seven chapters show you the value of getting instructions from your Heavenly Father. He will go through those seven chapters before He ever gets to one proverb. He will go through those seven chapters and begin to talk about why it is so important to get the instructions from your Heavenly Father.

Then when we get into chapter 8 up through chapter 30, we have the proverbs themselves. This is where we are at now, the one-liners that are just incredible that deal with all the things that we have to face in life. Then we come to Proverbs chapter 31, which is the last chapter. There we find the finished product and a great exposition of the virtuous woman, who we know that from a doctrinal standpoint will be the nation of Israel as God's wife. From an inspirational standpoint, it will be you and me as the child of God, the bride of Christ. In both cases, a bride and a wife who has taken the instructions of the Father, applied the principles, and now we see the end result in our lives.

The Christian life is just that simple. We like to make it complicated. We like to make it hard. We like to make it like if you have problems in your life or your marriage or with your family or your own personal life, that it is some great thing that has to go on for all of your life. That is simply not true. The Bible is such an easy application to whatever problems we have in the natural realm of problems. You just get the right instructions, one, two, you apply the instructions, and three, the end result will take care of itself. It is just that simple. Each verse from chapter 8 to chapter 30 will be a simple commentary on truths about life on planet Earth.

I grew up in an era where the favorite saying was, "Tell it like it is." Had it on T-shirts, heard it everywhere you went. This is back in the 60s and the 70s. The great phrase was, "Tell it like it is." But you know in truth, nobody really wanted to hear it like it really was. People would say that because it sounded neat. It was a cute saying. But nobody ever really wanted the truth. They just wanted to be part of the whole crowd and use that expression. But certainly the book of Proverbs is a book that tells it like it is when it comes to the issues of life.

Last week we saw one of the greatest one-liners anywhere in all of the Bible, verse 13, where it said, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We looked at how people will get focused on things that they absolutely think is the right way to do something, and it is not.

I. The Heart of the Fool and the Wise Man

Now I want to read five verses here today, verses 13 through 17, and then look at them individually. We are going to try to see some great truths out of them about life and how it really affects you and me.

In Proverbs 4:23, we saw this when we started Proverbs, the Bible says that the problems that we have, the issues of life, they start in a man's heart.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

I can safely say, and you probably already know this, even if you would not publicly admit it, every problem we have, I do not care where it winds up, every problem we have, it started with us. It maybe was not your fault, but it started with you and me not handling it the right way. Then it just kind of goes from there.

The book of Proverbs, through its truth about life, will expose a couple of things. When it comes to the heart of man, the book of Proverbs will expose the heart of the fool. That is somebody who will not take instructions. Or the book of Proverbs will expose the heart of a wise man. That is a man who takes God's instruction. Sitting here this morning, we fall in one category or the other, saved or lost.

Now I want to read Proverbs 14:13-17, and then we will begin to make some comments about it.

Proverbs 14:13-17 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his goings. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

II. The Sorrowful Heart Behind Laughter

Now verse 13 says, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." This will be the fool of Proverbs. This man has rejected the clear principles of God. He has forsaken any kind of instruction, and he is now completely swaddled up with life and the

compounding effect of life without God. This is what happens. We have problems in our lives for whatever reason: pride, embarrassment, simply the fact that we do not want to deal with the problem. The problem goes on. We actually think that with time we will solve the problem. Well, if you could solve the problem, you would have solved the problem. So what happens is you make more problems, bad decisions, bad choices, and in time the problem gets very complex and becomes a very complicated situation to have to deal with.

This man here who hides all of his sorrow and heaviness with laughter and mirth, he can be a saved man or he can be a lost man. Life will be filled with these individuals, and they are stories of a tragic, complex life that just goes on and on and seemingly never comes to an end. In my 40-plus years in the ministry, I have seen hundreds of them, dealt with hundreds of them. They have no joy whatsoever. These people, their happiness depends on the happenings in life. They wake up and win the lottery, it is a great day. They wake up and somebody turned their lights off because they did not pay the bill, they have a bad day. Everything in life rises and falls on the happenings in life.

So he runs with the in-crowd. He is in and out of relationships. He gets into relationships and he goes to parties and he tells jokes and he drinks and he gets high. He goes to pool parties, tailgate parties. He goes to football games, boxing matches. He goes to basketball, hockey, and golf outings. He or she surrounds themselves with things that they think will make them happy and make them laugh because they think that laughing at things is happiness. But in truth, they are absolutely miserable because they are empty inside.

I have told you before, to me the greatest example of this is on New Year's Eve in Times Square. You have a million-plus people. That place is packed. You have a million-plus people who are there standing shoulder to shoulder and in most cases they are the most miserable, lonely people on the planet. They go there for one reason, to watch the New Year come in hoping that this next year will be better than the last year, and in fact it will only bring more misery and disappointment in life because happiness and completeness and fulfillment does not come just by the start of a new year. You say, "Well, we got a new year. We got a new start." No, no, no. Unless something dramatically changes within you, you just got another new year to make more bad choices.

There have been some great examples of this in our lives around us. I look back at some of the great entertainers in show business and a lot of the movie stars. I am the last guy that is an expert on, you know, I know the old singers, all these new guys, Yvonne Say or whoever that guy is or girl is or whatever. Who is this guy that died this week? What was his name? Was he Ken the Jim Bowie? I do not know. I do not follow it. The only closest I ever get to People Magazine and Star Magazine and Comedy Central and National Enquirer is the checkout at the grocery store. They are right on the rack. I usually catch the first.

But I remember guys like Hank Williams. Hank Williams died in 1953. I was three years old. His music, I grew up in his music. He is the one that wrote the great song that the boys sing here, "I Saw the Light." He probably impacted country music in his day more than anybody else. But he did not live very long. He died at twenty-nine. He died at twenty-nine as an alcoholic. He died in

West Virginia on his way to a place to do a concert. He died in the back of a car going from there. One time a cab driver picked him up and he was so drunk, he could not even figure out where it was going on. He was laying in the back out of his mind and the cab driver was gone. He recognized the ad, Hank Williams. He says, "Hey, Hank," he said, "sing us some of that song, 'I Saw the Light.'" Hank says, "There is no light. There is no light." Miserable.

I think of Johnny Cash. What a tough life he had with drugs and alcohol. I think Elvis Presley. I heard coming over here, listening to a gospel station, they were playing Elvis Presley singing "Amazing Grace" or something like that. I thought to myself, you know what? We get so full because a person has a great voice. Here is a guy who was on drugs all his life, who probably was responsible for sending more people to hell than he ever was to heaven. But he is a Christian.

I saw just flipping through the channels, this stupid movie, "Two and a Half Men." I am not sure who the half man was. It could have been any one of them. But, you know, Charlie Sheen. It is funny. Everybody laughs. It is a comedy. But there are some of the most tragic lives you have ever seen off camera. I think of Robin Williams. Probably the funniest man on earth. Made the whole world laugh. He is famous for his comedy and satire and the funny impersonations that he did. I mean, he would make you laugh yourself sick. I still, I mean, I will never forget. The only thing I ever saw him in was "Good Morning Vietnam." But it was hilarious. I would watch him when he would come on and he would make people laugh at the drop of a hat. But last year he died. When he died, he died a depressed, unhappy, broken suicide. After all his years of laughter and mirth, at the end of his life, the proverb was true. The proverb is always true. His laughter was a mask for his sorrow. I am telling you, the book of Proverbs is the greatest commentary on life you will ever find anywhere.

Look at the last part of that verse: "And the end of that mirth is heaviness." In the Bible there is a great study. There are four kinds of laughter in the Bible. It is usually whenever I preach it, I preach it under the message of the laughter of God. But in the Bible there are four distinct laughers recorded for you. Three of them are bad. One of them is good. When we start looking about how that mirth is heaviness and all of the sorrow that is in a man's heart and he laughs about it, it brings to mind a couple of the laughers.

Ecclesiastes 7:6

For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.

This talks about the laughter of sinful merriment. People shamed and lost who are part of the world who laugh at the things in the world to try to be happy. Their laughter is around the dirty jokes and all of the things and the stories and everything that they see.

I think in Genesis chapter 17 the other laugh with Abraham and Sarai, which was the laughter of skepticism. God came down and told Abraham what he was going to do. Now Abraham is almost 90 years old and his wife is in her high 80s and God comes down and says, "I am going to give you a promised seed." The Bible says that they both laughed and yet God brought that seed to

pass. There are many of God's people who look at the promise of God and look at their circumstances and they laugh at the promises of God.

Nothing says more about a man or a woman than how they are at the end of their life. The Bible, and one of the greatest studies you will ever undertake in the Word of God, is to study the last thing that a man does in the Word of God. Sometimes the last thing he says. Sometimes it will be the last thing that God says about him. You have to think, you have to see, you have to look at a man like Abraham and look at the last thing in his life where he was, from where he started. Moses, Paul, Stephen. You have to look at the last thing God says about David. You have to look at the last thing Timothy says before he dies. Incredible study. Incredible study. When you look at it, it shows what a man is really all about. Where he really put his value system. Where his real, his priorities are. All the mirth and light-heartedness is just a mask to hide the heaviness of our hearts.

A man one time said, and it is so true, "We laugh before man, but we will weep before God." Boy, that is a true statement. A man will come to the end of his life and he will realize that he has been one of two things. He has been deceived in all of his life and now he is empty. His marriage is a wreck, his family is a wreck, his personal life is a wreck. He will come to the place that he thought that all his grandioso ideas, all the great philosophies of life that he followed. Everything that he thought would get him ahead and get him and he did not need God, he did not need the church, he did not need the Bible. No, no, no, he was going to figure it out for himself. He deceived himself and now he is empty.

Or he is fulfilled all his life through the Word of God. He is complete now through the Word of God and he is full of the joy that only comes from a relationship with the Word of God. If he has been faithful, here comes the third laugh in the Bible. If he is faithful, he has the laugh of victory found in Psalms 126:2.

Psalms 126:2

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

The laugh of a Christian who gets through this life and when he stands there with the Lord looks back and now the devil cannot hurt him anymore, the world cannot hurt him anymore, people cannot hurt him anymore. Unless God is home with the Lord and he has a good laugh about it. Or if he has been deceived and he weeps before God, he will hear the fourth laughter, the laughter of God, Psalms 2:4, the laugh of condemnation.

Psalms 2:4

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Incredible, incredible. There is an old saying that people use that says that he that laughs, laughs best. That is straight out of Psalms chapter 2 because that is exactly what it is because God always has the last laugh.

III. The Backslider and the Satisfied Man

Now look at verse 14: "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." This is the great verse and it is a classic and there is a lot here for all of us to glean from and apply to our own selves. Look at the first part of the verse: "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own way."

It says that when a man or a woman backslides from God. You have to understand backsliding, that word is not a New Testament term used in the Old Testament for the nation of Israel. We use it today. That is okay. But primarily it is talking about Israel backsliding from God. Technically speaking, not to make this a theological lesson, but a New Testament Christian cannot backslide. Israel could backslide. You and I cannot. We just get out of fellowship. They can slide backwards. You cannot, but you understand where it is coming from. It is okay if you use it.

The principle is if you think something long enough or about it long enough, you will do it.

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

In Luke 15:11, you have the story of the prodigal son. That story of the prodigal son is one of the greatest stories in the Bible that shows somebody who leaves the things of his Heavenly Father and then goes out into the world and then has to find out that the world is not what he thought it was. But you know what the real key is? The real key is this verse here. It says the backslider in heart. I want to tell you something. That prodigal son was in the far country in his heart long before he got to the far country in a geographical location because it starts in your heart. It always starts in man's heart. It is the number one reason Christians get out of fellowship and go into the world. A man or woman starts thinking in his or her heart about getting his or her way over God's way. Then in time he just fills himself to the top, to the brim with himself and God is pushed out.

An old evangelist said one time years ago, and I will never forget what he said, "You know what? Right now, if you love something more than God or the Word of God right now in your life, if there is anybody, anything that you love more than God or that book right now in your life, you are already on your way to the far country."

I saw a bumper sticker the other day and it is such a true statement, especially in America today. It just said that the cost of freedom is eternal vigilance. That is so true. For a child of God, nothing can stop the decay of our relationship with God. You have got to know by now that when you get saved, you can have the very best intentions. You can dedicate your life to God. You can be everything that you want to do. But the moment you get up off your knees and you walk out that door as happy as can be, your Christian life now is beginning to erode.

I preach some great messages over the years with some great revivals and some great people and people getting saved and God really coming down and doing some things. I am never so foolish that I do not understand. You can have the greatest preaching service on the planet. You can have a thousand people come forward and get their lives with God. The place for a moment in time

can rock with the Spirit of God. The moment everybody says, "Amen," and the last song is sung and they head out that door, the devil starts to do his work. For a child of God, nothing can stop that decay of our relationship more than a constant vigilance.

Last Saturday in the people ministry, we finished up the seven pillars of marriage. Obviously those of you who are here now, you know how that will work in an exceptional way for premarital counseling. But it also works in a great way for just dealing with marital problems. We talked about the seven basic pillars that marriage has to be founded on for it to work. I talked about how that in a marriage you have to maintain your marriage. I use the example, a very simple example of your car. You go buy a new car and drive it off the lot like the day you got married. You know what? You put some miles on that car. They tell you, you have got to have the oil changed every four or five thousand miles. Used to be every three thousand but now they got better oil I guess, I do not know. In time your brakes are going to go out. In time you are going to have to do maintenance on it. People buy a car, they understand that and they will sign up for a service contract, where you bring it in, we will rotate your tires free, they will do all that stuff. You make sure that your car is maintained because you depend on that car to get you where you want to go in life.

You never one time think about when you get married in that chapel and you walk out that door, you begin now to go down life's road just like your car goes down a road or a highway and in both cases you start to put mileage on it. Things will wear out, things will go bad, things will have to be maintained. I told them that on your dashboard of your car you have that little red warning light. I know I feel the same thing. The thing I hate about me most is the thing that you ought to hate about you too. We just think we know more about it than anybody. I still think I know more how to get where I am going than the lady on the GPS. I do not trust anybody that can change languages just like that. She says go down this road. I know a quicker way to get there.

When my red warning light comes on my car, my first thought is that is the manufacturer so they can get more money out of my pocket. Because they are the only one that can turn it off. I do not know up at Ford, John and Jan, but some place out there in Ford when you are putting those cars together, there is some little guy out there, probably a midget, who crawls up under that dashboard and puts that red light in there and then fixes it so nobody can turn it off but him. But my first thought is that is just them. It is running okay. I do not have to fix it. I am not going to take it in and spend some money just to get a red light turned off. You find out that maybe the manufacturer put it on there, but there is something wrong.

How many times we have looked at our own marriage, our own walk in our relationship with God is what I am talking about here. You know when the warning light comes on. You are not stupid. You know exactly when that light comes on. A lot of women, a lot of guys too on their car, they just ignore it. A lot of others make excuses about it. When it comes to your own personal relationship with God or your marriage, when that red warning light comes on, you better take it seriously. You know why? Because your car needs maintenance, your marriage needs maintenance, and your relationship with God needs maintenance. A total constant vigilance.

Just like we get wear and tear on your car or a marriage, when you put miles on it, you will put some miles on your relationship with God and it will require some maintenance. As a Christian, your oil will get low and that red light comes on. You know when it comes on. You know in a moment when you do not start handling things the right way, where yesterday or two weeks ago you did. I bet, I do not know how many people tell me when they struggle with something, "You know what? I know what the principle is. I know what to do. I know this. I know that. I understand that." That is your little red light coming on saying your oil level is low because every day you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Some of you went in life and your Christian life, you know what your problem is? You do not know when to stop. You do not know when to stop. You will just go on in life. You will get involved in this. You will get involved in that. You do not know when to stop. You know what your problem is? Your brakes are worn out. Your brakes are gone, man. Shame on you this morning and you are not right with God. You know you are not. You know there are things in your life that are between you and God and the very bottom line is it? Your water pump broke. By washing of regeneration is the only thing that gets you clean, the Word of God. Some of you cannot see very clearly this morning. Once you did, you saw everything in the Bible very clear. Now it is kind of muddled. You do not see it. Now where before you saw things clear you say, "Yeah, I see it." Now you are saying, "I do not know what your problem is." Your windshield wipers need replaced. You are not seeing the real world as clearly as you once did. There needs to be some maintenance done. There needs to be some maintenance done. Because on the road, either the road and the highway of life or the road of highway of spiritual things, one of these days your car is going to break down or your body is going to break down. Either way, you are going to be dead in the water with nowhere to go.

Look at the last part of verse 14: "And a good man shall be satisfied from himself." Now that is a strange verse. First of all, a good man. I will be honest with you. According to Romans 3:10, there is nothing to do with good, no not one. There is nothing good about me and there is nothing good about you. But when you understand what the Bible is saying here, you realize that our good or any goodness that you may have is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is my goodness. When we say, "Oh my goodness," you are saying in an essence, "Oh Lord, oh Jesus." He is the only goodness that we have. Any goodness will only be Jesus Christ. That is the only good that ever happened to me. If I have any goodness at all, it certainly is not because of Bob Alexander or me or this. It is simply because of the fact that, you know what, Jesus Christ is inside me and that is the best thing that ever happened to me. On my worst day and my worst nightmare, He is always good.

Now look at the last part of that, "shall be satisfied from himself." This is what I want to talk about. The Bible says that in me my flesh draws no good thing. The Bible says Romans 3 that none to do with good, no not one. That all of my righteousness is filthy rags in the sight of God. But here it says "shall be satisfied from himself," not with himself, from himself. Now I want to tell you something. The only good thing that I have that satisfies me, that is from me, is when I do what is right and come away with a good conscience toward God. A good conscience in the fact that I did what He said His way and not my way.

Listen, there is nothing more satisfying in this life than to know in any given situation that we have followed the biblical principles and did what God wants us to do. I speak this very moment. There are thousands of Christians out there in the world today who right now, and they are as saved as could be. Many of them have made a decision in life or done something in life or made some kind of change in life or did whatever in life. Now they are sitting here today because it did not work out for them the way that they thought it was going to. Now they are sitting this morning second guessing themselves. "Well, was God really in it or really was not in it? Did I do this on my own or did He do this on my own?" They are struggling with that. When you have a good conscience toward God, you do not have to worry about decisions you make because you always, always want to have a biblical principle behind everything that you do.

The definitive verse on a good conscience toward God is 1 Timothy 1:5, if you do not have it in your Bible already.

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

It says there that a good conscience comes from a pure heart. It comes from faith unfeigned, not fake. In other words, doing it by the principles of the Word of God. No ulterior motive. Using the clear principles because you know and understand that God never violates His own principles.

I have seen some of God's people want to do something in their life. All of their life when it came to dealing with people or dealing with this or dealing with that, they used good biblical principles. But when it came to something that they wanted to do, they threw the principles out. That is how we are. Sometimes I have had folks get upset with me in dealing with some of their problems or some things that they were involved in or maybe wanted to do. Honestly, I feel bad about that. But I must tell you at the end of the day, I work out of the principles of a book. When you have caused the issue with yourself or with your family or your kids or with your wife by not doing it biblically by the book, I do not see the point of me just adding to the confusion of getting involved and setting aside and not getting into the only thing that will fix your problems. That is the Word of God. So I always stay with the book. I always stay with it.

Listen, there is no natural sin. There is no marital problem. There is no family issue that a man or a woman gets into that if they will simply start doing what they need to do, not what they want to do anymore. That is what got you where you are at. If he will just do what he needs to do, they can be on the way to fix that thing and solve that thing in a very short time. It is just that simple.

One thing about me and you might as well know it and I guess it is a good thing. I do not know. It gets me in a lot of trouble sometimes. But I will never tell you what you want to hear. I just never will. I will stand in this pulpit and tell you what you want to hear. You come in to see me. I will love you. I will be there for you. I will walk through whatever problem you got. You will never have to go alone again. I think there is a song about that. If I have the words, I would sing it for you right now. But it is a thing where you will never have to go by yourself through anything again. But I will never tell you what you want to hear. I will always tell you what the Bible says. Besides all that, honestly, I sleep a lot better at night with you mad at me when I did it by the book than I would doing it your way and have God mad at me. I am telling you nothing,

I mean nothing beats a pure heart. Nothing beats unfeigned faith and a good conscience toward God and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. When he can look at things in life that he did, choices that he has made, situations that he is in, and he can simply say to himself, "You know what? I did it by the principles of the Word of God." This is why. This is why I constantly, constantly, in everything we do, try to hold before you the importance and the value of learning biblical principles.

IV. The Simple and the Prudent

Now look at verse 15: "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his goings." "The simple believeth every word." Nothing will ever be truer in this life while we see it all the time. What a profound verse. The simple. If you know anything about the book of Proverbs or you are staying up with us through it, we talked about this simple guy in chapter 5 and again in chapter 7. There is an example there of a young man, and the Bible says in Proverbs 7:7 that this young man is a simple guy, and he is void of any understanding. He has no Bible at all. What he does is put in the context of that he is out on the street corner, and he sees this harlot, and she is painted up and looks absolutely great. She walks down there and talks to him and flicks her big eyelashes or whatever and talks like that, and he is mesmerized by her. She speaks to him and says, "Oh, you know, I am a Christian, I made my peace vow, come up and you know, we will take our fill of love till tomorrow." Oh yeah, and he falls right for it.

Now we who know the Bible know that that woman is a picture of false religion. It shows how a simple young man will fall into false religion because last week there is a way that seemeth right, but the end thereof are the ways of death. She looked good. I mean, she looked good. Most false religions look good. He fell for it. Why? He did not have any understanding. We know that that is a picture of how people who are simple, who have no truth, no Bible, no principle, and from the Bible standpoint, they are a fool. He will believe whatever he sees, whatever he hears, whatever somebody tells him when it goes along with his belief system that he wants to believe.

There are some famous quotes on this verse that down through life that people have put out there and it is just so true. Somebody said, "You believe easily what you hope for earnestly." Adolf Hitler said, "Great masses of people will believe a great lie quicker than a small one." So true. The general rule in life is it establish truth of human nature that most of us are ready to believe something evil, something bad, faster than something good. You know, it is so true. You can talk to somebody about getting saved. They will blow you off. Heaven, blow you off. You talk to them about drinking, partying, fornicating and all things go with it. You got their full attention. You know why? Because it is easier for human nature to be drawn to do what is wrong than it is to believe what is right. Oh, it is an incredible verse, incredible verse. As they say on the street, a sucker is born every minute. You already know that everything on the internet is true. Bonjour.

On the other hand, the prudent man. Now prudent means he is careful. Prudent means that he is cautious. Prudent means he proves all things. He gets his facts. He does not just run in and throw caution to the wind. He has seen some things. He has some experience. He has good instructions. He has understanding. He is smart enough to know that the absolute standard of all truth will always be the Word of God.

Now you know what? I do not know that all of you, where you are at with the Lord, I know that some of you are very high up on a level. You are invaluable to me, most of you, a lot of you. I know some of you are midline people who are getting where you need to be and you are right on track. Some of you are just new Christians and you are doing great and you are moving along and you will be at that point someday. I say all that to say this. No matter what spiritual level you are on, if you know and understand today that the Word of God is the absolute standard for all truth in life, you are going to get wherever you want to go in life with God. Because that will be the fundamental ticket that will get you there. I can teach you everything else. You can learn everything else. That is the hardest thing to get people to learn that there is an absolute standard found in the Word of God, which is the standard for all truth. That is the problem. You know as well as I do, you can only have one authority.

Now I say that. You can have, you know, you can have two authorities. You take a husband and wife who are battling it out. She wants to be the authority. You can have two authorities. I guess I should have said you can only have one final authority and that has to be the Word of God. Last week that book is what we judge everything by. I showed you last week. He is a spiritual judge of all things that comes into his life. Running whatever you hear and see and read and are told through the book, not around the book, but through the book. Oh, that is so important.

I have done a lot of dumb things in life. I really have. But God has given me a couple of really key things to help me in my stupidity along the way. Some things that are very insightful to me. I am no rocket scientist. I feel that I am a reasonably intelligent guy. I can carry on a conversation with most people about most things. History, whether it be world history, church history, American history, European history, English history, Bible history. I know a fair amount about science. I know quite a bit about astronomy. I try to stay up on current events. I try to stay relevant to social issues. Do not talk to me about math. Trigonometry, gigonometry. It is all out of the pit of hell. Oh, it is. It is. It is. You guys go through that thing. When I was in school, the big thing was geometry and then trigonometry. People that went to that class really thought they were something. I will be honest, I had a tough time getting out of general math. I did. But you know what? As it turns out, I was much smarter than they were. This was a long time ago. They went through all of that, memorized all that stuff. I mean spent hours taking tests and learning about the roots of this and that and whatever all that stuff is. You know what? Right after they graduated and there I had math where I could just do the little simple thing. But you know what? As soon as they all graduated, held up their degrees. You know what came out? Texas Instrument. Put a computer, a little hand calculator. All you had to do was push everything in. What was the point?

Sometimes I appear more stupid than I really am. Not often. Sometimes I am just stupid most of the time. Sometimes I appear to be dumber about things than I am. I found in dealing with people that sometimes that is a great advantage. I found out when you get into a debate and discussion with somebody about the Bible, King James Bible. I learned that from a preacher one time who was an expert pool player. He was excellent. I was terrible. I was just a young guy and we were over someplace having a staff fellowship. He said, "Come on Bob, I will play a game of pool." I said, "Well I am not very good." He said, "Well I am not very good either." So I said, "Okay." I

am terrible but again, you think you are better than you are. He was an absolute expert. So he says to me, he says, "Now the rack thing," he says, "what is this for?" I am thinking, "Oh he really is stupid." Yeah. I said, "Well you rack up all the balls with that one." He said, "Oh like this?" I said, "Yeah." Then he says, "Now we got a ball left over." I said, "That is the cue ball." I said, "That is what you break it with." "Oh okay." He said, "I think I am going to like this game." He knew everything that was about the game. But he has got me now in a false sense of confidence, you know. So he says, "You go first." So I racked, you know, chalked up and hit the thing and they went everywhere. Then I put one in. When it did not go in, it kind of went off that thing. It was an easy shot that I missed. I said, "Is it my turn now?" I said, "Yeah, it is your turn." He cleared the board. He looks at me and he says, "That is a fun game. I think I am going to play that again. You want to go again?" I said, "No I do not want to go again." But I learned a great truth. Sometimes when you appear to be stupid about something, dumb about something, ignorant about something, it works to your advantage.

I mean, I have been many times when somebody tried to call me on the cuff of the Bible and they got a college education, a couple degrees, me, I do not have anything. They got a doctorate degree, you know, PhD, post-grad, they got everything, you know. I got nothing. I got my BA. I am born again. That is all I got. Which is enough. So I will let them go, you know, and when they get this thing up that I am really stupid, then you just, it is kind of like Rocky I when Creed was so big into that fight. They started out and he is Rocky is cracking the meat, you know, with his hands and they are over there and the guy, his manager saying, "Hey, hey champ, you better look at this guy. He is taking this thing to share." He is so busy doing everything, making money, sending roses to all the mayor's wives. He says, "Yeah, I mean, I mean business too." He looks at him and first thing he thinks he has got, he is out there and I think within the first 15 minutes, Rocky hit him with an uppercut that put him on the ground. He never saw it coming. You know why? Because he thought Rocky was stupid. He thought he was a bumbler. Sometimes when you get into those situations, if you play your cards close to your chest and let them think you are stupid, you can catch him with a right uppercut and put him right on the mat. That is what you want. In Jesus name, of course, in Jesus name. I am not talking in a physical sense. We are breaking. Some of you are looking so serious out there like he is going to hit me or something. No, I am not going to hit you. Boy, I am. You just are not going to know it.

A long time ago, over 30 some years now, I realized that there was a really big world out there. There were a lot of things I had to learn, but I also knew there were many guys who got into these things who actually lost their faith in God and the Word of God. Young Christians, they will get saved. They will never get grounded in the Bible the way they do it. So they will read something. Somebody will tell them something. They will hear something. Now the Bible is not this and it is this. It is because they are this guy right here. They believe everything that is told to them because they have no grounding. So I did not want that to happen to me. So I took 10 years of my life and got really grounded in the book.

When we started our church, one of the first things I did is still on the website is I went through every book of the Bible and I detailed out everything in the Bible, that book. I did it so that anybody down the line could take that study, sit down with Genesis or whatever book you

wanted, and when you were done, you would have everything at your fingertips to understand that book because that is the essence of what I did in that sense. I mean, I am telling you, there are 31,176 verses in the King James Bible. I guarantee it. There are 1,189 chapters. I took 10 years cross-referencing everything from one to the other. I had to get that done. When I was totally convinced and rock solid in God's Word that nothing could shake me, then I began to read and study and digest everything the world had on the great things of life that man has come up with.

I remember going into the KU bookstore up in Lawrence and buying 30 books that they used as textbooks that year and devouring those books, reading books on art and music, architecture, getting the liberal mindset of the Old Testament and the New Testament. I read every book. We talk about the King James Bible in my defense of it. Let me tell you something. I read every book put out by the Westcott, Hort Crowd, and the Alexandrian cult that they ever put out before I ever got into anything else. All the books on church history by Newell and by Robinson and most of them were non-church history books. They were ridiculous. But I looked at socialism and communism and fascism and studied pragmatism and altruism and hedonism, existentialism. I read the works of Voltaire and Nietzsche who claimed that God was dead. I read the 12 or 14 volumes, I cannot remember how many it was, of the history of socialism and the world. I went through the age of reason and the age of enlightenment. I studied the agricultural age in America, the industrial age in America, the information age in America, the space age in America, and now today, the technology age of America.

I heard that the Illuminati was behind the world takeover, so I studied the Illuminati. Somebody else said it was the Masons, so I studied the Masons. I went through the DaVinci cult material 25 years before they ever made the movie. I read the works of Josephus. I wanted to work with people and a lot of them were drunks and a lot of them were drug addicts, so I actually went through the 12 steps of AA and Narcotics Anonymous. Got my little certificate, I am clean. I looked at the great religions of the world, I studied Buddhism and Confucius, I looked at being a Buddhist Saha in the wheel of life. I clipped out the little ad in the TV guide back in the 70s that you could send in to the Roman Catholic archdiocese and they would send you Catholic material of catechism through the mail and if you completed them, they would send you a certificate and then all you had to do was go to a Catholic church and give the priest that. You could be confirmed and baptized with the Roman Catholic. I got my certificate. Never went. I studied with the Jehovah Witnesses. They will come over and have a Bible study with you. I studied the Charismatic Movement. I read the 12 volumes of Philip Schaff. I read the books on science and religion and politics and history and the cultures of the world. I studied the two landmarks down through history in the Bible and looked at them and talked about how that when you lose those landmarks in Proverbs, you enter into the fields of the fatherless and I saw the Gentile world into the fields of the fathers always going to war. So I studied the 30 Years War, the 100 Years War, the War of the Roses, the French Revolution, the Communist Revolution, our own Civil War, the assassination of Lincoln, the assassination of Kennedy, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and where we are at today.

But in all of that, I learned some things. I learned some things before I ever entered into those things that kept me from getting messed up and that is why I spent 10 years getting that book down. I tell you all that and I am also tell you this, do not try this at home. You will wind up losing your faith most of you. You have to get grounded in that book. But oh, that old black back 66 brother, that old Bible that God gave us, that old book that stood the test of time and I learned some things and three things that I learned that I hold to this day.

1. Do not believe anything that you read about history anywhere unless it is substantiated in the Word of God first. The only absolute truth to you and I have is a book that God gives you that fixes and defines everything in life.
2. The second thing I learned when I began to get my Bible down first, I began to look at it and understand it. Then I began to delve into all of these history books, all of these books that man wrote about theologies of man and the philosophies of man and all the science of man. I began to see the second great truth and I found it in Genesis chapter 3 was right there under my nose. I saw and understood that the first thing and I never would have got that. I would not have believed those guys if I would not have found this first. I saw that the first thing the devil did in Genesis chapter 3 when he showed up to Eve, he rewrote history. Oh, I know he said, "Yea, hath God said," and changed it, but he did more than that. He rewrote history. God in the past tense had told them to do this. When the devil showed up, he rewrote history and said, "Nah, nah, it means this." Boy, when I saw that I began to look at history in a complete different light and I began to find the Oxford movement. I began to find, oh, what a study, the Counter Reformation. I began to see how that history, the devil has rewritten everything about history and if you do not have an absolute standard to judge it by when you get into it, you are going to get caught up in it and you are actually going to believe that our economy is doing better. I will tie it to just a bunch of guys in a bag of pickup trucks.

The greatest example is coming up in March, March 17th, I think what it is. Who knows what March 17th is? Raise your hand. Anybody know what March 17th is? Okay. St. Patrick's Day. Here is a classic example of history being rewritten. You go on the internet and look up St. Patrick. He is the patron saint, supposed to have let all the snakes out of Ireland. He is adorned as a saint in the Roman Catholic Church. Every March 17th we have a day connected with him and he is the patron saint and he is held up as one of the great saints of the Roman Catholic Church. He is canonized and over there he is held up and he is in the window of motifs of all the great cathedrals in Europe and all that stuff. Let me tell you something. He was a born again Bible-believing, hell-fire and damnation preaching that would not spit on the Roman Catholic Church. St. Patrick would go into the forest of his country over there in Ireland and he would beat on a big old drum so all the pagans would come around to see what it was and they would pick out a leaf of an old Waldensian Bible and he would preach the fire out of them and preach the Word of God. Most people do not even know why the Shamrock is always connected with St. Patrick's Day. Catholic Church will blow smoke up your rear end and tell you it is this or this and this. No, no, no. When St. Patrick wanted to get his point across to the pagans about the Trinity of God, he picked up a little clover with three leaves on it and used it as an optic lesson. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Whole history rewritten. Oh yeah. I will be down at the St. Patrick's Day Parade looking to see if any of my people are drinking the green beer. Crazy.

When the devil did that, he believed every word that he said when she had just past tense gotten the clear Word of God from God Himself and the devil just come in and rewrote it.

3. The third thing I learned in Genesis chapter 3. Did you ever look at that verse when the devil shows up? The third thing that I learned when the devil does change something, whether it be history, whether it be your church, whether it be what you believe about God. I mean it would be so easy if the devil just was completely black and God was white like the light. It would be so easy to have darkness versus the light that God is light, but the devil realizes that you cannot deceive anybody that way so he transforms himself into an angel of light. You know what he did with Eve? Out of everything that God said, he left it the same, he just changed 20%. When devil rewrites history, he will leave God in it, he will leave this in it, he will leave that in it, he will just change 20% at the minimum. That 20% in Genesis chapter 3 folks would have landed them off in the lake of fire.

So in all my reading, in all my studying of the human race on planet Earth, I went in knowing that the devil had rewritten history with at least a 20% false concept. So I did not buy anything. I could not get straight out of the book that God gave me. In other words, I ran all I learned through the book, not around the book. As old Bob Jones Sr. said one time, every bad thing in his life is a good thing twisted. Somebody said one time, if you would take all the literature that has been written by man from the beginning of man recording and lay it on the ground, first you would have a square 100 square miles, covered everything on it. Then if you continue to stack everything that man wrote, it would stack up and go out past the orbit of the moon, which is 250,000 miles. I am going to tell you something. If we could get all that stuff together and put it in one pile and stack it out past the moon on the authority of the Word of God, I am going to tell you something. You can judge every piece that was ever written by any man in the light of one book that God wrote. The quicker you get that and understand that and put those principles in your life, the better off you are going to be. A prudent man will look well to his going.

V. The Wise Man and the Fool

Now look at verse 16: "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident." The key word here is the word confident. A fool will be confident in himself and he will deceive himself that he is right even when he is totally wrong. See it all the time. His anger and rage will come into play when things do not work out and his rage, his burst of anger, will be to show himself to himself and others that he is right when others are wrong. His anger is a badge that he wears that shows him how dedicated he is to his viewpoint. To anybody who disagrees with him. His anger and his rage falsely will bolster his confidence because unleashed anger will always be a mask of his weakness and his failure. You want to remember that.

A wise man does not trust in himself. He knows better. He has got a book that will give him a solid right principle in every area of his life. He just has to follow and apply him in his own life. Proverbs 3:5-6 says,

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Colossians 3:3 says that a man worships God in the spirit and rejoices in Christ Jesus and puts no confidence in the flesh.

Colossians 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

1 John 3:21 says that our confidence is toward the Lord.

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

VI. Anger and Wicked Devices

Now look at verse 17: "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated." Usually when you are angry, you are going to wind up feeling like a fool if you ever come to yourself because you realize that what you said you had no right to say and probably should not have said it the way you said it. "He that is soon angry," soon angry. The reason why a man is soon angry is because he is undisciplined. He has no principles in his life. He is unstructured. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly." So he does foolish things. He says foolish things. "And a man of wicked devices is hated." It gets to the point later on where not only is his anger and his foolishness deceiving himself, but now he starts taking advantage of other people with it.

Now, let us talk about anger for a moment. Anger is a real issue with a lot of people. Yet at the same time we know that anger is a God-given emotion. God gave it to us. Now anger used properly is okay. As I tell you, there is always a principle in the Bible and you want a principle, a definitive verse on anger in the Bible? It would be Matthew 5:22. This is the principle behind anger. There is nothing wrong with getting angry as long as the principle is behind it. The story here in Matthew 5:22 is Jesus in the New Testament. He goes into the temple and their money changers are in the temple. He is upset. He is mad. He is angry. He turns over the table. But he had a right to do that because the definitive verse in Matthew 5:22 says,

Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

You see, anger is okay if you have a cause. These wimpy Christians who walk around and think you should not be angry. I am going to tell you something. If you are a red-blooded Christian, you ought to be angry about some things all the time. You have just cause for it. It is the undue anger, anger about self, anger because of your selfishness, anger because of your lack of being principled and disciplined.

Now, I will just say this to you. Jesus went into the temple. Matthew 5:22 says, "He that is angry without a cause is guilty in the judgment." We show how the devil works. We show you how some of your brethren work. That Bible says in Matthew 5:22 that he is angry without a cause is guilty before the judgment of the court. Yet Jesus goes in and he turns over the temple and he turns over the tables and he throws everybody out. He gets a cord, whips them back and throws them out of there and scatters them out of the place. But he had a cause, you see. So if you go pick you up a new NIV, the new love of so many of God people's lives, and you go to Matthew

5:22, they took out "without a cause." They just said he that is angry with his brother is guilty before the court. You know what they did by doing that? The old devil, your buddy. They made Jesus Christ a guilty sinner before the court because they take out "without a cause." Now, some of you do not have a problem with that. I will tell you right now. That makes me angry.

The Bible says in Proverbs, you say, "Well, the Bible says, have a little friend with an angry man," but that does not make no friends with me because I am angry. That is how subtle it is. People just get it and say, "Oh, it is so wonderful." Yeah. I made Jesus Christ a guilty sinner. We did not even get into back in Ezekiel and Isaiah where it gives the title of Jesus Christ to the devil. We will not even go there. I do not want to give you a heart attack.

Now, let me throw you a little trivia question out here. Two places in the Bible. In the New Testament where Jesus goes in and throws out the guys. One is in John 2:16.

John 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

The other one is three years later in Matthew 21:13.

Matthew 21:13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Two distinct different times, three years apart. The first one, when he goes in there, throws them out. He says, "You have made my Father's house a den of thieves." Second time he goes in three years later, Matthew 21, he says, "You have made my house a den of thieves." Question is, think about it. What is the difference between the Father's house? Now it is His house. That will give you a little insight into the Bible. What is the difference? I am not going to give you the answer. I just want to throw that out while we are here. We are going to move on here.

Anger comes in a person's life. As I said, he is undisciplined in weak life, lack of control. He who angers you controls you. They are undisciplined in the principles of the Word of God. I say it all the time. The principles of the Word of God are absolutely important. We have a couple of things here that always get you started. Most people do not think of it. We have a discipleship one. Discipleship one is 10 lessons. In that 10 lessons, as a new Christian, you are going to learn probably 20 of the first fundamental basic principles of the Christian life. Then we have what we call discipleship two. Discipleship two will bring you up to the next level and you are probably going to learn what? 30 or 40 principles there. The longer you stay around and apply yourself here, the more principles you learn. Pretty soon you start operating by those principles. Pretty soon it starts to work for you.

Anger comes in a person's life because they are undisciplined. They are undisciplined. So when something comes into their life because they have no principles, they react to it. Reacting to a problem is like a knee jerk. Somebody hits you in the knee and you jerk back. So you hit your elbow and you pull it back. You hit your head and you pull it back. That is a reaction. We as God's people never need to react to anything. We have to respond because when you respond, it means that you get faced with a situation. Instead of reacting to it, the principles float in and the principles soften your response and brings it around to the right response. Reaction is of the

flesh. Response is based on the principles. It is just that simple. The ability to process any issue through the principles of the Word of God, filtering out wrong actions and leaving the right ones.

Now look at the last part of that verse: "A man of wicked devices is hated." An angry man with wicked devices to use and hurt people. Using them for his own personal gain, he will be hated. I gave you a verse a little while ago, just kidding, Proverbs 22:24, "Make no friend with an angry man."

Proverbs 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

Most people will not. They do not want to be around them. Angry people will be some of the loneliest people you ever meet. That is why they are so angry. Nobody wants to be around them. So they are always hanging out with a crowd that makes them laugh or doing this or doing that or telling jokes to try to get it going. But nobody wants to be around them.

Anger in a man or a woman will be in his heart and then it will move into his spirit. It always starts in the heart. Something will happen. Something will transpire that hurts somebody. Hey look, I get it. A lot of people do not go to churches because they have been burned by churches. I get that. Come on. Come on. Are not you bigger than that? Have you ever eaten at a bad restaurant? So you quit eating? Quit going to restaurants. But you see how easy it is to do wrong than it is to do right? Churches are going to burn you. When a church burns you, you have got two ways to look at it. You can say, "Oh man, I am not going back to churches anymore." You know, that is just it for me. I did not do what is right. I did not do what is right. They do that. Hey, let me tell you something. You can look at it that way or you can look at it. "You know what? God gave me a good experience and that was a tough time. But you know what? I thank God for it because I am smarter now coming out of it than I was going into it." It is your choice. It is your choice.

But something will happen in a person's life. Maybe a bad relationship. Maybe bad marriage. Maybe something that left a bad taste in their mouth. You know, it is a thing where they do not deal with it biblically. They do not get the help that they need. So they struggle with it and it is in their heart. Pretty soon, like Saul, it moves into their spirit. When it moves into your spirit, it is going to affect everything and everybody around you. Pretty soon you are going to find yourself getting outraged at things that are absolutely ridiculous. You are going to find yourself. You are going to take the dog out. They are not going to go to the bathroom fast enough on a cold night. So you are going to yank the dog and say, "Come on, just get inside. Just go inside." Then you are mad because you got to clean that up. You told him to. You know what? After 20, 30 years, many times they do not even remember what happened anymore. What the root cause was. But it all comes down to the fact that they will not deal with it.

Let me tell you something. The only way we can fix whatever issues we have is to stop and deal with where it is at right now and then begin that maintenance program to get it to work for you. In time, that anger will spread and cover every area of your life over every issue, over something that happened 20 years ago. You know, somebody said one time that bitterness is, boy, so many of God's people are bitter about things. Bitterness, the best example I ever heard of bitterness or best explanation of it, is like you are really upset with somebody and you hate them. So you

drink poison to show them who is really right. You wind up dying and they just go on with life. Bitterness does not affect the person that you are bitter against. It destroys you. Anger does not solve anything when it is without a cause. It destroys you.

Boy, Proverbs is an incredible book. We will hold up here. Proverbs is an incredible book. As we get deeper into it, the more you see how it applies to every aspect of our lives. When you build your relationship with God, you build it in two ways. You will either build it doctrinally, learning the teachings of the Bible, and then the principles, learning the principle side of the Bible. As you grow, you will learn to turn the doctrine of the Bible into the principles of the Bible and into the practical side of the Bible. Then you have the ability to maintenance your problem. Well, we will hold up there. We are going to have our guys prayer grip change over, so bear with me. Everybody just sit here.