

Proverbs 18:13-15

Sunday 11/27/2016

SEC: Choosing to Be In the World, Not Of It

We can either serve the Lord and have everything He has to offer us, or we can serve the world and have everything it has to offer us. A few weeks ago, well, I guess it is a few months now, but in this group, Zach had said something that really stuck with me. He said, "We are going to be in the world, but we just cannot be of the world." This is so absolutely true because even when I teach with God, I am still going to be faced with the world.

At the beginning of the school year, I had some trouble finding a place to sit at lunch. All the people with whom I had sat in the previous years did not have the same lunch. So it was hard, and I tried a few tables and I finally found one. I knew this one girl whom I really liked. As I sat there a few days, I realized this one girl who also sat there cursed a lot. I remember the second or third day I sat there, she got really upset about something. I was like, "I am going to be in the world."

So she cursed a lot, and the second or third day I sat there, she got mad about something that they had said or something. She could not say a sentence without at least five bad words in it. I went home and I told my mom, "I found this lunch table and I really liked it, but this one girl said a lot of bad words. I really did not want to associate myself with that every day." She told me the same thing. She said that I am going to be faced with the world every day, but I just cannot be of it. This is again true because this is where I chose not to be like that, and I chose to be a light. I had to make that choice to be Christ to her because I may be the only Christ that she had ever seen. Now that I have been sitting there, she has not cursed as much because she saw that I was going to be like that, and she saw that we were going to make a choice to be Christ.

SEC: The Consequences of Disobedience: Moses' Example

Moses is a good example of somebody in the Bible who made a bad decision, and it really did impact him big time.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

So previously, we know that Moses was in the wilderness, and he was leading the nation of Israel, and they needed water. God told Moses to hit the rock, and water came out. Now it was time for water again, and God told Moses that he needed to this time speak to the rock. Instead of simply just obeying God, Moses decided to hit the rock again, and he ended up not being able to go into the Promised Land. It was all because of one poor decision.

I can think of a lot of times in my life where I have done something, and I have not obeyed instructions from someone or something like that, and it got me into trouble. When I look back, I think, "Wow, if only I would not have done that one thing or said that one thing, it would not have gotten me into trouble," but it is too late. I bet Moses probably felt the same way when he made a mistake. I bet he was really upset and thinking the same thing. If only he had made that one choice, that would have really turned the whole situation around for him, but one bad choice ruined it for him, and one bad choice could ruin things for us.

SEC: Forgiveness, Resilience, and Giving Your All

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

We are all going to sin, and we are all going to make bad choices in our life, but for saved, born-again Christians, it is okay because we know that we can always ask for forgiveness, and we are not only able to, but we have to.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This is how we are going to restore our fellowship with Him when we make a mistake, by asking for forgiveness.

For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

So even saved people are going to make mistakes and make a mistake, but it is our responsibility that when we do, we need to get back up, acknowledge it, and ask for forgiveness.

My younger sister, Kenzie, over there, she ran cross-country at her middle school. During the race one day, she probably had maybe one hundred yards left, and it was on the finishing straight. She came up on this girl and started to pass her. They got tangled up with each other and fell, and they got all scraped up and hurt their arms and knees. Instead of staying down and down in the dumps about it, she got up and she kept running and she finished strong, and that is what we need to do in life. When we make a bad choice and make a mistake, we need to get back up and finish the race.

I talked about how Paul compares our Christian walk to running in a race throughout the New Testament, and I just talked about my sister running, and I also ran. At one point in our season, our coach had realized that some of the girls were not working as hard, and he could tell it was

affecting the team. So he pulled us aside after practice one day, and he told the team, he said, "I cannot make you give it your all, but for yourself and your teammates, I expect you to choose to give it one hundred ten percent every day."

Cross country, this sport is pretty unique because while you are racing by yourself and you are racing for yourself, you are also racing for your team. So if one person chooses not to do their best, it affects the whole team, and this is exactly what God expects us to do when He expects us to give one hundred ten percent every day. When we choose Him, our choices we make throughout the day are going to be the right ones, but if we do not choose Him, then all of our daily decisions are going to be wrong, and it is going to affect everybody around us.

When we choose to do the right things and give it our all every day, we are going to do good against the world, and we are going to fight against the world. But decisions are such a key factor in our walk with God, because if we do not make the right ones, we are going to lead ourselves astray. So it is always important that we are choosing the right things and making the right decisions, because when we do not, it is going to affect us and everyone around us.

I just want to leave you with a few final questions. What kind of choices am I making? We talked about Moses who made just one bad choice, and it affected him, and how my choices affect me and others. In cross country, if one person does not try the hardest, it affects the team as a whole, and it is the same in the body of Christ. When one person does not do their best, it affects the whole body. When we choose to serve God, we are going to make the right smaller choices, and we are going to do the right things in life. But if we do not choose Him, all of our choices are going to be wrong, and we are going to waste our time, and go through life not caring about what we are doing. All of our choices are just going to simply go along with whom we choose to serve, and there are only two options. So it is super important that we choose the Lord, and everything that He has for us. So that is all I have.

SEC: Introduction to Proverbs and Prayer

If you have your Bibles this morning, I would like to invite you to turn again back to Proverbs chapter 18. Again, we are going to move a little bit deeper into this chapter today. This has so far been a really good chapter with a lot of good, solid principles for all of us. That is one of the things about the book of Proverbs; it just continually unearths great truths that we need to have in our life, and have in everything that we do.

You will remember last week, just by a quick review, we talked about the verse there that talked about the wounds of a talebearer, how they go down deep into the belly, and we talked about how the tongue is likened to a sword in the Bible. You remember, I gave you a couple of different things that you could study out through the Scriptures last week. One of them was the two swords in the Bible. One of them is obviously the Word of God in Hebrews 4. The other one is man's tongue, as we talked about. One is used to build people up, the other one is used to tear people down. A great analogy, a great study, would be a great devotion for somebody that wanted to just lay out a quick, down-and-out principle that really impacts some things.

We talked about the two great aspects of what we waste as God's people. We talked about how we waste time, and how we waste the money that God gives us, the resources that we have. Then another quick little study that I told you about as we came through there was about a strong tower. I told you that there are two different kinds of towers in the Bible that you can study. One of them represented by the Tower of Babel, which is a tower that is man-made, which was taught, "may reach unto heaven." The other one is the strong tower called the Tower of David, which is based on the Word of God, and God giving you the ability to have all the things you need to protect you and your family, and all the things around you. So last week we had a lot of good concepts, as we did the week before, pretty much through the whole chapter of Proverbs 18.

Today I want to read Proverbs 18, and we are just going to look at three verses today. I try to keep the study in Proverbs localized with things that go together, so we do not kind of jump into another concept or theme. The theme in Proverbs is constantly changing as you come down through it, so I try to stay with that. But here is what it says in verse 13, 14, and 15.

Let us pray.

Father, we do thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus today. We love you. We thank you, Father, for the Word of God that you provided for us, and for the folks that have come out today. Lord, we pray, each one of us looking at our own hearts, we pray the blood of Christ on us today, that we might be forgiven for those things that we have done in the transgressions against man and our sin against you. We pray, Father, that you would forgive us now and, Lord, cleanse us and give us what we need to be able to preach the Word of God, but also for you to receive the Word of God. We just thank you and all you do for us in Jesus' name, for the sake we ask, amen.

Now, these three verses are really good verses that I think will yield some really good principles to us, and we want to look at them.

SEC: Principle 1: The Importance of Getting All the Facts (Proverbs 18:13)

Let us look at verse 13 first. This is a great principle. In dealing in circumstances in life, this will be one of the most profound principles found anywhere in the Word of God. It really is. To give you the overall understanding of it, it simply means, "Do not form your opinions or answer a matter until you have all the facts involved." That is so crucial.

So many people, we talk about reacting versus responding, and we talk about all the different scenarios of dealing with people and the things that people get into. When we react to something, it is kind of like a knee-jerk reaction. Somebody says something, we say something back. When we respond, somebody may say something to us or something may happen, but we filter it through the principles of the Word of God, and therefore come out with the correct response to it and deal with it properly.

In the context here, if you remember our study from last week, it is built around a talebearer, somebody who takes and spreads rumors and slanders some things about someone else. Rule number one in the context here, before we look at it as it applies across the board, never form an opinion about anybody with information from a person like that. You are going to have all your

life going to be faced with people who are talebearers. They are people who want to slander people, and they will usually have a personal agenda of why they want to do it. Most of the time it is because they do not want to do what is right with the Lord. You and I have to be very careful that we do not form an opinion about something that somebody says about somebody without getting all the facts. The Bible is very clear where it talks about "prove all things." We have an obligation to prove everything before we allow ourselves to engage ourselves in it. I have told you many, many times that you and I should form our own opinions based on the principles and using the Word of God with what we know.

Also, along with that, in a general sense of dealing with everyday life, it also is dealing with biblical principles and dealing with people. Again, it is real simple. The things that I have learned years and years ago, when you get into dealing with people's problems, the thing that you want to learn, there will be a husband come in and talk about his wife. There will be a wife come in and talk about her husband. There will be some Christian come in and talk about some other Christian that they are struggling with. It is just the way it is. In a perfect world, everybody would do what the Word of God said, but obviously we do not live in a perfect world. So you are going to have those issues. The thing that you want to follow, and the thing you never want to forget, is simply this: there are two sides to every story. You want to remember that.

In dealing with people, one of the things that you really have to understand, that when you start talking with somebody who has an issue with somebody, or an issue with themselves, or somebody who is dealing with something in their life, you are going to find out that human nature is always going to prevail. It is just the way that it is. A person who is telling you about their side of the story is always going to tell it from a self-preservation mode. I understand that. I am not saying that is wrong. I am just saying that is human nature. That is what we do. I mean, we can talk about the principles of the Word of God and how much we love the Lord all of our lives, but when push comes to shove in most Christians' lives, it is them first and everybody else second. So it is a thing where that is just a human nature concept. They will always tell it, like I said, from a self-preservation mode. There are exceptions to that. I have met people who were very honest about things, and they laid it out the way that it was, but you do not find those kind of folks very often.

In dealing with any issue where two people are involved, one of the things you always want to remember is you never take sides. You never take sides. You keep your emotions out of it, and you realize that you are in a position where you cannot allow your emotions to get involved in it. It is something that you just cannot take a side, one side or the other, when two people have a problem. Too many times in dealing with marital problems, it is a he-said-she-said, and you can get caught up in that. Very frankly, some people will try to draw you into that. I was on the phone last week, several times, with a guy who is just a, I do not even know how to have a good adjective for him, but he is just a real piece of work. He is going through some problems with a woman, and he consistently just keeps calling me. His whole purpose, his whole purpose, he does not want to fix any problem that he has. His whole purpose in telling me his side of the story is one thing, and that is to draw me in, to get me to take his side against the woman. That is all that it is. It is a thing where people will do that. They will try to bring you in, draw you in, for

you to support them, or to give them credibility in what they want to do. Many times they will draw you in to want to use you to get you to do something for the other person that the other person will not do. In dealing with any issue, as I said, you keep your emotions out of it, you will be smarter than the problem, and you just never take any sides in it. What you do is you work with and lay out the principles that govern a given situation, and let the principles be the deciding factor.

To give you an example on this, this guy last week, he was telling me, in whatever their legal situation was of going through whatever they are going through, he was telling me all the things that she was doing that violated the agreement, all the things that she was doing that just violated everything that the judge had said needed to be done. He laid that out to me, and I said to him back, "I am not sure why you are telling me this. First of all, I cannot fix it. I am not the judge. My advice to you is this: if this lady has done everything that she said she has done, put her in jail. I mean, go to the authorities, go to the judge, go to the courts, let them deal with it." Of course, when you start talking like that, then you do not go anywhere with it, because of the fact that that is not what he wants. He wants to draw you in. People will want to draw you into their circumstances and their problems, and you simply lay out the principle that governs any given situation, and then you let the principles decide the factor.

When we started our people ministry a couple of years ago, I started out with probably the single greatest principle that I use in dealing with people when you do not know what the situation really is. That is what I call, from 1 Kings 3, the Solomon principle. I have told you the story before, how Solomon was king, the wisest man who ever lived, and two women came to him with one baby. They both claimed that it was their baby, and the other one's baby died, and then the other one stole the baby. Solomon did not know these women from Adam. He did not know anything about them. He was faced with a situation that you will find yourself in many, many times in dealing with people and problems. You do not know who is telling you the truth. You do not know who is giving you the real story. I told you earlier that when people start to tell you what is going on in their world in any given situation, human nature is always going to dictate that they are going to do it from their perspective. I understand that. I get that going in. How do you come to the place where you find out something like that?

Well, Solomon was a genius in what he did. Here were two women. The Bible says they were both harlots. They both had some character problems. They had a baby. One of them was telling the truth. One of them was lying. It was a she-said-she-said here. One says, "It is my baby." The other one says, "No, it is my baby. Her baby died last night. She took my baby from me while I was sleeping," vice versa. Solomon did not know. Solomon's answer was a classic. He called somebody to get a sword. Then he brings that sword and he says, "Let us cut the baby in half, and you can have half, and you can have the other half." Immediately when he did that, the true mother came forward and said, "Oh, I am not going to let that happen. Go ahead. I would rather her have the baby to be alive than me to have that baby die." The other woman said, "Go ahead and cut it in half. I do not care." Immediately, Solomon knew who was telling the truth. The point of that great story is the fact, the deciding factor was the sword. When the sword showed up, it revealed the truth. The Bible says in Hebrews 4 that the Word of God is a sharp two-edged

sword. When you find yourself in a situation that you do not know who is telling you the truth, when you find yourself in a situation where you are dealing with two situations that you do not know what the bottom line is, put them under the sword. Let the Bible principles dictate to you what is right and what is wrong. It is just that simple.

In dealing with marital situations, and you will deal with those a lot, there are always some things that you look for. When you get a little more understanding about dealing with people's problems, you will realize that in any real scenario, any real situation, no matter what it may be, there will be certain things that you will want to look for. There are certain things that are undeniable. There are certain things that are right there. There are certain things that when you learn to look for them, it will help you determine the honesty of somebody who is telling you what they are telling you. When I get into a situation where it is a husband and wife, I look for some things. I will not tell them I am looking for some things. I will listen to what they say. I will watch what they do. I will listen to both of them as they lay out their perspective on where the situation is. But there are some things that I will look for. There are some things that I will look for within the wife. There are some things that I will look for within the husband. There are some things that I will, in any marriage, that when you start to work through some problems that you will want to look for. You will want to see. Learning that is invaluable.

When two Christians have an issue, and two people come in, and they are struggling with something, and they are at odds with each other, there are things that I look for. There are things that I look for. It may be a legitimate problem. It may not be a legitimate problem. How do you determine that? There are things you look for. When you learn the Bible and the Bible principles, the Bible lays out all the scenarios that a person can get into. Once you get those down and understand those, then you simply look for some things that are the real deal.

When you deal with a person by themselves, here again, somebody comes in to me, whether it is a young guy or a young woman, or a mom or a dad or whatever, somebody comes in on their own, and they have some issues. There are things that I look for. There are things that I look for. In human nature, human nature follows patterns. To keep us from falling into Proverbs the verse here of making a statement before you hear the whole matter, and then looking like a fool, is to simply understand that there are some things that you look for. There are some things that you always want to look for in dealing with people. Every situation will come with a story. I have never seen it any, every situation will come in with a story.

Most of you know that I have a, I like to collect World War II memorabilia. Those of you who have been to the veteran's things, and I like the uniforms, and I like to get them into groupings where they come with everything that the guy had. But I really, really, really, really like helmets, especially the ones that were painted by the units. They did not do it a lot, and they are kind of a rare deal. To find a legitimate painted helmet is a pretty hard thing to find. Honestly, everybody remembers the movie *Saving Private Ryan*. Everybody remembers the miniseries, *Band of Brothers*. Those two movies did more for the collecting world than you could ever imagine. In the *Band of Brothers*, it was built around the 101st Airborne, but it was Easy Company of the 506th. The 101st Airborne had three main infantry parachute, they had the 506th, they had the 502nd, and they had the 501st. Every one of them had different stencils on their helmet. For

whatever reason, they decided to do playing cards, like the spades or whatever on it. In the 506th, they put the spade on there of a playing card. Before *Band of Brothers*, if you would go to a military show and there would be a real, honest-to-goodness, real 506th helmet painted there, jump helmet, you would probably buy it for twenty, thirty dollars. Since *Band of Brothers* and *Private Ryan*, and *Private Ryan* was built around the 101st too and also the 4th Ranger Division, since *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers*, the last one I saw that was real that sold on an auction sold for thirty-five thousand dollars. Now that is a mark-up. Overnight, they went crazy. Everything went nuts. Where now you could buy a grouping for ten dollars or somebody would say, "Take it." Now, oh man, you are talking some money in some of those things, unless you find it right.

You know as well as I do, wherever there is money to be made legitimately, there is money to be made illegitimately. When that thing came out and those helmets started going for big bucks, every faker in the world started faking them. I want to tell you something. They faked them good. I mean, they fake them good. There are so many tricks that these guys have learned to age these helmets to make them look like they are eighty years old. I mean, they will paint them up and throw them on top of a barn for, who knows how long, and let them corrode and try to pick up the deal. They will use chemicals to age them. They will put them in ovens with certain chemicals on that will turn it like it is old and rust. In the collecting world, there is a rule you follow. Because every helmet, every helmet came with a story. I heard so many stories that this helmet was found in a barn in Normandy or Sainte-Mère-Église. Or this helmet came right out of the phrase in the collecting world is "the woodwork," meaning to come out of somebody's house. This helmet belonged to a vet. I have seen them put names in it. I have seen them put names in it, the guys that died and put a bullet hole in it, like this is the helmet that the guy was wearing when he was killed.

I will tell you, the rule of thumb in the collecting world is, "Buy the helmet, don't buy the story." Because everything has a story. In buying a helmet, there are things that you look for that tells you this is legitimate. There are some things, folks, no matter how good you are, there are some things you cannot fake. As good as it may look to a novice, you cannot fake seventy, eighty years of age. You just cannot. I mean, you cannot put the things in it. You cannot put the, you know, a lot of, some of the little secrets that you look at as you get your little magnifier and when the stencil is painted on, you look at it under about thirty, forty X and you see down inside that paint, there are little splinter cracks in it from age. A new paint will not do that. Obviously, one of the key things was, is back then they used lead-based paint. So they have guys now that will test your helmet for you to see if the paint is modern day paint or lead-based paint. That never did much for me because I know a guy in Nebraska who is a professional painter and he is great at faking helmets and he probably has nine thousand gallons of paint that is World War II era that is lead-based. I mean, it is the tricks that are out there. One of the things that you learn is you never buy the story because you buy the helmet. You look for the legitimacy of what that piece really represents.

In dealing with people, you never buy the story. You look for the legitimacy of what a situation has. When you learn to do that, when you learn to look beyond the story, because stories will, I

mean, stories pull at your emotions. I mean, if you are at a military show someplace and a guy says, "Hey, that guy over here in this table has got a helmet that came right out of the barn in Normandy, man." I mean, he has got the guy's paperwork. He has got the, man, your heart is beating a thousand, you are there. I have seen some of the best fakes you ever saw in your life. When it deals with dealing with people in circumstances and situations, I have seen some of the best fakes you will ever see in your life. You learn because people will try to tell you the story to get your emotions involved. Once your emotions are involved, you are vulnerable. So you stay with the principles. You never buy the story. You always look for what is legitimate within any given situation once you understand what that is. That is the key. When you hear a matter, you listen to it, both sides, and then you answer it according to the principles of the Word of God. The key to dealing with people and helping them is to keep yourself from getting drawn into the situation. It goes without saying that just human nature will do that. I get it, and you have got to remember this: you cannot see the heart of that person. I never try to judge a person's heart. I always try to give a person the benefit of the doubt. I think that that is, as a Christian, what we ought to do until that person proves otherwise. But I think that, I honestly cannot see a person's heart. But here is the key: God can. God will reveal what the heart is through the Word of God. It is an incredible principle.

I will tell you a story. I was a young man in the ministry. Let me tell you a story about the day I shot my white horse. When I was young, I thought as a young pastor, my job was to ride in on my white horse and solve every problem. There would be situations that somebody would have, and I would get the phone call, and immediately I would go out to the back of the church where the stables were. I would saddle up that mighty steed of mine, and I would jump on the back and ride off into the problem. I found out very quickly that that was the worst thing that you could do. You ride in there thinking that you, somebody on the phone, "Well, he is doing this or she is doing this." That is all you hear. You are so naive with it all that you think, "I know what the problem is." So you mount up on that horse. You go galloping down the road, pulling into the front yard, tying on the fence post, jump into the house, and you look like a fool. That is because there are two sides to every story. I learned that after about the first six months of dealing with people. One day I took that horse out and put a bullet right between his eyes. He is long dead. No more white horse riding for me until the one comes in Revelation 19.

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another:

Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

There is somebody running in thinking you have got all the answers when you do not. You look like a fool. "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself." Do not take what somebody else tells you. Find out for yourself and "discover not a secret to another. Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away." In other words, infamy is like your reputation. Your reputation gets shot. You come jumping in and shoot your mouth off before you get all the facts.

Then in Proverbs 25:11-12, it turns back toward the Word of God and what we should do.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovor upon an obedient ear.

Now you see that? An obedient ear. An obedient ear is an ear that is trained to listen and to look for some right things. How many times in the Bible does the Bible say, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear?" The key is "a wise reprovor upon an obedient ear." Understanding that your obedience to your listening is based on the principles of the Word of God. It is a great verse.

Five simple steps:

1.) Get the facts before you respond. Do not just go running in there and jumping in because the person is your friend or you think they would not tell you the truth. I have already told you, friend or not, people will always tell the story based on their own self-preservation in any situation. That is just human nature.

2.) Go to the person directly. You have a problem with somebody? Go to that person directly and deal with it. Do not go on hearsay. Somebody said, "There have been people, in my life, there have been people that come to me and say, 'You know that so-and-so said this about you.'" Before I make my judgment on where I am at or where I am at, I will call that person up or go to that person, "Hey, so-and-so," and I will ask the person, "Do you mind if I go tell so-and-so if that is true or I can fix it?" If the person says no, then I say, "Well, then why did you tell me, why did you put me in this situation that you are not giving me the liberty to do what is right with?" And I will deal with them. If they say, "Yeah, go ahead," which most of the time they do, then I will go to that person and I will simply say, "Hey, look, did I screw something up here? So-and-so says, 'You have got a problem with me.' So-and-so says that I did something." If I did, I want to make it right because the number one thing in all the world is for God's people to get along. If I screwed up, I will be the first one to tell you I screwed up. You have got to do that. You have got to be able to do that.

3.) Do not go on hearsay or what somebody tells you that is not documented. I am big on documentation. I think that documentation, if everybody would do it in what they say or what they do, would solve ninety percent of the problems we have in Christianity. But nobody does it. But I am big on documentation.

4.) Do not talk to others about it. You want to keep the loop of issues as close as you can without making it as big as you can.

5.) Follow the biblical principles. In everything in life, you are going to find that there are rules of engagement. You have to follow those rules. In dealing with people with their problems, no matter what the scenario is, there is going to be certain rules of engagement that you have to follow based on the principles of the Word of God. When you follow those, it helps you do something that most of God's people never have an ability to do: that is, pick your battles. There are some battles that you and I do not need to get involved in. There are some battles that you will have to get involved in. But you need to know when you do and when you do not. That comes back to the white horse deal. You know when to shoot that sucker.

SEC: Principle 2: The Power of the Human Spirit (Proverbs 18:14)

Now, with that in mind, let us look at verse 14. Here is another great principle. This is a great one here.

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

This is probably one of the greatest verses on the power of the human spirit. There is no greater force in man than his spirit that drives him onward and sustains him. A study of the spirit of an unsaved man is one of the most remarkable things that you will ever analyze and look at and study. The spirit of man will represent his passions. It will represent his fighting spirit, so to speak. It will represent his will to win. It will represent his will to survive. You see a football game. You see the difference in football players or any sport player, especially football. The guy who gets tackled and he has got five guys on him, but he gets an extra five yards, dragging him with him. Where the other guy gets hit and he goes down. You see the quarterback who does not want to get hurt, so the ball play goes to part and he is being charged. He just falls down, so he does not get killed. I get it. But you have got the other guy there when he sees the crowd coming. He still wants to make the play. He will do everything he can do, and in the midst of getting clobbered by four guys, he will let that ball go and somebody will catch it first down. He is in the hospital the rest of his life, but he won the ball game. That is man's spirit. The spirit of man, the Bible says, will sustain his infirmity.

In this next section here, verse 14, I want to talk about the spirit of man in two aspects. I want to look at the spirit of man in an unsaved man, and then I want to look at the spirit of man in a saved man. This is one of the great insights into what unsaved man can accomplish. This kind of stuff is invaluable in figuring out why people do what they do, how they do it, and it is the key to understanding the human spirit that is in man. We just do not think about it, but you see there, here is a man's spirit or a woman's spirit at work in almost everything that you can see and read in the world today. You see it in great leaders. You see it in great presidents. You see it in common ordinary people who rise above terrible circumstances. Somebody said one time that there are no heroes, but just men who rise above the ordinary to accomplish great things in an hour of need. That is so true. I think it was William Halsey that said that. That is so true because it is the spirit of man that does that. History is a record of the spirit of man to carry him to great endeavors.

I have always enjoyed in my own personal life, I have always enjoyed reading about men who were faced with great trials and great obstacles and how they overcame them. Many times in a military combat situation, many times in just life itself, I think that you learn a lot about yourself. I learn a lot about circumstances that people go through. I think that when you read those accounts, you get a better understanding and appreciation of what the spirit in man's human spirit does for him in an unsaved state.

In 1927, there was a guy by the name of Charles Lindbergh. Most people do not know who Charles Lindbergh is today. They think he probably was the guy that developed cheese. That is not true. Lindbergh cheese. Charles Lindbergh was an early aviator. In 1927, airplanes were still in their infancy. There were not a lot of jets, there were not a lot of good planes. Men were just

now taking long flights across the United States. Somebody put out a record and a reward for the first man that would fly across the Atlantic from New York to Paris. Lots of guys tried it and they all got killed. Charles Lindbergh was a young man, but in his twenties. He wanted to attempt to cross the Atlantic by himself. An incredible feat. I mean, it would be hard enough with two pilots that could switch off. We are talking about three days without sleep, three days without landing, three days without anything to cross from New York to Paris. Almost an unbelievable, impossible deal. And yet Charles Lindbergh accomplished that feat. His plane was the embodiment of what I am talking about today. Because the name of his plane, and it is in the Smithsonian Institute in the aeronautical section, but the name of his plane was *The Spirit of St. Louis*. He caught in that plane his endeavor that it was the spirit in himself that drove him that nobody else could do what he did. But he had a drive. You ought to read the account how he falls asleep and he almost crashes into the Atlantic Ocean. He is so tired. Not only did he have to go two or three days without sleep, but he was so keyed up before he ever took off that he could not sleep the night before. So literally four days without any sleep. And yet he landed in Paris. When he got to Paris at Le Bourget Field, he was so worn out and fatigued from the stress of flying and no sleep, he could not even land a plane without almost crashing it. He was that far out of whack with all the stress and all the fatigue that he had felt. But it was his spirit that got him through. The spirit of man, in an unsaved man, is just absolutely incredible.

I remember as a young kid, I used to read all the stories that I could find. I remember I must have been in the sixth or seventh grade, and we had then what we called reading labs. We probably do not even have reading labs today. But we had reading labs where you would go in and you could go through all of these different things and you could find short stories and you would read them. I always was a reader. I loved to read. I will never forget, I was always picking out the ones that had to do with World War II, even back then. I found a story based on a bomber called *The Lady Be Good*. *The Lady Be Good* was a B-24 bomber. In 1943, it took off from Benghazi and flew to Naples on a bombing run. Coming back, it disappeared. Nobody ever heard what happened to it. It just disappeared. Fourteen years later, in 1958, an oil petroleum crew in the Libyan desert was looking for places to put oil wells and they came across a B-24 bomber that was almost perfectly intact. It was incredible. They went inside. There was still coffee drinkable. This was like fourteen or fifteen years. Coffee was still drinkable. Sandwiches were still there. One of the guys went back and pressed the trigger on one of the fifty-cal machine guns and it fired. The radio still worked. That plane just looked like it landed on its stomach in the middle of the desert. Everything was there. Everything worked. Everything was intact. But no crew. One of the greatest mysteries that ever, ever, ever came into it. They brought the Air Force out. The Air Force did an investigation. They could not figure anything out. They went back and it was about four years later that that same British crew found the first body. Then they found another body. Then they found a little camp with four or five bodies in it. All skeletons at this point in time. One by one the story of *The Lady Be Good* came to be known. You can Google it on the internet.

What happened was this: they were on their way flying back from the raid in Naples. They got lost. They thought they were flying to their base. But actually they had flown over their base and were flying away from their base. They were almost out of gas. It was nighttime. They thought

they were over the Mediterranean Sea. Little did they know that they had flown into the Libyan desert some three hundred miles beyond where they thought they were. They all bailed out before the plane ran out of gas. From what they found and what they, in the log books and the diaries that they found, they actually thought they were over water. What a surprise it must have been when they hit the Libyan desert. That B-24, *The Lady Be Good*, just sauntered on for twenty, thirty miles to a complete run out of gas. Then just bellied in on the desert. And there it was. Those guys got together. They were confused completely where they were. They had no idea. It is a thing where they finally got together. They started to put it together. They had two canteens of water, four candy bars, half a sandwich that somebody had in his flight suit. That is all the rations that they had in the middle of the Libyan desert. Where it is one hundred thirty degrees in the day and twenty-two degrees cold at night. They started to walk out of the desert. They thought that they were closer than they really were. The closest way out was two hundred miles. When they finally found every one of those guys, and they never found the last guy. He got into the sand dunes looking for help. Some of them could only go so far. That is where they died. The little camp that they found had four or five guys. One of the guys, D.P. Hayes, was right from Independence, Missouri. He is buried over here. I went to his grave. He is buried over in Independence. Two or three guys were left. They struck out on their own. They found those two bodies. They never found the other one. They were there. It took them two weeks to die. In the most extenuating heat-cold situation with no food. Each one of them got a canteen cup, drink a day of water. They had no food after the first day, second day. How do you ration that kind of stuff? And yet, when they found the last body that they did find, he had went ninety miles on foot. Ninety miles. The human spirit. The human spirit.

I remember reading the story of early in World War II when the Japanese were just taking over all of the Pacific. I remember the fall of Bataan, reading about it. The Japanese were merciless. They looked at people who surrendered less than human because their Bushido code meant you did not surrender. So all these Americans had surrendered. They treated them so brutally it was unbelievable. They marched them in the heat eighty miles to a prisoner camp that became known as the Bataan Death March. I have seen pictures of soldiers walking along that trail, actually with dysentery so bad that they are actually carrying their intestines in their hands. If they stopped to get a drink, they were bayoneted. If they stopped, they were too tired and fell down, they were shot or bayoneted. It was the most horrendous thing that you ever saw in your life. And yet today, those men, the survivors of it, many of them have died by natural age by now. But for years and years and years, there were hundreds of them that met every year for a reunion. I went to one of the reunions in Kansas City, the survivors of the Bataan Death March, the human spirit. The human spirit will get you through when other things will not get you through. It is an incredible concept.

You had an uncle or somebody that was on the USS Indianapolis, did you not? Grandfather? Great uncle? USS Indianapolis, 1945. It was a secret mission that it carried the atomic bomb to Tinian that was going to be dropped on Hiroshima. It was such a secret mission that nobody knew anything about the ship, and the ship had dropped the atomic bomb off of Tinian, was making its way back when a Japanese submarine torpedoed it. It sank in like nine minutes. Fourteen hundred men went into the ocean. The Navy did not even know they were missing.

They were not even missing for a week and a half. For a week and a half, those men stayed in that hot during the day, cold at night, many of them not having life jackets on, not enough life raft for everybody, most of them just treading water. Fourteen hundred men came out, and after two weeks when that first PBY, it was search and rescue, came over and landed and began to pick them up, out of fourteen hundred men, less than two hundred survived. Sharks took the rest. I have read those stories, boy, those old boys that were in that water praying. I have read those stories when those old boys were there praying, "Oh God, get me out of this." They were talking about the fact that they were there in a little life barrier where they are holding on to each other, trying to stay afloat, and the shark would come and take this one. The shark would come back and take this one. You are in the middle of the night, you cannot see anything under you. Any moment of time, you could feel those jaws clench down and pull you under. Do you understand what kind of endurance that would take? Human spirit, man. Human spirit is an incredible thing. It really is.

You ought to read the book sometime called *Enemy at the Gates*. It is about the Battle of Stalingrad, 1943, Stalingrad in Russia. The Germans had tried to take Russia, and they had gotten all the way into Stalingrad and had taken the city. When the Russians counterattacked, and the German general was a guy by the name of von Paulus, he was in the German 6th Army, that is who was in Stalingrad. The German 6th Army got completely circled by the Russian, massive counterattack. Stalingrad fell. Five hundred thousand German troops from the 6th Army went into captivity into Russia. Fifteen years later, when they came back, five thousand came back. Everybody else died in those camps. It tells you in the book what they went through, the cannibalism, that they ate the dead people. I do not mean to be gross today, and I know we have got kids here today, but do you know how they survived, the human spirit? They would feed them some food, barley, corn, and they were so hungry that they had a detail that collected all the human waste. It came out of the human beings, you know, and it had groups that went through and picked out the individual ears of corn that had not been digested, washed them off, and that is what they had to eat. The human spirit. The human spirit. Incredible. What man will do to survive. It is incredible. Incredible.

We saw the movie *Unbroken*. We all went to see it, about Louis, whatever his name was, and how he survived. There is one out right now called *Hacksaw Ridge*. I read his life story years ago. Desmond Doss, who was a conscientious objector, who single-handedly in Okinawa with the 77th Army, saved seventy-five guys as a medic. Incredible. Incredible. We have all seen the movie *Rudy*. A guy who is one hundred ten pounds, nothing, and cannot know a speck of athletic ability, nothing. He hangs in with the greatest football team in the land, Notre Dame, and the spirit. I mean, they beat him senseless. Human spirit. I remember the soccer team that crash landed in the Andes Mountains. Remember that back in the early 1960s? Nobody ever knew where they were. Finally found them, but they did not have nothing to eat. They wound up eating their dead to survive. Hard to believe. Hard to believe. But I am going to tell you something. The spirit of man is his greatest driving force to keep him alive when nothing else will. It is just that simple. The spirit of man is his ability to survive in the most horrendous circumstances, lost in the wilderness for days. The Holocaust survivors. If you get Netflix, there is a documentary section, there is one you ought to watch called *Treblinka*. It is about the concentration camp in

Poland, in Treblinka. One of the most sobering things you have ever seen in your life of how these people had to suffer. This old guy who is now probably dead by this time, because I think it was done probably ten or twelve years ago, but he is talking the story of how he was put into Treblinka, and he picks up the clothes of the bodies once they were sent into the gas chamber. He is talking about, he is already fearing any day you are going to die. I mean, you only have this second, only have this moment. He is talking about picking up all the clothes and gathering them up. He walks over and he picks up and he looks down, and there he recognizes the coat of his older sister and his younger sister that had just went into the gas chamber, and he is picking the clothes up. Can you imagine that? Nothing you can do about it? Nobody you can talk to about it? Nobody that you can reach out to? Sometimes, in an unsaved man, his spirit is all he has to get him through. He is trying to survive.

Now, let us look at the second aspect of man's spirit in relationship to a saved man. We know that as a saved man, we are a body, soul, and spirit. We are complete. The body, defined in Luke 16, is what you are all looking at, and you got here today that you are looking at mine. I am looking at yours. The soul is unique only to man because God gave man a soul, made him a soul, so at some point in time when God would separate that soul from the flesh, God could fellowship with us through that soul. It is the spiritual body within your physical body. Then you have your spirit, and before you are saved, you have a human spirit. It is a dead spirit as far as God is concerned. It cannot recognize the things of God, cannot fellowship with God, cannot understand the things of God. The Bible says the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God. But that spirit represents and is defined in the Bible as the mind of man. It will be man's will. It will be man's drive. It will be man's passion. It will be his emotions. It will be his free will and his ability to choose.

Let me give you the verses in the Bible very quickly here on the spirit so you have them all that you can put them into your Bible.

First of all, the Bible says in Hebrews 12:1:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

God is the Father of spirits. All spirits come from Him. Spirits in the Bible, when a man gets a spirit in the Bible, the Bible calls it in Genesis 2:7:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

That is what gives man his life, even an unsaved man. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that when a man dies that that spirit that God gave him, the life goes back to God. That is what man saved. In other words, when God gave man a spirit, and initially it was to give man life, physical life, but then God uses that spirit, and I will show you in a minute, for something else as time goes on.

Ephesians 4:23 says that man's spirit is his mind:

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

So, you are told in the Bible that in 1 Corinthians 2:16:

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

That we are to get instructions from it. Philippians 2:5 says that we are to let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

So, when you take man's mind and couple it with the mind of God, then you begin to have some things in your life that you need to have. Based on that, Romans 8:16 says:

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Primary function of the Holy Spirit of God after we are saved is to bear out the fact that we belong to God. 1 John 3:20 talks about if our hearts condemn us:

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

And sometimes our heart does. Sometimes we doubt ourselves. I have had people all my life think that they can lose their salvation. That is their own heart condemning them. The Bible says if your own hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. He knows all things because of Romans 8:16. He is the Spirit that searches the hearts of man, a mind of man, and then becomes bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

Job 26:1-4 talks about the four spirits that are on this earth. It asks the question, "Whose spirit came from you?" Animal has a spirit. That does not affect you and me. But then you have man's human spirit, which you all have. Then you have an unclean spirit, which is the devil. And then you have the Holy Spirit, which is God. Those two will affect man's spirit.

Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 says that when you do not align your spirit with God's spirit, then you vex your own spirit with the things of the world.

2 Corinthians 7:1 tells us that our spirit is not saved:

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 Corinthians 5:5 says that our spirit, when the rapture takes place, that is when our spirit gets saved, when it becomes one with God's Holy Spirit, incomplete. When a person vexes their spirit, they have no rule over their own spirit.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

And now they are mostly a basket case, and they are like a city broken down without walls.

Where an unsaved man will get through life based on his own spirit, as I gave you the examples, and very clearly and graphically, and many times he will survive. Many times we focus on that,

but we have got to ask ourselves the question, "What is the point if you survive all the things that you go through as an unsaved man, and then die and go to hell?" What is your point? There is no point. But the saved man, on the other hand, now has the ability to align his spirit after he is saved, up to God's spirit, and through the Word of God, the mind of Christ, get the right answer to everything and make the right choice, and get through anything he has to face. It is no more just his spirit. It is God's spirit and his spirit now with a purpose. Where an unsaved man does what he does for his own purpose, and he survives. The child of God aligns his spirit up with God's spirit for God's purpose, and he survives, but he accomplishes something with it. Man's spirit, this is very important. I said it earlier, is his free will, his ability to choose. It is basically the conduit pipe that feeds man's flesh, or for a saved person, the old nature or the new nature.

SEC: Principle 3: The Heart of the Prudent (Proverbs 18:15)

Look at verse 15.

The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

Now last week we talked about building a strong tower, did we not? Two key things in building a strong tower. One will be the Word of God, and two, what you do with your spirit. There are four openings in our heads. We are told in 1 Corinthians 11:3:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Your head represents where you are going in life, which way you are headed. It represents how you look at things, how you reason about things. You are bound to say, "I am not in my right mind, I am out of my head." You make bad choices. You have four openings in our heads. We have our eyes, have our nose, we see with our eyes, we smell with our nose, we have our ears, what we hear, and our mouth, what we take in and then what we put out. All four will affect the spirit of man, and in turn will affect man's attitude about everything in life, and in time, the choices that he makes. When you make your head toward Christ, then you are in good shape. When you are in charge of your own head and you do what you want to do, then you are in not so good shape. When it comes to the mind of Christ and God's spirit, it gives man the ability to live above the circumstances by making good choices and going in the right direction. When it is not, then he makes his own choices that in many cases will lead to a wounded spirit that will in time destroy him or it will just make his life miserable. Verse 14 says, "but a wounded spirit who can bear."

The spirit of man is like a rudder on a ship. You take the biggest aircraft carrier you could ever find or the biggest destroyer or the biggest luxury liner. If you would pull that out of the water, you would find that it goes left and right by a rudder underneath, a rudder that is much, much smaller than the ship. When it turns that rudder this way, the ship goes that way. When it turns the rudder that way, it goes this way. That ship goes in the direction it goes by somebody in the wheelhouse turning the rudder one way or the other. That rudder is your spirit. You go in life the direction you go by which way you align your spirit up to the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

It will dictate and direct you every which way you go. It will set you on a course based on which way you turn either toward the Word of God or toward the things of the world.

Now, let us look at Proverbs 20:27 for a second. I want you to see the whole aspect here. We are talking about a saved man now.

The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Now, that is a great verse. Let us look at it. When God first touches man to bring him to salvation, the first point of contact will be man's spirit. He cannot get the flesh because the flesh is totally corrupt. He cannot get the soul because the soul is tied to the flesh. So he has to have an independent agent by which represents man's ability to choose. So he, like a candle, like lighting a candle, he touches that man's spirit. The Bible says in Proverbs 20:27, "search at the inward parts of the belly," the seat of man's emotions. Luke 19:10 says, God's Spirit looks deep down inside the bowels of man's emotion. God sees his failures, his fears, his anxieties, his disappointment in life. He sees the fact that no matter what he does to pretend he is okay, the emptiness inside is still there. In the darkness of his unsaved world with all his struggles, God starts by lighting that candle of man's spirit, the light in our lives that will lead us to the light of the Word of God that shines in our hearts.

You see, the liberals teach a version of it. As I have told you many, many times, everything that is a false doctrine is basically a Bible doctrine that somebody screwed up. The liberals teach this: they teach that every unsaved man has the spark of God in him, and that when you fan that spark, then he comes to God. Of course, that is totally not true. The Bible says in Romans 7, "in me that is my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The Bible says God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. God is not going to put any spark in any unsaved man until God comes down to deal with that man His way. When He does that, He reaches down deep inside a man and He touches him, and He gives him just a little light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Every man and every woman who ever walks this planet at some point in their life, God is going to reach down and touch them through their spirit. He is going to reveal Himself to them. We get this idea, people ask all the time, "What about all the people over there, not all the heathen in Africa, what about all the heathen in Kansas City?" A heathen is a heathen. We get the idea because they are over there, we are over here, we have churches and they seemingly do not, that that handicaps God some way, like God has got to do it through a church. He has chosen to do it through a church in the church age, but God can do it any way He wants to do it. The verse stands. Many times because we cannot understand how God does it, we do not accept that God can do it. That is a dangerous position to be in. There are a lot of things that I do not understand why God does the way He does it, but I cannot deny the fact that He does it. That is what I focus on. When it comes to the fact that I do not understand how God lights every man, I do not. I do not know how He does it. It is not my job to know. I just thank God He lighted me and I responded to it. But it is not my job to figure it out. I believe the verse and what it says.

I know this. I mean, what do you think? You think while Jesus is over there at the first coming of Christ doing all of His work in the Middle East over there to put up Christianity and get it going, what do you think happened to the rest of the world? What do you think happened to the Indians in America, North America, Central America, South America? What do you think? Was God not doing anything with them? Were they just out there hanging out on their own and they all died and went to hell until God got around to send the missionaries? You see, without this verse here and understanding what we are talking about here, about how God touches a man's spirit, you never figure it out.

Well, I know that when the Pilgrims came here and began to establish their colonies, they came here looking for religious freedom, preaching the Bible. I know that there was a group of Indians from Oregon out there called the Nez Perce that traveled two thousand miles when they heard that the white men had showed up and they showed up asking them, "Where was the book that talked about the Son of the Great God that died for us?" Now, how did they get that? You see, we think the Indians are all pagan and heathen. No, the pagans and heathens are out in Kansas City. You are going to shoulder to shoulder with them this afternoon. The truth of the matter, and I know a lot of lore and a lot of stuff happens in history that destroys a lot of facts. I get it. But I will tell you this, the American Indian in America, and I know there were probably bad Indians and good Indians. There were probably Indians that found God and Indians that rejected God. Now, how could you make that statement? Because look at the Indians that were all around. I am not talking about the ones in Cleveland. You have people today who reject God and accept God. I will tell you this, some of those Indians back there, they worshiped the Great White Father. Now, that may not be as biblical as you would say in preaching a church, but you go over to Revelation 1, 2, and 3, and you will find the Great White Father. They revered the Great Spirit. See, we just all think that is pagan. Well, I will tell you this, pagan or not, when they went out and they shot a deer for their family, and that deer went down with a bow and arrow, they believed that the Great White Father and the Great Spirit brought that deer to them. You know what they did? They got down on their knees and gave thanks to the Great White Father for bringing that deer. That is more than some of you will do this afternoon when you eat your deer steak. And they are pagan.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Man receives that light, that beginning of the light. He accepts that light. A great example is in Acts 10 with Cornelius. God touched him and gave him just enough that he needed to know. He responded to it, and the more he responded to the light that God gave him, it was only a matter of time that God sent Peter to him, and he got everything he needed. There is your model. There are lots of models in the Bible. God reaches down and touches man's spirit. Man either responds to it or rejects it. If man responds to it, then God is obligated to get him more light. The more he responds, the more light God gives him, and at some point between God and that man, he gets enough light that God has satisfied, and he does what God wants him to do that God accepts it. You say, "How do you explain all that?" I cannot, do not want to, would not tell you if I could. There are certain things about God in the Bible I do not understand, but I cannot deny what He does. I will focus on what I cannot deny, what I cannot figure out. It is just that simple. Just that simple.

In the Bible, the devil represents darkness. God represents light. Genesis 1:4, four verses into the Bible, God divided light from the darkness. They never got together since. Man in darkness is lost and dead in trespasses of sin.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

That is for a saved man. You get the light, you start walking in it, and you fellowship in it. Where an unsaved man walks in darkness, he has no fellowship.

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

The moment God brings in the Word of God into that man's spirit, light shows up. The great example of man accepting that light in his spirit and allowing God to bring him out of the darkness and into the light. When I have thought about this, I have always thought about it like this. Quick scenario. Two different kinds of people.

You are out walking around in the woods and you are having a great time, you find this cave. Your curiosity gets the best of you, and you have got a little flashlight, so you are going to go do a little caving. So you walk back in this cave, and it has got a lot of, it goes back miles, you go back and go off here and go off there, and you go back way back in this cave, and it is total darkness. I mean, you cannot see anything. If it was not for your flashlight, you could not see anything, and suddenly your flashlight goes out. Now you are at least two miles in the cave, total darkness. You cannot find your way out, you cannot see the light of the entrance of anything, you are in darkness. You are there for a day. You are really scared. You are there for two days. You are praying, "God, let somebody find my car and put it together." I did not tell anybody, I was not planning on coming into the cave, but here I am, I have been three days. Some hikers come along and they see your car, they see the cave, they go up and do their thing, come back a day later, the car is still there, they are a little concerned. You tell the park ranger, the park ranger comes up, he is concerned, he calls for a search party that you are back in that cave, maybe you fell, maybe you are hurt, maybe you are lost. You have been there four or five days now, and you are sitting there so despondent, you are sitting there in total darkness, and all of a sudden, way, way, way, way down that tunnel, way, way, way, way down there, you see a flicker of light. You are so excited, you get up, and as best you can, without killing yourself, you start moving toward that light. Then you start yelling. They start yelling. Pretty soon you meet up, out of the darkness, into the light, you go home.

Scenario two, you just killed somebody. Cops are after you. You are driving all through the woods to try to get them off your trail, you dump your car, you run through the woods, and finally you see this cave. You think, "What a great place to hide." So you go back in this cave, way back in the dark, and you are laying low back there, and you are quiet. You are waiting for the heat to go off, that you can go back out and get away with this. But then you see it, way down that shaft, you see that little light coming your way, and you know that they are searching this cave. Now, where the first guy could not wait to get caught, you do not want to get caught. So you know what you do when the light starts coming toward you? You move back farther in the darkness of the cave. You use the darkness of that cave to mask that you do not have to deal with

the light. One is a picture of how a man got saved when he was touched with the light of God and he responded to it. The other one is a picture of a man who was touched with a light, did not want to respond to it. One gets into the light, the other one stays in darkness. That is how it works. That is how it works.

SEC: The Perfecting Process

You see, Proverbs is a book that shows the inside of man. It takes him apart. It shows you not only what he thinks, not only how he thinks, but why he thinks what he thinks. It is like Romans 1 and 2, probably two of the greatest defining chapters in the Bible, where Romans 1 defines for you how the Gentiles think, and Romans 2 defines how the Jews think. But Proverbs lays out all the aspects of man, and how he thinks and how he reasons. Proverbs is a book that looks deep inside the mind of man, his spirit. Looks deep inside his attitude of his heart. Shows us that as a child of God, we have to align ourselves with the two key aspects of God. Align ourselves with the spirit, our spirit, with His Spirit, and align ourselves with our attitude of heart, with His attitude of heart, through the Word of God.

The Bible talks about our perfecting on a daily basis. I know that when you get saved, you are not perfect. There is nobody who is. We all make mistakes. We all have our issues. We know that. But the Bible talks about a perfecting for the work of God. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, it talks first about perfecting our spirit with the Word of God, the principles. Ephesians 4:12 talked about that the concept of the church at the end of the day was the perfecting of the saints.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, it says:

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

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

You see, the aligning of your spirit with God's Spirit, after salvation, is the key to the perfecting process. You perfect your spirit as you listen more intently to what instructions God gives you, that you let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, that you take instructions from, that you continue to learn and grow in everything that you do, that you take in what God has for you, you add to your learning, you add to your knowledge, and you build it all around His Spirit bearing witness with your spirit, and allowing Him to teach you through your spirit, giving you the direction in life you need to go.

Well, we will hold up there, and I am going to pray we will be dismissed if you are going to be part of the high school thing.