

# Proverbs 18:1-7

Sunday 11/6/2016

SEC: The Vitality of Proverbs and the Simplicity of God's Word

We are in Proverbs chapter 18. We have been in the Book of Proverbs for 17 chapters, a journey that has taken us probably two or three years to reach this point. We have truly taken our time with it, focusing on all its truth. We have discussed many times how absolutely vital the Book of Proverbs is to our Christian life. The Bible talks about the Book of Proverbs containing for us the issues of life. I do not know of another book in all the Word of God that is more potent or powerful for our current situation, one that gives us insight into almost every issue you will have to deal with. Personally, I believe that the whole Bible is built around the Book of Proverbs, or perhaps more accurately, the five wisdom books. Proverbs is certainly a key book that deals with that.

As you come through any book of the Bible, and certainly through Proverbs, you will encounter things and gain great principles for life. You will see great doctrinal truths about the future, understanding how it works. But every once in a while, you will come upon a passage, a verse, or even a chapter that stands out by itself and cries out to be laid out and preached. I think in all the Bible, as we went through the Book of Proverbs early on, probably the greatest, deepest chapter in all the Bible, the deepest spiritually connected chapter, is Proverbs chapter 8. Proverbs chapter 8, without a doubt, is the deepest chapter in the Word of God. So much of what you will understand and learn about God, the Word of God, and what God is doing is found in that chapter.

You will find this as you come through different books of the Bible. Proverbs chapter 18:1-7 is one of those passages; it is a standalone passage as far as I am concerned. I remember years ago when I was a young Christian, I had a lot of questions about many things in Christianity. I am always a simple kind of guy; I am not really deep in my thinking about many things. I cannot remember the technical term for it, but there is a theory that the simplest answer is the right answer. I have always followed that, and I think the simplest approach to the Bible is always the best approach. I never understood why men wanted to make the Bible so complicated. I never understood, and I think through things because I know I am going to stand before God someday and give an account of my life. So I look at things around me and what people say, and I ask myself questions. Over the course of my years in the Bible, I have answered most of them. I still have some for which I do not quite have the answer I am looking for yet, but the majority of them I do.

I always wondered, hearing what man said, that you had to spend years and years studying Greek or Hebrew, going to a Bible college to get the seminary training you need. Most churches in this country would not even look at a candidate for a pastor who does not have several degrees behind his name. The whole world lifted up the Bible to such an unapproachable position. I thought to myself, and this is just me, someday God is going to judge me by the book that He gave me. Someday, the Bible says, the books are open. When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ, God is going to open up the Word of God, and He is going to judge everything that I did.

He is going to judge every attitude that I have. He is going to judge everything that I involve myself in based on the book that He gave me that would be the guide in my life.

I asked myself, if the Bible is that hard to get, if the Bible is that hard to understand, if the average person, just like me and you, who had a tough time getting out of grade school, if the average person has to come to that kind of understanding and education to learn what God has for him, which the majority of people on planet Earth will never do, how in the world is a righteous God going to judge me when He gave me a book and told me He was going to judge me by it, but He gave me a book that was so far out of my reach that I could never just learn? That really was a question that I struggled with for a long time. I really got the answer when I came to Proverbs chapter 18 and the first seven verses. They really helped me understand some things.

I was like most of you when I first got saved. I was naive. The night I got saved, I came down to get right with God. I remember it. I came down and got right with the Lord, wanting to dedicate my life to the Lord. I thought all of Christianity loved God. I thought everybody loved the Bible. If you had told me at that time in my life, when I went down there slobbering and crying all over the pulpit, and people were slipping and sliding and everything, if you had told me that there were deacons in a church fighting with other deacons, and there were people in the church who were mad over this and mad over that, if you had told me that there were men who did not believe the Bible yet claimed to be Christian and they were bickering and fighting over stupid stuff, I would have called you a liar. Well, 40-some years later, I know that is the reality of life and Christianity. It is a thing where we, as God's people, perfect ourselves every day in our life, and we should come to the point with a perfect book that we ought to be able to handle anything that comes into our world. But the problem is, we are perfected people who live in an imperfect world, and therein lies the struggle.

I looked and I thought to myself, how is God going to do that? How is God going to come down and judge me based on a Word that He gave me when everybody out there is telling me it is so hard to believe and get? Most of God's people get so defeated when they start reading the Bible after they get saved just because everybody else out there tells them it is such a hard book to get. I have told you before, everybody, I do not care who you are, you and I have two fundamental problems when it comes to learning your Bible, when you read your Bible. This is why so many people stop reading it. You will start reading your Bible, which is a good thing. You will get saved, right with God. How many times has somebody told me, "Where should I start to read? Where should I go? Should I start in the Old Testament or start in the New Testament?" Some people say, "Well, you need to start in the New Testament because it is easier. Read that through once, maybe twice, and then crack open the Old Testament and then read that." Other people say, "Just start out, let God show you what He has for you, just start reading it." I understand all that, but let me tell you something. Let me tell you why people get discouraged when it comes to reading the Bible.

1. They have already been told it is such a hard book to get. Everybody who is anybody has said, "The Bible is really a hard book, and you really have to invest all your life and get all these other things to get it." I understand that, but I want to tell you something. The Bible is

not a hard book to understand. It is just a hard book to believe. When you begin to believe it and you begin to understand what it is, you realize how simplistic it really is and how God gave you the Word of God that He wanted you to have.

One day in England, Tyndale, who translated the early English translation of the Bible, was among all his peers, and they were criticizing him because he was translating a Bible for a common man who could have and read the Word of God. At that time in England, the Bible was held up in such an unprecedented way that the common man was never equated with anybody who could ever learn the Scriptures. It all was housed in the great minds of the great scholars. He looked outside the window and saw a plow boy plowing across the field there, and he said, "You know what, gentlemen? One day that plow boy will know more of the Scriptures and know more about God than all the scholars in England." You have your King James Bible today because a man like that had the vision.

SEC: The First Sin and Man's Desire to Be Like God

Proverbs chapter 18:1-7 is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible in the aspect of a man who is totally against the Word of God. It is about men whose whole lives are built around one thing, and that is to destroy other people's faith in the Word of God. In Christianity, I could always understand how the world would do it, but I could never understand how God's people could do it. Then I got to Proverbs chapter 18, and it began to unlock a lot of things for me. I began to get an incredible inside look at men and women, but mostly men, who will sit in judgment on the Word of God. I began to see a mindset behind the great issue in the church today.

The church down through history is laid out for you in the Bible through seven periods of church history. God did it that way so it would be easy to break it down and easy to grasp and easy to learn. I have told you before that in every period of church history, God's people had to face an issue that came up that threatened the very existence of what they believed, and they had to take their stand on the truth of God's Word. In every age and dispensation as you come through a period of church history, you begin to see how every aspect of the church in each period had to deal with a specific doctrinal issue. I have told you before, the issue today for the Laodicean church, the issue that you have to decide for yourself today, is simply this: Do you have the very words of God that He wants you to have? Do you have the very words of God that He orchestrated, put into play, brought down, and put in your lap, that you can have the very absolute perfect Word of God without any error or any mixture of error? If you do not today, you are wasting your time.

The first sin that is recorded in the Bible was never connected with Adam and Eve. People who have a passing acquaintance with the Word of God, if you would ask them what is the first sin in the Bible, they would tell you Adam and Eve because Adam and Eve in the chronological order of your Bible in Genesis is the first book, and in chapter 3, it looks like it is that way. The truth of the matter is, the first sin in the Bible goes back a long way before Adam and Eve. When you go back to Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28, you will realize a place that was long before Adam and Eve ever came on this planet. You will find a place where a man by the name of Lucifer, who had everything over God's creation, decided in his heart that he was smarter than

God. He decided in his heart that he was going to exalt himself above the thrones of God. He decided in his heart that he was going to sit on the sides of the north, and he was going to be like the Most High God.

Most people read that account and never understand the importance of finding something in the Bible for the first time. I want to tell you something: the biggest problem that man has today, the biggest problem that human beings have today, was laid out for you long before Adam and Eve ever had their problem. The biggest problem that man has today is laid down for you with Lucifer when he tried to lead a revolt against God. What was that revolt over? It was over the revolt of the authority of the Word of God. The biggest problem that every man and every woman is going to have in their life today is the same problem that the devil had way back there: you want to be like God. You want to be like the Most High God.

We see it in everything. We certainly see it in the business world. Men love power. Women love power. Everybody loves power and money. It gives them the ability to be able to call the shots for the world. We are going to have an election next coming Tuesday. Whoever wins is going to be the most powerful person in the world. They are going to sit on a throne, basically, where at their whim, things around the world are going to change, certainly things in this country. You find doctors who go in and work with people, and not all doctors, but many of them develop what we call the God complex. They think that they are God because they actually are like God, because they actually have the ability to save somebody's life. They have the ability in a trauma unit when somebody comes in and they are that far from dying. They have the ability to rush in there, and they order this and they order that, and they tell this and "give me four things in it, give me ten cc's of this." I love that kind of talk, by the way. They jump in there and they save that person's life. You cannot do that as an unsaved person, and maybe many of God's people cannot do it either, where you do not come to the place where you think that you have something special, and that old God complex begins to come in.

It happens in human nature. It happens in Christianity. It happens with preachers. It happens with preachers who get into churches and they think they are so important and they think they are so vitally an aspect to the church that their position as pastor elevates them to a place where they are actually over the people and not one with them. They call it the doctrine of the Nicolaitans back in the book of Revelation. They exalt their position to the place in their own minds where they actually are not one with the people anymore. You can never talk with them. You can never get anything from them. You cannot get an appointment with them. Everything now is unreachable. The first sin in the Bible that is recorded was not connected with Adam and Eve. It starts and sets up the first problem that man will have to deal with, and that is wanting to be like God, sitting in the seat of God, showing yourself that you are God. According to Romans chapter 1, talking about Gentiles, when man tries to take God's place, he has to set up judgment on all that God is and all that God does. Everything that he does, he has to put himself to make himself like God.

SEC: Man's Inventions Against God's Truth

Man has an insatiable desire to invent things that will get him around the truth of God. Do you know that? Man works at it 24/7. Many times we look at it, we do not have the wisdom and the

understanding to understand why. But the Bible says in Proverbs 19:21 that there are many devices in a man's heart.

*Proverbs 19:21*

*> There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*

Man, all his life, saved and unsaved, will invent things to get him around the truth of God. In an unsaved man's case, those many devices are philosophy. He goes back and he philosophizes about the world. He creates his own reason why the world exists, and he lays out completely false and completely bogus and nothing to do with real truth of life, but he creates an aura of truth. You see it in theology. You see it in psychiatry. You see it in religion. You see it in science. You see it in government. The idea that a government, that is a democracy, is going to go around the world and establish all other countries with the same democracy that they have. It is all built around a false education system. A false education system that may teach you some things and may give you some things but elevates you to the place where the whole... I am not saying you should not get educated, I am saying you ought to be smart about your education. Old Bob Jean Sr. said it. He said, "Education without salvation is damnation." Education exists for one person to exalt yourself to a point where you can learn some things, you can get some things, but at the end result, man's old nature takes that and knows that information is power.

An unsaved man will invent evolution. Do you know why Charles Darwin came up with evolution? He was not the first one that did it. The Egyptians believed in evolution. The Babylonians, I mean, nothing new under the sun. But do you know why evolution caught on so quickly? Because that was during a time when there was a great revival going on in the United States, right around that Civil War period. The concept that man has evolved from nothing to something was a great deterrent to the fact that the Bible was truth. So man will invest their whole lives into that kind of stuff just so they can get out from under the conviction they are under when it gets from the Word of God.

I have seen men and read the stories about guys like Dr. Leakey who were paleontologists and anthropologists, and they have spent their whole lives going to Africa, dusting down and digging around and finding a tooth, finding a piece of a jaw bone about that big, finding a bone of the elbow, and then from that little piece of bone, construct a man six feet tall that walked over a hunt that was not quite human and was still a little ape-y. Kind of like the guy you went out with last night. From one little jaw bone, from one little tooth, and somebody says, "Oh, amazing what science can do, amazing what paleontologists can do, amazing what anthropology can do, amazing where we can come now that we can take a little piece like that and we can come up with a complete skeleton of exactly what that was." No, what is amazing is how a guy would take one tooth, one piece of jaw bone, one little piece of bone, and create a whole skeleton just to get around the fact that the Bible is truth. That is what it is. Imagine showing up at the Great Throne Judgment with all you had in your nakedness of your filthy flesh with the tooth that you found.

You will find the unsaved liberal. He will invent a system of works for salvation. He will invent a system of works to save yourself by something you can do. He will completely nullify the cross. I have told people this before, I am a simple kind of guy. If you can work your way to Heaven, if there is something you can do to merit God's salvation, I just have one question for you. It is a simple question: Why did Christ come down and die? What was the point? Pretty pointless, was it not? He came down and died on the cross to save you, and then you have to do something to save yourself? Many devices in a man's heart. They come up with the idea of the social gospel, that you are going to help your fellow man and make your way to Heaven by that. They come up with the idea of the fatherhood of God, that we are all God's creations, so therefore we are all God's children. Not true. It is an invention.

Then you have the saved, born-again Christian who will think that he can take the perfect Word of God that God has given us, and because he is educated, because he has a series of degrees, and because he has been learned in all the ancient languages, he thinks that he can improve on a book that God Himself wrote and gave to man. I do not know of a more arrogant hypocrisy that could ever be in a person's life than to think that you could improve on a book that God wrote. But we do. Seemingly, I have been around this for a long time. This is something that I just did not find yesterday. I have watched this all my life. I am 66 years old. I have been in the ministry over 40 some years. I have seen this thing. I have watched it. I have seen how that when it comes to God and the Bible and the devil, it is just like they go brain dead. In all my years and all the curriculums of the colleges and the Bible colleges in particular that I have ever seen in a seminary, I have never seen one, and I have looked, I have never seen one class ever taught on how the devil does try to destroy the church and the Word of God down through church history. When Philip Schaff writes his seven volumes, when Newell writes his three volumes, when these guys put their works out, when they read about our church and the history of the church, when Carnes wrote his and Barnes wrote theirs, let me tell you something. They wrote from a position that the devil was on vacation someplace. Do you think the greatest book in the world that the world has ever seen, do you actually think the devil missed this? Just because you do not recognize what it is and you missed it does not mean that he did. He knows the greatest power on this earth. The greatest power on this earth is a common man with a common Bible. If he can take that Bible from the common man, you are done. And he has. They do not even pay attention. It is almost like when you get to that point in your mind of your Christian education, when you become a doctor and a PhD, when you are so versed in the Greek and the Hebrew that you are so far extended out past, it is like the Bible does not matter anymore because you do not believe it is really anything to begin with.

SEC: The Devil's Strategy: Complicating Christianity

For me, I am a simple guy. In my Bible, God strategically placed three warnings in the Word of God about someone not to tamper with the Bible. He put it, if you only read through Deuteronomy, you would find the first one.

*Deuteronomy 4:2*

> *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

If you only read a little bit farther in the middle of the Bible in Proverbs chapter 30, you would find the second one there.

*Proverbs 30:5*

> *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*

And if you got real adventurous and read the whole Bible through, you would find the third one in Revelation chapter 22.

*Revelation 22:18-19*

> *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

> *And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

Along with that, the first attack in the Bible that is recorded in Genesis of the devil, once God's plan got going, was against a woman by the name of Eve. I am going to tell you something. She is a great study in the Bible. If you look at your Bible and put that story together, she is a type of the church. You do not get that from the Greek and the Hebrew. You get that from the English that God gave you. Her husband Adam was a type of Christ. He is called the first Adam. Christ is called the second Adam. You do not get that from the original languages. You get that from the Bible God gave you. He shows you the model by the time you get to Genesis chapter 3 of the attack of the devil down through history against that book and the people he is going to use.

There is a great little thing on television called \*Criminal Minds\*. It is about FBI profilers. It is amazing how they can just see a crime scene. All the cops are standing around twiddling their thumbs saying, "I wonder what happened?" These guys are putting together a profile, and before the show is 10 minutes into it, they have this guy nailed. They do not even know who he is. They know how old he is. They know he is male. They know he is white. They know he is this. They know he is that. They know he is educated. They have the profile down. Why? Because they are looking for patterns that they have trained themselves of human nature. I am going to tell you something. They will fall far short of what you can do with the Bible because this book right here lays out human nature in a pattern so clearly you can know exactly what you are dealing with, what you are up against. It is incredible.

She is the type of the church. Adam is the type of Christ. Did you ever notice that the devil, when he showed up to destroy God's plan, did you ever catch it that he showed up when Adam was not at home? I do not know where he was, but he was not there. Do you not understand that that is a type of the church age, that right now Christ is not here? He is back up in Heaven. When the devil wanted to destroy with a type of the church what the Word of God said and change it, he showed up when the husband was not there. The devil wants to destroy what you have as the

church in this church age when Christ is up there seated at the right hand of God the Father. All that he had is all that you have, what God said. When the devil came in, the first words out of his mouth, what he wanted to destroy the universe, what he wanted to destroy God's plan, it was not, "Hey baby, let's go get a drink." It was not, "Hey baby, let's go do this or do that." It was, "Yea, hath God said?" And then he changed what God said.

Human nature kicks in, and Eve, she jumps right on board because human nature... remember now, God said, "In the day that you eat of that fruit, you are going to be like the gods, knowing good and evil." So I know the devil picked the woman because she is a type of the church, but he also picked the woman because the woman has to know everything. When she heard that verse, "You will be like the gods, knowing good and evil," that was it. She said, "Where is that grape, man? I am in, I am in. Where is he at?" Of course, we know it was an apple. My old grandmama used to say that it was not an apple, it was not a grape. The problem in Genesis 3 was the pear on the ground. She is pretty wise. She could not cook very well, but she is pretty wise. Someday I will tell you a story about her cooking. I am not going to go there today.

The devil will use man to destroy all that God has given us. Proverbs chapter 18:1-7 is a tremendous picture of all this. An absolute vital look into the mind of man when it comes to God and His Word. He shows up to Eve, the first type of the church in the Bible, when a type of Christ, Adam, was not there. He corrupts the Word of God. Maybe you do not get that, maybe you cannot see that, maybe you have no clue of where you are at or what is going on. But in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul got the connection, and do you know what he said? He said to the church:

*2 Corinthians 11:3*

*> But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

He told the church that there was a connection between Adam and Eve and the church in Christ. He said when the devil showed up, he beguiled her, and when he beguiled her, what he did was he destroyed the simplicity that is in Christ. Do you know what the devil has done today? He has taken the Word of God out of your life and made Christianity complicated, and what he has done is he destroyed and made it, he has taken the simplicity out of Christianity and made it hard. He took Bible verses and made it theology. He took salvation and made it soteriology. He took the defense of the Bible and made it apologetics. He took preaching the Bible and made it homiletics. He took the simplicity that is in Christ and he made it complicated. The reason why they make it complicated is because somebody wants you to come to them instead of going to the book.

You ever go to your doctor and you get a doctor, and you start to tell him what is wrong, and he talks about the gastric inflammation of your intestinal body, whatever, and all through this stuff, and you listen to him and you are wondering what he is saying, and the first thing you are thinking is you are going to die, and he is going on with these 25 words, and when it is all done and said, you say, "Doctor, what is wrong with me?" And he says, "You have a pain in your stomach because you have too much gas." Why did he not just say that to begin with? You go to

the dentist. He says, "Well, your molars are encrusted, and your upper bicuspids are bad, and we have to get this over here." Why can he not say, "The big teeth on the bottom and the little teeth on the top are not very good"? Do you know why he cannot? Because he cannot charge you the money he charges you if he talks that way. He does not want you to understand, so everybody develops a tradesman terminology.

You go to the lawyer, and he says, "We are going to get rid of a habeas corpus." If the guy committed murder, he said, "Do not worry about it. I got rid of the corpus yesterday." My buddy Greg McIntock, I told you about him last week, preaching his pastor, and how he was a prosecutor, and there was a guy up there that killed an 86-year-old woman, a brutal murder, and it was terrible, and Greg prosecuted the case. So they are sitting down with their lawyer, and Greg is trying to work some, talking about it, and here are lawyers there, and the kids there, and Greg says to the lawyer, "I just want you to know, I am going to charge him with first-degree murder, and I am going to charge him with second-degree murder. I am going to charge him with first-degree and second-degree murder." The guy looked at his lawyer and said, "How can he charge me twice when I only killed him once?"

When it comes to the Bible, there is a tradesman terminology. Do you know why? They want you to come to them. They do not want you to go to your Bible. They do not want the Holy Spirit of God to be the ingredient that God takes to teach you the Word of God. They want to be the ingredient. They want to take the place of the Holy Spirit of God in your life, that they can become, going right back to Isaiah 28 and Ezekiel chapter 28 and Isaiah chapter 14, that they become God in your life.

SEC: Seven Vital Aspects Lost Without the Bible

Do you know what is wrong with Christianity today? I am just a simple guy. I am no theologian. I cannot even spell it, so I am not even going to try. But do you know what is wrong with Christianity today? I will tell you what is wrong. When you lose your Bible, you lose seven vital aspects of Christianity, and when you do, you have absolutely no relationship with God. So then at that point, do you know what you do? When you cannot get anything from the Bible anymore, now you have to read man's books. Rick Warren's book on the whatever it was, *\*The Purpose Driven Life\**, it outsold the Bible. It outsold the Bible for the first time in 400 years. Somebody said, "Whoa, what does that mean?" I will tell you what it means. It means that nobody is getting anything out of the Bible anymore, so now they have got to go to man's book to get it. Do you think that book supersedes the Bible? Somebody asked me when that flap was all going on, "Have you ever read *\*The Purpose Driven Life\**?" I said, "I sure have. It is a real purpose-driven book of life right here." You say, "It does not have any pictures." Yeah, it does, you just do not know how to look for them. I like books with pictures anyhow.

But what is wrong today is when you lose your Bible, you lose seven things, and when you lose these seven things, you are done. This is exactly the devil's plan when he put man who would destroy your faith in the Word of God. This is exactly what the Laodicean church is.

1.) ***\*\*No Furnishings\*\****

First off, 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, it says:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

> 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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Now the first thing that happens when you lose your Bible, you do not have any furnishings. Like in the Old Testament, there was a tabernacle. That tabernacle had seven pieces of furniture in it. Every one of those pieces of furniture lines up to something spiritual that you ought to have in your body today because your body is the temple and the tabernacle of God in the New Testament. Most of God's people do not even know what they were in the Old Testament, let alone know what they are in their life. It is no wonder we have the problems we have in our lives when a saved, born-again child of God does not even understand the seven furnishings that you should have in your body today if you are saved. I mean, what is the brazen altar? What is the laver of water out front? What is the golden candlestick? What is the showbread? What is the altar of incense? What is the Holy of Holies? How do those things translate in a spiritual way from the literal Old Testament tabernacle to your body as a tabernacle? They do. Do you know what is wrong with God's people today? No furnishings. It says down there that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, unto all good works. Thoroughly. All the Bibles say "thoroughly," and they missed the great teaching. You do not get strengthened and get God thoroughly; you get it thoroughly. Let us start with those seven pieces of furniture on the inside and then manifest itself through you thoroughly outside. But who knows that? Do you know what is even worse? Who cares?

2.) **\*\*No Working of God\*\***

Second thing, not only do you lose your furnishings, 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

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

Then you know the second thing you lose is the Bible does not work in you if you do not believe it. No working of God in your life, no spiritual growth. This is the reason so many of God's people today, I love them. They are saved, they are on their way to Heaven. But do you know what? You know absolutely nothing about that book. Nothing. I am not talking about some new convert or some new Christian. I am talking about somebody that has been saved for a number of years that you absolutely know nothing about what that book does in your life. Until they get nothing from God. God does not work in them. When God does not work in them, you see it in many churches. When God does not work in them and there is no power of God in the church, what do they revert to? They revert to the things that draw people in. They will take a worldly band and make it Christian. They will play music that if you close your eyes and did not listen to

*the words, it could be in any nightclub, any disco, any drug house. They will put the big screen up there and they will put the words of the pastor on it. Do you know why? Because they know nobody brings their Bible anymore. Because they have got brainwashed that they do not need to. You go to church, do not bring your Bible, and just shut up there and they will put everything out there for you. You go not to get preached to. You go to get entertained. You have singers that sway back and forth. You have light shows. One church over there in Kansas City, when the service starts, the lights go down, smoke comes out from under the thing, the lights come up, the band swells up, and everybody, the pastor walks up and says, "I will be like the Most High God." He does not say that, but that is what he is trying to say. You have to revert to those things when you do not. Is it not amazing? Do you not think that the missionaries in Africa and India and China would have had those things back in their day?*

### *3.) \*\*No Biblical Love for God\*\**

*Third thing, John 14:23, Jesus answered and said unto him:*

*John 14:23*

*> Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

*The third thing that you lose when you lose your Bible, and I know you think you love God. I am not saying you do not, but you love Him on your terms. You cannot love God on your terms. You have got to love God on His terms. That Bible says that when you do not have the Word of God, then you lose your ability to in a biblical sense love God. I am not saying you are not appreciative to Him. I am not saying you are not thankful to Him. I am not saying you do not recognize who He is. I am saying you cannot love God the way He wants you to love Him without a book that tells you how to do it. He did not say, "If a man love me, he will keep my original autographs." He did not say, "If a man loves me, he will keep the Greek and the Hebrew." He said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words."*

*I had a person one time say to me, and I get feisty every once in a while. Years ago, I had to interview a guy that was going to be a song leader for a church I was with, and they asked me to take him out and find out what he knew about the Bible. He is a nice kid. Worthless but nice kid. Good singer. So him and his wife went out, and I took him out to eat, and I was very kind. I said, "Well, they kind of wanted me to find out, we are not looking for just a guy who can lead singing. We are looking for somebody who can teach a Sunday school class and work with people." He said, "Oh, yeah, that is, I really like to do that. This is good." I said, "Tell me about your ability as a song leader and to be able to minister through music." He says, "I want to tell you right now, right now as we speak, I know 200 songs that I could lead. I can count 200 songs without any songbook, 200 songs I could either sing, I could lead, I could do everything. 200 songs, Bob, 200 songs right now I could do it." I said, "That is amazing." I said, "I do not even know two. One of them is 'In the Sweet By and By,' and the other one is not." I said, "That is pretty amazing. Let us talk about the spiritual side of things. Do you think you could teach a Sunday school class?" "Absolutely." I said, "Good. Give me 200 Bible verses." It got just as quiet, and he looked at me like you are doing right now. I said, "I mean, I am not being mean. I am just*

asking you, if you tell me the Word of God is the most important thing in your life, why would you know 200 songs that you could sing right now, but you do not know 200 Bible verses?" Now, his wife was pale. She said, "Oh, boy, we lost this job. We are not going to get this thing." Well, they got the job, by the way. He turned out to be a pretty good kid. But my point is this. God's people know nothing about the Bible today. They are good singers. They are good at this. They are good at that. It is almost like because I do not have a Bible and I do not believe there is a real Bible, I do not have to really spend any time in the Bible. And yet you claim to love God.

We all have things we hate. The Bible says there are seven things that God hates. Does what you hate line up with what He hates? Do you even know what He hates? The Bible says there are seven things that God loves. We all love things. We all love things. You know what God loves? You say, "Well, as a Christian, I want to please God." Seven things in the Bible that please God. Do you know what they are? Now be careful with that because one of the seven is God, it pleases God to confuse people on the Bible when they reject His Word. Now, still loving? I have this little thing I always ask people. They will say, "You know so and so," and I will say, "Yeah, I know so and so. He is a really good man." And I will say, "Compared to who?" They will say, "Boy, he did a great job." "Compared to what?" You see, those terms are just relative terms unless you have a point of reference that you go back to. There is an absolute standard by which you are judging it. You get that, do you not? I mean, all you get out of the sixth grade? Well, a guy says, "I love God." Compared to what? By what standard? "Well, I want to please God." Compared to what? We do not even know. This is what happens when you lose your Bible.

#### 4.) **\*\*No True Worship\*\***

The next thing, the fourth thing, John chapter 4, verse 24, it says:

John 4:24

> *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Now the thing that is missing today in a Christian's life, there is no worship in most cases. This is the great definitive verse. Today the idea of a biblical form, a biblical worship, is completely unknown to the child of God. You go to churches and see it on a marquee, "Nine o'clock worship service." The pastor gets up, "Okay, come on forward, offering, we are going to worship God with our tithes and our offering." Somebody says, "Our choir now is going to come and sing for us, and it is going to be a great time of worship." I had a pastor one time that put out a little brochure. We do not put out a little brochure; it tells you what is going on because we just do not do it. I mean, we do not have that much going on. But it was on there, he says, and the brochure it said, that was so funny. He said, "Tonight, come and hear our melodious choir sing in the evening service, and then the pastor will preach what it is like to go through hell." You do not worship God in a service, folks. You do not worship God with music. You do not worship God with your tithes and your offering. You worship God in your spirit, human spirit, with the truth of the Word of God. That is what worship is. Worship is not in music, it is not in offerings, it is not in something that you, it is not in a church. Worship is a state of your attitude of heart that you love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, and your spirit is lined up to that truth, and that produces the worship. You do not go to a worship service; you and I should

live 24/7 in a state of worship. How foreign is that today? You can only worship God with truth. You do not have the truth of the Word of God, you have no worship.

5.) **\*\*No Power in Prayer\*\***

Fifth one, John 15:7:

John 15:7

> *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

*Next thing is no power in your prayer life. Again, God's people, because they have had no Bible for so long, their prayer life is an absolute atrocity. They use the Bible in their prayer life with God to order God around, to "give me this." They use God to get them out in the prayer life, to get them out of a bad situation that they do not want to be in. They never stop and consider that maybe God puts you in that situation for some purpose or some reason. Uh-uh, no, cannot go there. I live in such a cushy Christian world where I want everything to be my way, everything to be happy, everything to be nice, and when a first little ripple of life comes into me that I do not get it my way, the way I want it, "Oh God, take it away."*

*Years ago there was a church, and there was a hellfire preaching church. There was a woman in the church that every time the pastor gave the invitation, she would always come forward, and she was coming up a facetious show, everybody knew it was all phony, and she would get up and she would hit the altar up there and she would say, "Oh God, fill me, oh God," every week, "Oh God, fill me, oh God, fill me," every week when they gave the invitation. She would come up there, "Oh God, fill me." After about years of that, one time the pastor had enough. She came forward, came on out of the altar, "Oh God, fill me." The pastor said, "No God, do not fill her, just fix the leak."*

*We do not know how to pray. Romans talks about, the Bible talks about three infirmities that we have, and in Romans chapter 8, verse 26, one of the infirmities is we do not pray for as we ought, and we do not do that because we do not know what the mind of the Spirit is. We cannot know what the mind of the Spirit is because we have lost the mind of Christ. So we pray about everything. I know the Bible says pray without ceasing, but it did not say pray about everything. There are some things you do not need to pray about. "God, I am praying, should I be a soul winner? God, I am praying, should I do something for you in my life? God, I am praying..." There are some things you do not have to pray about. In fact, you would have a lot more time just praising God and telling Him how much you love Him. If you had just gotten a book that already told you what you needed to pray for or what you did not, you would have a lot of time to sit there and say, "I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you so much. You are the love, I love you, I love you Lord, I just love you, I love you." God upstairs, "Lord, all of it, I cannot, someone else is doing it over here too, I cannot keep it straight." "I love you Lord, I love you, you are the best." Instead of saying, "Oh God, get me out of this. Oh Lord, there is a highway patrolman on my tail, do not let him see my driver's license, do not let him see my license without a date." God says, "See that? They have expired, get him."*

6.) *\*\*No Power in Preaching\*\**

*Sixth one, Jeremiah chapter 1, verses 8, 9, and 10. The Lord said unto me:*

*Jeremiah 1:8-10*

*> Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

*> Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

*> See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*

*Now I am glad I got to this because by the look of some of your faces, some of you are happy with what I am saying so far. So now I get to exonerate myself here a little bit, and it simply says this: When you lose your Bible, you have no power in preaching. So you revert to being a teacher. The hallmark of great Christianity today in the 20th, 21st century are great teachers. Nobody is preaching the paint off the wall anymore. Nobody is preaching on sin. You have not heard a good message on hell in 30 years. You have not heard a church in this city, whether it is an evangelical or most Baptist churches, where the pastor got up and just took your hide off on the judgment seat of Christ or some other area that is dealing in our personal lives. It does not happen. We are teachers today. Teaching is important, but preaching is important too. You do not motivate people by teaching. You motivate them by preaching. You do not get people right with God by teaching. You get them right by preaching.*

*In fact, if you notice it here, it tells you the six missing elements in Christianity today: the lost art of preaching. The lost art of the ability to stand in a pulpit, take the Word of God, and paint a picture that you just do not miss. He says that when you get the Word of God in your mouth, when God touches your lips and puts it in your mouth, that He sets you over the nations to do six things:*

*1.) Root out. You know there are some things you need to root out of your life this morning that teaching will not do.*

*2.) Pull down.*

*3.) Destroy.*

*4.) Throw down.*

*5.) Build.*

*6.) Plant.*

*You know there is some sin in our lives that we can allow to be there when somebody is teaching because they are so passive. I tell you what, whatever you have got in your life or wherever you are at this morning, I do not care where the guy goes or where he starts. When he starts coming down that aisle and the Holy Spirit of God starts dealing with it, whatever your problem is, it is going to come to the surface. You may not like it, you may not agree with it, but it is coming.*

*Then when you get those four things done, and they only get accomplished through preaching and the power of preaching, then you can build and plant. This is where most churches fail. They teach all the time, or even when they preach, there is nothing about anything specific that targets you because they do not want to lose you because "no bucks, no Buck Rogers." So they are very passive even in their preaching if they even preach at all. Oh, they will preach about salvation, preach about health. They will never get into your world where you live because they are not going to make you mad. You are going to make you all mad. I get up in the morning, look in the mirror, "Who am I going to make mad today? Mirror, mirror on the wall, who am I going to let them have it today?" He says, "Everybody." Because you know what? Sometimes you have to get mad about something before you look at yourself. Do you always want people, I should not have even asked this, does everybody want to go around and everybody just tells you what you want to hear about yourself? Of course you do. But that is not good for you.*

*God gave us His Word. Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 29, says:*

*Jeremiah 23:29*

*> Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

*You bet it is, saith the Lord. Like a hammer. Have you ever come out of a church service and said, "How did it go, man? I got hammered." That rocks your heart. That rocks what you are hanging on to. That teaching will not touch. More preaching will. Did you ever see a real hot SWAT team make an entry on a house? Six guys lined up out there. Everybody has their hand on a guy in front of them. Everybody following in. One guy, everybody designated for the corner of the house. Everybody is going to scream at the top of their lungs. I cannot say what they scream, but it is basically, "Put your hands up!" They are waiting there in line, and all of a sudden, they have one guy that is going to, you have to breach the door. He smashes with that deal. Everybody is in right now. Everybody is in right now. They overwhelm them so fast that that guy or girl or couple, whoever it is, do not have a chance to react. That is what preaching does. Did you see a SWAT team lined up? "Hi. We are the KCPD SWAT team, and we are just here to put you under arrest. And we really like you to put that gun down because we are here to have some fellowship with you on the way to jail, and there is no need for this because I am okay, you are okay. You know what? You have got your problems, I have got mine. I know I have got a badge, and you have got the gun, but we are all here to get along. Kumbaya." Come on, is that how they do it? That is exactly what teaching will do when you have sin in your life. You do not need a nice, easy entry. You need God's SWAT team to kick down the door, cover every exit, look behind the door, under the bed, flip things off the floor, off the wall, knock them down, and put you under arrest. That is right. Amen. Now then, when you are sitting in that gospel squad car, cuffed by the preaching of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God comes down and says, "I want to read you your rights. You have the right to remain silent, but I would not tell you to do that because confession is really good to me. You have a need for your lawyer, one will be appointed for you, but you do not have one because you have an advocate for the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." No power in preaching.*

7.) **\*\*No Inheritance\*\***

*And the seventh thing, no inheritance. Joshua chapter 1, verses 6, 7, 8, 9:*

*Joshua 1:6-9*

*> Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.*

*> Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.*

*> This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

*> Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

*He says here that you lose the Bible, you lose your inheritance. Now I am going to say something, and it is not popular today in the 20th, 21st century, but whoever cared about being popular when it is the truth? We have a lot of people today that think that you are rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ, and your inheritance is based on what you do. I hear this all the time, "Well, you know, I know he does not have the right Bible, I know they do not do this, but they are really, really, he is really a good guy. She is really a good girl. They are really good people." Compared to what? Let me tell you something. I have heard it all my life. "Well, I cannot believe that you could say that about this guy. He is a great preacher. He has got a great church. He has got a great dad." He has also got a great old sin nature. And we all do. Some of the men of the biggest churches I ever saw in my life had the biggest ungodly nature you ever saw on this planet when it came to the Word of God. We think because a guy is a Christian or a woman is Christian, and because they are saved and they talk about love and God and talk about this, that negates the fact that they have got an old sin nature and they do not want to revert back to being like Lucifer and be like the Most High God. You are wrong on that one.*

*Let me tell you something. Human nature will always be human nature. I am telling you, you can be the nicest person on the planet. You can help the sick, help the poor, do everything you want to do. You can spend all your life, and you can do everything that you do for God in church and ministry or whatever you want to do. You can be a missionary around the world, and you can do all those things. If your base does not go back to an absolute standard of the Word of God that God has given you, you are wasting your time. That is not popular today because we want to negate the Bible as the final authority. We want what we do to be the final authority. We want ourselves to say, because a guy does really good and he claims to love God and he does the ministry and he does this and he does that, somehow God is going to overlook the fact that he rejected His Word. I am going to tell you something. Everything in Christianity goes back to one thing: the Word of God, the truth of the Word of God.*

## SEC: God's Absolute Standard and the Authority of His Word

The question here today is simply this: Do you have the very words of God? Do you have His truth? One time back in the Old Testament, Eli's boys were priests, and they were in charge of the altar and the candlesticks. The Bible says that one day God came down and God killed them. I have had people say to me, "Well, you know, I am not sure why God did that. I mean, they were priests. They were working in the temple. Those candlesticks are supposed to stay burning forever. They knew that. They did the best they could. They kept the fires burning. I do not understand why God is so upset that He would come down and kill those guys because they started to have kept that fire going with what God called strange fire." A lot of people look at that and they say, "Wow, I do not, you know, I do not..." It is like that story about the guy that they are taking the ark and the ox cart. They are carrying it along, and they are bringing it back from the Philistines. This guy, they have it on an ox cart, and they are taking it back to Jerusalem, and the ark stumbles, and the thing begins to falter, and one good guy puts up his hand and keeps it from hitting the ground. And God killed him. I have had people say, "God having a bad day? What is that all about? Here is a man who did the best he thought he was doing. The ark of God was going to fall over. All he did was put his hand up and try to stop it. And God killed him." Those poor guys back there, Eli's sons, they just, they knew they had to keep the fire going. They got fire. They kept it going. What is the big deal?

The big deal is that God always operates by His truth. That ox cart deal back there, that guy reached up and tried to... First of all, it is a picture of religion today, Christianity. That ark was not ever, ever, ever, ever to be carried on an ox cart. It had rings in the side that they put staves and poles through. It was to be carried on the shoulder of the priests and never on an ox cart. That ox cart is a picture of man taking something that is absolutely precious and holy to God and then putting it into a world system to get it where you want it to go. They did not put it on an ox cart so they could carry it down there. That is a picture. That ark of the covenant is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had to put the staves through it, put it on their shoulders and carry it. One, two, three, four guys carry it. Do you know why? Because in Christianity, in real Christianity, you bear the burden of the load of the ministry. You carry it on your shoulder. You do not put it on a man-made ox cart and let it go. You carry it. You carry the burden. This is what is wrong in churches. The pastors do not have the burden. You do not have the burden. The people do not have the burden. So when it comes to Christianity, they put it on a man-made, worldly ox cart and look at it go.

There is a way God intends things to be done, folks. The first thing you need to learn about your Bible is in the Bible. God has certain ways He requires things to be done. The second thing you better learn in your Bible, there are certain ways He wants you to do things in your life. Do you think that poor little guy back there that reached up and was not trying to help God? Do you think it was not doing it? Do you think his attitude of heart was not right? Do you think he was not trying to do the best he could? Do you think he was not saying, "Oh my goodness, God's ark is going to fall. I cannot let that happen"? It does not matter what your motive is. It does not matter what your intentions are. It does not matter how good you try to do it. When you step outside that book and you do it your way, you are on your own. You are on your own.

Going back to Eli and his boys, God is killing him over the strange fire. Everybody says, "What is the big deal? Fire is fire." Everybody says today, "What is the big deal? Bible is the Bible. Ministry is the ministry." Those seven golden candlesticks represented the Holy Spirit of God. That incense that burned out there represented the prayer life and represents the aspect of the Holy Spirit of God in prayer. Those fires were to burn continually. They were never to go out. When they were originally lit, when they originally kept going, when they started to get low and they had to be re-fired up again, they had to get the fire off of the brazen altar. It could not come from their bic lighter. It could not come from their kitchen matches. It could not come from a blowtorch. It could not come from some outside fire. It represented what God was. That brazen altar represents the place where Christ's sacrifice was made for you, and the Holy Spirit of God and everything He does goes back to that sacrifice on that brazen altar, and the fire that kept those things alive in that temple had to go back to the day Christ died for you. If you, if me, anybody, are doing what you are doing for God Almighty, doing what you are doing in the ministry for any other reason than what He did for you in that brazen altar, you have lost it all, and you are wasting your time.

God has a way He wants things done. The Bible tells you how He wants them done, and when you lose your Bible, you lose how He wants it done. The little guy back there said, "Oh, I will get it." Boom. Eli's boys said, "Come on, man, let us get this fire going. We have some girls we have to meet tonight." Boom. God's people today, because they have no Bible, they have no absolute. They have nothing to anchor their soul in, to understand what pleases God, what God wants out of them, what God requires out of them, how they love God, how God is going to work in them, the furnishings in their life. They just follow what they idea that the ministry is. They are good people, nice people, salt of the earth people. So what when it comes to the truth of the Word of God? Let God be true and every man a liar. The book is the book. If you think that just like they could do whatever they want to do in a tabernacle, getting the fire wherever they wanted to get it, when that fire represents Christ's death on the brazen altar of that lamb, and a sacrificial lamb with the cross of Calvary, and for you and for me, whatever we do in life, whatever our prayer life is, whatever we do for God, whether it is a showbread, or whatever you are doing with God, if it does not go back to what He did for you on Calvary's cross, you are wasting your time. Certainly, if you are doing what you are doing, no matter how good you are at it, no matter what bigger church you have got, no matter how many people come to Christ, you do not judge a man's ministry on how big his church is and how many people come to Christ. You judge his ministry on one book: the truth of God's Word. Just like it has to go back to the fire, everything we do has to go back to the absolute. Why are we doing what we are doing?

Do you have the words of God? Do you have it today? That is not a question, that is all. But thank you. But do you have it today? Are you sure you have got it? Let me see which one you have got. Do you have it today? Has it made a difference in your life? Is it something that has changed everything about you to the point that you do what you do not because Bob wants you to do it, not because it is things to do, you do it because you are in a church that is led by the Word of God and believes the book, and God is going to open up a thousand avenues? Through the Holy Spirit of God and your relationship with that, the Holy Spirit of God will say, "This is where I want you to be and what I want you to do." But never forget, you are not doing it

because of Bob, you are not doing it because it is a Christian thing to do, you are doing it because God mandated you through the perfect Word of God and gave you the direction to do it.

All we have got, guys, the only thing that separates us from Buddhists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, Charismatics, Muslims, evangelicals, 99% of the Baptists, the Methodists, Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, all of them. The only thing that separates us from what we have from every other religion on this planet, the only one thing that makes the difference between us and them, we have an absolute standard. We have a book we believe. We have a book we believe that God brought down to man and gave it to man, perfect. You have a pastor here that believes that. You also have a pastor that knows beyond any shadow of doubt, in no way, shape, or form is this human piece of garbage ever going to be able to sit and stand judgment on this book. You will never hear me get up in the pulpit and say, "No, in the original it did not mean that." It means what it says the way it said it. If I cannot figure it out, there is something wrong with me. There is never anything wrong with the book.

Now this is the introduction to Proverbs 18. I can do two things. I have nine minutes to give you the rest of the sermon. We stay here till midnight tonight. I have a better idea. I will bring you back part two next week. Now that you understand where we are at, you have all week long to think about it, look about it, listen to it. I am going to come back next week. I am going to show you the mindset. The hardest thing for me to believe is why a saved person could tear apart the Word of God and tell another young man or young lady, "Do not trust what that Bible says. Trust me." We will show you next week. Every head bowed and every eye closed.