

I. Introduction and The Riches of God's Word

Today we are back in Proverbs chapter 18. Last week we saw one of the key all-time principles that really fits into Christianity, especially in the Laodicean Church Age. Proverbs is so relevant to where we live today. Most people do not understand it. History changes, styles change, clothes change. Once they drove chariots, now they drive cars. Once they walked, now they flew. Once they had clipper ships, now they have ocean liners and all that stuff. But one thing that never changes down through history is human nature. Human nature has always been the same for the last 6,000 years. This is why the Bible is so relevant. This is why in particular the book of Proverbs is so important. We have taken our time coming through the book of Proverbs simply because it is just a goldmine of things that you will be able to use in your life.

Last week we looked at verse 19, just as a refresher as we move into the next section today. We looked at the aspect of a brother being offended, how hard that person is to win back over. The Bible says it is harder than a strong city with bars. We talked about all the aspects of that. I gave you one of the greatest verses in all the Bible, simply on what loving the Word of God and making the Word of God the number one thing in your life will do for you and help you in dealing with life in general, not taking things personal. Getting to the point where you realize that in life, certainly in the ministry, in dealing with people, not everything always goes the way you would want it to go.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

What a great principle that is. I thought about this a lot last week, and that verse and what I said last week, I just want to kind of add this to it to complete the thought on it. In a worldly sense, rich people really fear nobody. Rich people have enough money to buy themselves out of anything. If they get in trouble with the law, they can get the million-dollar lawyer and usually can get around whatever they are facing. If you go up against one of them and you have a lawsuit with them or they sue you or whatever, they have more money than you have. They will run up your legal fees to \$200,000 before you know what happened, and they will break you financially so that you just cannot compete with them. They will spend \$100,000 like you spend \$100. It just does not matter to them. Of course, there is no way to survive when you are broke and they are rich. They just outspend you. That is so true. You see it happen all the time.

In our verse last week on never getting offended by anybody, I thought, think of it the same way only in a biblical sense. You may not have a lot of money financially, but you have the riches and glory in Christ Jesus in your Bible. Those principles are worth a billion dollars in gold bullion, every one of them. You have the unsearchable riches of the Word of God. Your Bible is likened to gold. It is likened to silver. It is likened to precious stones. It is a king's ransom. God gave it to you, and He gave it to me. You are richer than anybody on this earth in a spiritual sense, if you have and you believe the Bible.

When it comes to the poor spiritually who struggle with things, who want to cause problems, or want to come to the point where they are insecure and they get offended about everything, you just fall back on the riches that God has given you. It is your money in the bank. It is what you have that you do not have to fear anything or anybody. As long as you are doing what God wants you to do and you are loving that Book, and that Book is everything in your life, you have absolutely nothing to fear. They have absolutely nothing spiritually, and you have absolutely everything spiritually. What you do when you see things, or you have to deal with things, or you have to face things, and in most cases, they would knock you down or hurt you or offend you in the concept of the verse, it does not do that because you simply have the peace and the security of the riches in Christ Jesus that you have. Things do not bother you. Just like a rich guy, he is not afraid of somebody out here who is going to sue him. He just laughs at him. When somebody does something that you do not like or you do not approve, just laugh at it. Fall back on what you have with God because what you have with God is everything, and it will carry you through everything.

II. Five Principles from Proverbs 18:20-24

Now today, let us look. We are going to close this chapter out today. Let us look at Proverbs chapter 18, verses 20 through 24. We are going to look at five more great principles. We will probably break these principles down and get some more out of them, but there are five fundamental ones here. Let us read it.

Proverbs 18:20-24

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

III. The Three Desires of Man and Their Fulfillment

Let us look at verse 20.

Proverbs 18:20

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

Now this is a great verse and it is a great principle for every one of us today. I think it goes without saying that the three basic goals in a person's life, whether they are saved or whether they are lost. I have been around people most of my life, saved people, lost people. I have talked

with them through every struggle that they go through in life, the things that are their defeats in life, the things that are their disappointments in life. I think it is safe to say that across the board, a man has three basic desires or three basic needs that he struggles to get in life today.

- 1.) He wants to be complete. He wants to understand who he is. He wants to be accepted. He wants to be successful.
- 2.) He wants to be content. He wants to be satisfied in life. Life can be so unsatisfying so many times. Life can be so disconnected so many times. Life can be a series of events that just, it seems like at every turn of life, there is something else that you have to deal with. I understand. He wants to be complete. He wants to be accepted with the people around him. He wants to be successful in what he does. He wants to be content. He wants to be satisfied in life. He does not want to go through life in misery of not having the necessities of life, but there is nothing wrong with having some of the wants of life too. We all want them.
- 3.) He wants to be happy. He wants to enjoy life.

You realize that those three things, and I am going to talk about them here for a moment, you realize that those three things are only found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. I know you know that. Those three things are only found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The world can never give you those things. The world will give you the fake things that you think will make you happy, that you think will make you complete, that you think will make you content, but at the end of life you find out that it has deceived you and it is simply not true. The only people that can have those three things in their life are God's people. I need to say this to you: most of God's people do not have them.

God's people today are the most miserable people on this planet. They ought to have the joy of their salvation. They ought to have everything that they have in God. They ought to realize the goldmine they have in that Bible. They ought to realize everything that God has given them, and they ought to live above every circumstance in life and certainly not take anything personal or get offended by much in life. Yet, these three things can only come from a relationship with God, yet they are the three things that God's people do not have today. It is an incredible concept.

The reason that the world can never do that is because when God made us, God made us as His creation. God made man differently than any other thing that He created. When He made the angels, He made them a body and He made them a spirit, but He never gave them a soul. When He made the animals, He gave them a body, He gave them a spirit, but He never gave them a soul.

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.

He is three parts. God gave a soul to man and to man only, simply because it was that soul that God gave to man that God knew He wanted to communicate with God and fellowship with man through. He knew He could not do it through his spirit, He could not do it through his flesh, so He had to give man the ability to fellowship and relate with God through something that He gave

only man. An unsaved man, his body and his soul are stuck together. His spirit is over here, so he is only two parts. We also know in the Bible that a number three is the number of completion in the Bible. So when a man gets saved, when he really gets complete spiritually, God comes down and separates the soul from the flesh, illuminates his spirit, seals his soul, and now man is complete. He has a body, he has a soul, and he has a spirit. Where he was dead in trespasses and sins, now he has the ability to be alive unto the things of God. It is just that simple.

When a man gets saved, he now has that ability to build a relationship with God in those three areas. Because he is now complete spiritually, and when you understand that you are complete spiritually, now you have the ability to be complete in everything else in life. Now you have the ability to be content. Now you have the ability to be happy. It is those three things that man desires to look for that an unsaved man can never have. Only a Christian can have it, but unfortunately, most of God's people never have it.

I watch God's people, and I understand, it is the Laodicean Church Age. I understand that we have talked about it many, many times, when you lose your Bible, you lose some things. We are certainly in a church age with pastors and churches who simply have lost their way and lost the Bible, and God's people are miserable because of it, I get that. But I want to say that you will never be happy and complete or content without putting three things in your life. I want to show you how these three things work in your life today. These three things will have to be in your life.

The verse says a man's belly. We know from our past studies that that is a man's emotional stability or instability. We talked about that before. It says, "A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth and with the increase of his lips, shall he be filled."

Three things you have to have:

1. The Word of God. You have to have the Word of God in your life. You cannot exist as a child of God and build any relationship with God without you spending time in your Bible. When people get out of fellowship with God, when people start to go down that road that they are going to leave God, leave the church, leave everything that they once knew, the first thing that goes in their life is the Bible. The Bible is gone. They quit reading it, they quit loving it. I have seen people that at one time in their life loved the Bible in an incredible way, and got to a point in their life where the Bible meant nothing to them.
2. Ministry to the Lord. I quantify that by saying ministry to the Lord because when we think of ministry, we just think of going out and doing something for the Lord. But if you go to Acts chapter 13, verses one and two, it is the Church of Antioch which is the model church of the Bible. It is the Church of Antioch which is the model church. It talks about the men that are there, and that is a very good study in itself. It talks about the men that were there, and then it says this: it says that they ministered unto the Lord. There is a difference between ministering for the Lord and ministering unto the Lord. There is a vast difference in the Bible. There is a vast difference of just going out and doing something, going here or going here, doing everything that we call as ministry. There is a difference between that and what the Bible says. True biblical ministry is that you minister to the Lord. In other words, your real Bible-

based ministry, whatever you do, has to run through Him first. You have to understand what He wants for you to be able to do that. We use the concept and the phrase so cheaply today. We talk about salvation and it means nothing to us. We talk about dedication to the Bible. That means nothing to us. We talk about ministry, and we think that ministry is just something that we do. Well, many times, probably in most Christians' lives it is, but a real biblical-based concept of ministry based on the Word of God will always be ministering to the Lord. I am going to tell you something: you will never be complete. You will never be happy. You will never be content. Until you get into the Word of God and then you learn how to minister unto the Lord.

3. People. Most churches today, and I grew up in them, most churches today think that you can minister to inanimate objects. That you can minister to this. The ministry is people. God saved you for three things. He saved you to give you the Bible for you to minister unto Him and then to match you up with people that you could take the Word of God and give them by the fruit of your mouth, by the increase of your lips, and give people what they need. If you do not have those three things in your life, you are going to be miserable. You will go through everything in life as a Christian. You will go to church after church after church. You will get into choir, you will get into this, you will do that. You will sign up for everything that is there, but you will never, never, never have those three things in your life until you put the other three things in your life. The only reason God saved you, the only reason God saved you was to give you the Word of God that you may minister to Him and then invest your life with people.

The ministry is people. I watch you, many of you, all of you are simply at your best when these three areas are working in your life. You are at your peak. You are at your best. You have your game on. These are the three main ingredients of a working relationship with Christ. These are the three things that God saved you for that make you everything that you need to be in Him. Let me tell you something, I am going to be honest, and I know many of you know this is true. There is no greater feeling or experience than what you get when you sit down with that Book and God gives you something out of it, just you and Him. There is no greater anything in this life. There is nothing greater in anything that you do, nothing greater than sitting down and opening up that Book, just you and God, and God gives you something that He just gives to you. I mean, what? Six billion people on a planet, a bunch of them saved. They are all in their Bibles. They are all praying in all different languages. Yet God puts them all over here and gives you something. I am telling you, nothing greater than that. Nothing like it.

Along with that, there is nothing that will compare or nothing that will complete you more in your life than knowing that you are totally involved in the work that God has called you to do. There will be nothing more satisfying to you than to realize that as a child of God, oh, I know you have your career. I know you have your job. I know you have all kinds of things you do. I get that, that is part of life. But your main function in life is to realize why God saved you, and you can look God in the eye today and you say, "Lord, I am giving You everything I can the way I need to do it." You will never get out of fellowship with these three areas in your life. In the work and the ministry, people come and people go. But I have never seen anybody get out of fellowship with God that had these three areas working in their life. It is the greatest insurance

program that you will ever find, and I will tell you something else. There is no greater contentment in all the world than allowing God to use you to give the Bible to somebody else. There is nothing better than that.

We have what we call the people ministry. Over the years of being in the ministry, seeing every mistake that every pastor probably made, making most of them myself, trial and error, dealing with people, getting your tail feather shot off, getting your rear end burned, getting all the lessons of life that you learn in 40 plus years in the ministry. After a while, you begin to see what works and what does not work. You begin to understand better, and there is always a method to what you do. You may do something that everybody else looks at completely one way, you see it completely from another aspect simply because you know what you are trying to do with it because you have learned through the years. I am a very unorthodox pastor. I am not your norm. I do not look at things the same way that most of them do. I do not do things the same. I do not believe the things that most of them believe. I am as far from the mold as you could ever find, and I want to stay that way.

I have realized over the years that you look at things and you do things for specific reasons. We talk about the people ministry, and four or five years ago, or three or four years ago, whenever it was, we started that and allowed anybody to get in it. My plan, my plan behind it, there is always a method to my madness. There is always a reason why I do what I do. I do very little spontaneously when it comes to ministry. I usually think it through for a long time. I put all the pieces in order, and when I do something, I am going to get every drop of something out of it I can for the Lord, for the church, for the ministry, for you, and for what we try to do here. My plan was to get you involved in these three areas, and it worked so for many of you. I am going to tell you something: it changed your life. It changed who you are. It changed your goals in life. It changed your desires in life. It changed your passion in life. It changed your perspective in life. It changed your direction in life.

I have watched you pour yourself into people. I watched you with Discipleship One. I watched some of you do Discipleship Two. I watched some of you work in the marriage section of things with me, and you work with people. We have two couples that are going all the way up to Atchison, Kansas today, to work with a couple up there. That couple could not believe that any church would drive an hour and a half one way just to sit in their living room and try to help them. But you see, when you get infected with people, when you get infected with ministering to the Lord, when you get infected with the Word of God, it changes everything about you. The team is going up to Lincoln. Who would drive three hours, get no sleep, stay up half the night, have to go to work, come back for church the next day, and then go? Who would do that other than somebody that is infected?

Last week I gave you the verse in Psalms 119:165.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

How could it? How could anything offend me or you when you have this thing working in your life that has transformed you into what you are today? You want to define completeness? Completeness is understanding who you are in Christ. You want to be complete in Christ? You do that by understanding who you are in Christ Jesus. You realize how He looks at you. You realize what He sees when He sees you. You do not look at yourself through the failures of your past life. Everybody has a history, folks. Everybody has made mistakes. So many of God's people can never get the confidence that they need with Christ because they are always looking at where they have been. You need to look at where you are at now and how God sees you. We all could go back in our history and literally defeat ourselves every day. You want to be complete in Christ? Get to understand who you are in Christ.

You want contentment? Realize being satisfied with what God has given you. Understand that everything in your life you have, God has given you. Everything that you have, every dollar in your wallet, every car in your garage, everything in your home, every piece of furniture, everything you have, God gave you because He saved you for a purpose.

Philippians 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

You are content with that. That does not mean you do not want things. I mean, that is why they build shopping malls so you can go out there and walk around and see what you do not have. I make jokes about the women going to the cosmetic counter, and there are 600 pairs of different lipsticks in there. You do not have that many lips, but there it is. I think that is okay. I think God knew what a woman needed, and a woman likes to pamper herself. She likes to look at those things. I mean, a guy, he looks at a fishing rod, he buys it, and he is ready to go. A woman, she will look at all those colors. There is nothing wrong with that. That is the way God made her. It is not a sin to have 600 colors of lipstick, but it is a sin to put those 600 colors over what God has called you to do, like it is with a fishing rod or anything else. I have known guys that bought a boat, and you never saw them in church ever again. The one I was thinking about was the Titanic. Those guys never got back to church.

You want to be happy? You want to have real happiness? I know the word happy, happiness is building on the happenings of life. The Bible's word for it is joy, I get that. But you want to have the real happiness of life, get the joy of the Lord. The happiness of the world can change in a heartbeat. You can be happy in the morning at 12:30, get one phone call, and the rest of your day is a disaster. But that will never happen when your whole world is built on the joy of the Lord. It all comes from your mouth. It all comes from you fulfilling what God saved you for. The bearing of fruit of what you do and what you say to people. Then it just keeps getting better. You see, you get into the Word of God, you get into ministering unto the Lord, and you get in with people. What you say to them is the fruit that God begins to multiply. It only gets better from there because the more you say, and the Bible says, "with the increase of your lips."

I can say this with 100% certainty, after 40 plus years in the ministry, nobody ever got out of fellowship and walked away from God or church or whatever without failing in these three areas

first. The Book goes first, ministry goes second, people go third, and you are out the door. It is just that simple, not complicated.

IV. The Anatomy of a Backslidden Christian

In a few moments, I am going to give you the anatomy of a backslidden Christian, in case you ever want to be one. You will know what to look for. You will notice when I put somebody to disciple someone, here again, methods of my madness. When I put somebody to disciple someone, say I am going to put you to disciple someone, or you to disciple someone, or Bob to disciple someone, or I put somebody that is an oldie but a goodie to disciple someone, I always put one or two younger ones with them. Maybe one, sometimes two, never more than two. That young person will meet with you guys.

Why do I do that? I mean, it is just as easy to have somebody to disciple somebody, or somebody else to disciple somebody, but I put younger people with them. Because I want that older Christian to get them infected. I want you to make the ministry to the Lord and teaching people the Bible appealing. I want you to give them an easier lesson and let them do it. I want them to see every week how that person is changing and that person is growing. I want it to infect every aspect of their life. So when they get past that, they will say, "I want to do that too." Because without the Word of God in your life, and ministering unto the Lord in your life, and people in your life, you have no reason to be here. My goal is to get you to the place where you can take somebody yourself because the ministry is people.

My job, the job of this church, is to provide you with the tools, create the opportunities for you to realize and reach those three goals in your life. That you get the Word of God in your life, the ministry unto the Lord in your life, and you invest your life with people which will in turn bring you around by the increase of your lips and your mouth to the completeness, the contentment, and the happiness that you are all looking for in life. You will never find it any other way. As always, God's people, some will and some will not. It is just that simple.

When you get out of fellowship with God, the first thing that goes is the Bible. You know that to be true. Your attitude changes about the Bible. Sometimes I preach hard sermons. Sometimes I preach sermons that step on your toes. That is a pastor's job to do that. When you are in fellowship with God, you like that. You are sick, but you like that.

Proverbs 27:7

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

You know why? Because you know deep down inside that the only thing that keeps you straight is sometimes banging your head up against the wall or running somebody through the wall back there. The anatomy of a backslidden Christian is not complicated. Out of fellowship people, here is how you first spot them. Out of fellowship people will never enjoy anything negative out of the Bible. Negative people will not like negative things about the Bible. I get it. People who are in fellowship with God will enjoy negative things about the Bible. It is just how it works. It is not complicated.

If you ever look at 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16, it says all scripture is given by inspiration of God and it is profitable. Let us see what it is profitable for. Watch this.

2 Timothy 3:16

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

Let us see what it is profitable for. Watch this.

4. Doctrine. That is positive.
5. Reproof. That is negative.
6. Correction. That is negative.
7. Instruction in righteousness. That is positive.

That Bible is built on a negative and positive impact. You have to take it all. If you just get positive stuff all the time, you are going to be the absolute most miserable people in your world. You know why? Because positive does not get down into your deep, dark world where you are hiding things. Positive does not get down when everybody is telling you how wonderful you are, how great you are. You have to have the balance. You have to have the doctrine, but you have to have the reproof. A child of God who loves God, loves that Book, he loves them both. He loves them both. I have had some of you come in here on Sunday morning and walk by me and give me a hug and you simply say, "Give it to me today, I really need it." And you are not asking for five dollars. Nothing will be more telling of where a child of God is at, where you are at with God, than how well you like getting your hide torn off. Even the bitter things are sweet. You know why? Because you know you need it. When you do not want negative and you just want positive, you think it is because you do not need it anymore.

The human nature of man is the most incredible thing on the planet. It is so easy to read when you map it out over the Word of God. I am telling you, some people want it, some people do not. Some people come to the place that they fall so in love with the Word of God, they know how miserable they really are. They know that they need the negative to keep them straight. They know if you told your kids, put it in your own world. If you never disciplined your kids and had any negative experiences with your kids and you just told them when they broke something or did this that they are the most wonderful person in the world and you did not hold them accountable, you did not deal with them, what would you have by the time they are 20 years old? You would have a monster. Oh, you are going to do your kid that way, but the church cannot deal with it that way. This is the greatest sign of the anatomy of a backslidden Christian. This is the first sign you look for.

V. The Power of the Tongue

Look at verse 21, the next verse.

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

What a powerful verse, and it goes right along with another verse in Proverbs 12:14.

Proverbs 12:14

A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

The power of the words that we speak and that we use. Our words will either send a man to heaven or they will send a man to hell. Our words will either build somebody up or they are going to tear somebody down. Or our words will get us judged out of our own mouth because of our self-righteousness when we make great explanations to God that simply are not true. There are some great examples of that in the Bible. In Acts chapter 5, verses 5 through 10, Ananias and Sapphira. What they said out of their mouth sealed their doom. Sealed their doom. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Saul got himself killed because of what he said.

1 Samuel 13:12

Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

God killed him for it. David got judged out of his own mouth with Bathsheba and Uriah when Nathan went in and he told him this story about a guy who had a little lamb and this big strong guy, rich guy, cooked this guy's little lamb. David was so enraged and incensed, not knowing that Nathan was telling a story about what he just did to Uriah by taking his wife. He jumps up and stomps around and he says, "I do not know who this guy is, I do not know who this guy is, but he is going to pay fourfold for that life." Old Nathan stuck that bony finger out there in his face and he says, "Thou art the man."

2 Samuel 12:7

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

You go through the rest of David's life, God held him accountable, that judged him out of his own mouth. He loses his next four boys. Old Bartimaeus over there in Mark chapter 10, verse 47, he got his lifelong desire of his heart based on what he said.

Mark 10:47

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

And He stopped right there and fixed him. Power of the mouth. You go back to Queen Esther, back in the book of Esther, back there in chapter 7 and 8, she probably saved hundreds of thousands of lives by what she said to the king in Esther chapter 7 and 8. Jesus said one time in John chapter 6, verse 63, He said, "the words that I speak unto you are life."

John 6:63

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

In verse 68, He says the words of eternal life, the power of what we say.

John 6:68

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

We do not really think about it. I was thinking about this, and this was Pearl Harbor week, all the movies were on for Pearl Harbor, and I was sitting there watching it and I thought to myself, putting this together, the power of words. Pearl Harbor on December 7th was an absolute disaster for the United States. It almost broke the back of America, and boy, we were down, man, we were in trouble. The Japanese did not know what was really going to happen. They expected a real fight, but there was no fight. It caught America completely asleep. Over 2,400 people got killed in that. All because they are flying in there and they are coming in over Diamond Head, and they are coming in from over the other section, the other side, coming in, and they are waiting to see, to get the word. Three little words that one man spoke destroyed the fleet, killed over 2,400 people, and put America so far behind, and it took her the next year to get back up.

Those three little words. One Japanese pilot flying in the lead ship, when he flew over and saw that there was no aircraft, there were no planes in the air, they had been cleared to fly. As he flipped that little mic switch, three words put an end to the American Navy: "Tora, Tora, Tora." Three little words. Three little words. Three little words wiped out the whole fleet. Three little words, over 2,400 people killed. Three little words, battleships upside down, men trapped in there and cannot get out. For two or three weeks after that battle, where those ships capsized, they could hear men tapping down there. When they finally cut their way down, some of those guys had lived down there for two and a half weeks before they ran out of air. Three little words, power words. We read stories like that, do not even think about that, do we?

I think about the Enola Gay, the B-29 that dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. They had prepped for that and tried it. They did not even know if it would work. They did not even know if it would kill everybody in the plane. They are flying out there that morning, Colonel Paul Tibbetts was the pilot, and he is flying over there, and he gets over Hiroshima and has that thing in there, and he turns that thing over to the bombardier. Down there is that city early in the morning, 275,000 people in that city, just waking up. That plane is so high, you could not even see it, could not hear it. That old bombardier looked down through that bombsight and found his target area, said two words, "Bombs away." And then 30 seconds later, 225,000 people stepped into eternity. Power words, power words.

You are discipling somebody right now, what you say to them could make all the difference whether they make it or they do not. You are going through somebody in marital counseling and working with them and helping them. Let me tell you something, how you say what you say. It is not only what you say, it is as important as how you say it. Power words. When you tell somebody the story of Christ, it can give them life. When you do not, it tears down the ministry and the Lord's work, you can give them death. The power of what we say.

Job 26:4

To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

VI. Finding a Good Thing: The Help Meet

Look at verse 22.

Proverbs 18:22

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

The standard teaching is talking about a man who finds himself a good spouse, i.e., a wife. We have got that. Genesis chapter 2, verse 20 talks about when God made Adam, He had a job for Adam to do. Adam could not get the job done by himself. God had created all the other animals by that time, and God is looking down through the zoo that He made and He says there is not anybody there that can meet Adam's need. So God created a woman out of Adam. Where all the other animals have mates, M-A-T-E, over there in Genesis chapter 2, verse 20, you get a different word for the woman that God gave the man, it was a help meet, M-E-E-T. Animals have mates, men have meets. Because God had a plan for Adam, and He knew that he needed somebody to help him meet the need to fulfill that plan.

Genesis 2:20

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

Within the text here, we know that this is Solomon and his virtuous woman that he found in Proverbs 31 and wrote about in the Song of Solomon. Inspirationally, we know that is when a man finds a good wife and she becomes a good help meet to him, we know that. But doctrinally, it is a little more than that. Doctrinally, it would be Israel to God in the Old Testament as God's wife. In the New Testament, it would be Christ and the church. In the New Testament, Christ's bride. You see, in the Old Testament, God had a nation of Israel, kingdom of heaven. He had a plan, and He had something that He wanted the nation of Israel to accomplish. He took on the fashion that the nation of Israel was His wife because God knew that to get the job done, He needed a help meet. The nation of Israel in the Old Testament was God's help meet to get God's plan to the Gentile world. You know what she did? She stepped out on Him, committed adultery on Him, fornicated on Him, and left Him. Now she has a bill of divorcement. Hosea.

In the New Testament, it is you and me. The body of Christ, the church. You and I today, if you are saved, God has a plan for the Gentiles today, completely different than a plan from the Old Testament, but God has a plan. Where the nation of Israel was God's wife to be His help meet to get it done, in the New Testament, you and me, the body of Christ, is Christ's help meet, the bride of Christ, to accomplish the plan that God wants to get done through His Son. You are His help meet.

Let me ask you a question. Questions like this are what you have to ask yourself. Once you see the reality of something like it, ask yourself this question: What kind of help meet are you? What

kind of help meet are you, after all? Are you the kind of wife that you got married to Him, you just want everything for yourself? Are you the kind of wife that when you got married, you did not really care about what your Husband wanted? Proverbs chapter 31 talks about all the virtues of the virtuous woman. They have to be you and me in the church. Now when you hear something like this and you read something like this and you see how it applies to you and me, the body of Christ, you have to ask yourself the question: What kind of help meet am I to Christ?

It is kind of ludicrous for me to even say this, but it is true. It seems so weird to say this, but it is true. He needs you. You would not think God would need anybody, would you? He obviously needed somebody to fellowship with, that is why He put this whole plan together. Christ needs you. Do you know what He needs you for? Because He cannot do what His plan is without you. It simply is not going to happen. You have people at work that are going to die and go to hell if you do not be a good help meet. You have people in your family going to die and go to hell if you do not try to do everything you can do to be a help meet. You do not put those three things in your life and allow God to put the Word of God in your life, the ministering unto the Lord in your life, and people in your life. That is what He saved you for. That is your plan, and I get it. Some of you have extenuating circumstances, some of you have the worst circumstances. Hey, there is always something you can do. God's people complain so many times about all they have to do that they cannot do anything for God instead of looking at what they could do and getting everything done. What kind of help meet are we? When you get up in the morning and look in the mirror and you know your day is going to start for the Lord Jesus Christ, not for yourself, that will be the first thing you ask yourself. "What kind of help meet am I going to be for Him today? He has something He wants me to do. Is His plan for me today even remotely in the ballpark of my plan today?" Boy, that is the difference. That is the difference. That is the difference.

VII. The Poor and The Rich

Let us look at verse 23.

Proverbs 18:23

The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

Now, this is a good principle in life. You see, the poor has to plead and beg, like in 2 Samuel 14:4-12, somewhere in there, because he or she has nothing. They do not have anything. They do not have any advantage in anything. They do not have any bargaining power. They have to entreat the help of others. The word entreat means to ask urgently because you have a real need in your life. You entreat somebody. When poor people get in a jam, they need somebody to help. They are on their own. They do not have anything to fall back on. So they are always looking for somebody that has something to help them out.

But the rich, on the other hand, he has everything he needs and he needs nothing. Of course, the model for this in the Bible, in a spiritual application, will be the Laodicean church.

Revelation 3:17

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Yet the Bible says they do not know that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The church has a false concept of itself today. Most Christians do too. Most Christians think they are spiritual when they have no clue what real true biblical spirituality is. Most people think they have a Bible when they have no clue what a real Bible really is all about. Most people think they have a relationship with God when they have no clue what a real biblical relationship with God is. That is the problem we find today. That is the problem we face today. The rich man, he is the man of Proverbs 18:11. His wealth is in his strong city and his high walls, not in the Bible that he believes and cherishes, but rather in his own conceit.

Here again, the Bible is filled with guys like this. You have the rich guy, Pharaoh. You have the poor guy, Israel, in the book of Exodus. Pharaoh treated them roughly, treated them terribly because he was in power, they had nothing. Anything they had, they had to entreat and beg to get. Over there in 1 Samuel chapter 25, you find Nabal speaking roughly to David and treating him terribly. Up through the New Testament at the first coming of Christ, the Roman Empire is the most powerful empire in the world. They treat the Jews like slaves. They treat them like dirt. They put them under their heel. They persecute them terribly. When you go back even before that, when God ended the times or began the times of the Gentiles, and Babylon comes down and Assyria comes down and takes the nation of Israel captive. It is a terrible time, and Babylon and Assyria are great powerful nations, and the Jews have nothing. You see in Luke chapter 16 with the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus is laying at the gate of the rich man's place, and he cannot even afford basic medical supplies. He has sores all over his body. He cannot get Ibuprofen, he cannot get any drugs, he cannot get to a doctor, he does not have anything. The dogs come and lick his sores. The rich man fares sumptuously every day. That is a great picture of the world because as we read that, we think that Lazarus is poor and the rich man is rich. When you put it into context, Lazarus was the rich one and the rich man was the poor one. But the world does not look at it that way.

VIII.A Friend That Sticketh Closer Than a Brother

Now look at verse 24. Another great verse. This one is on par with Psalms 119:165. It is a parable principle. It will leave nothing to the imagination. You need no Greek or no Hebrew to get anything out of this one. It is plain, clear, and simple.

Proverbs 18:24

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

All my life, I have dealt with God's people, and I understand it. This is certainly not a criticism. I understand it. People are lonely. All my life, I have heard people say, "Well, I just do not fit in here." And all my life, I have heard them say, "Well, I do not have any friends." I understand. I get it, I get it. I realize that those are real things in a person's life. It is just like somebody getting offended like we talked about last week. Hey, I realize, I am not minimizing that. I am really not.

I have dealt with people, all my ministry, that they came in and talked to me and said, "I just do not seem to have any friends." And, "I just cannot seem to fit in." I help them, I tell them. But I always give them what the Bible says. I always tell them. Because the verse kills you. I mean, the verse just kills you. I mean, it just does. It is a great reality check, man.

The Bible will always show you where the problems are in life. We all come in and we all say, "Well, I have this or this or that." This is why people leave the Bible when they get out of fellowship with God. Because the Bible will always be clear, basic, and simple, tell you what the problem is, and tell you how to fix it if you want to fix it. Now the verse kills us. It says, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."

A while back I gave you six or seven things that I had learned in 66 years of life on planet Earth. I use them, and they are great things to me. One of them, I cannot remember what it was, or maybe number three and number four, simply said this: one of the things I have learned in 66 years of my life is simply that you only get out of something what you are willing to put into it. That is so true. If you have a job, you get a brand new job, a job that you wanted, what is going to determine how far you go up the ladder of promotions and success and raises? It is going to be what you put in it, not what you take out of it. You get up, everybody else comes in five minutes late, you come in five minutes early. Everybody else says, "Well, I am too busy to do this." You say, "I am not too busy, I will help you. I have got my load, I will do this too." You show people that you are interested, you show people that, "Hey, I love this job, I got this job, I really, really am going to take care of this job." And you can count on me in this job, and then show them that. You only get out of something what you are willing to put into it.

You find a boyfriend or a girlfriend. You go out on a date someplace for the first time, and he does not speak to you and you do not speak to him. How far is it going to go? Drive around town all night. You say, "Where would you like to eat?" "Oh, I do not care." "I do not care either." Drive an hour later, "Hungry yet?" You cannot build a relationship in any way, shape, or form without putting something into it. You have to be the one who puts it in. You see the beautiful girl over there that you just want to ask out? You do not stand over here in the corner and say, "I hope she asks me out, I hope she comes over and talks to me, I hope she..." No, you do not do that. It is never going to come that way. You see me walk towards you and you think, "Oh, here she comes, she is going to walk right by you and go to the ladies' room." If you want her, you have to go say, "Hey, Bob Alexander is my name, it is good to meet you here. What was your name again? Maddie, that is a nice name, Maddie. Do you come here often?" I mean, that is how you have to get into it. You have to be a facilitator. It is not going to happen by itself. It just is not.

When you get out there and you are going to play sports, I do not care, I am never in it to win. Winning has never been important to me. It is how hard you play when you are in there. I do not care whether I win or I lose, that is not. But I will tell you what I do care about, guys who do not really give it their all. If a ball comes your way and it is within 10 feet of you, I want you in the grass and turf in your teeth when you come up. You may have never got the ball, but you were down there looking for it. That is what I want. I get so mad at myself when I do something stupid, but I knew better. I have watched people out there that play ball, and I know nobody is

great, but the ball is overhead and the guy, I have seen it, and I do not say anything. I just turn around on the pitcher's mound and I just have a little talk with Jesus. The ball is over his head. He throws his glove up, like the glove is going to catch the ball. That is what I am talking about. That is how I do it. But you have to get after it. Do not stand there and flip your glove up in the air. You only get out of something what you are willing to put into it. Sports, you have to put some stuff in it. You will be sitting on a bench all your life. You have to show them that you are into this thing and this is what you want.

Listen, when it comes to church on Sunday, and you being here this morning, and I do not know why you are here, I give you all the benefit of the doubt. I think you are all here for the right reason, probably, most of you. But listen, when you come on Sunday mornings, you have two basic goals that you are geared up, lined up, and ready to go for.

8. The first one ought to be what God has for you. That would be the first and foremost thing that you have. You have a 55-gallon drum to fill up with everything that God is going to give you.
9. The second thing that ought to be your goal in life is how you are going to inject yourself into what God is doing here.

There is always a method to my madness. We have prayer groups. Those prayer groups change every 12 weeks. That is so if you are somebody new, you can get to meet people. You are not locked into the same old crowd over and over and over again. In the elementary, most churches, they have standard people working in elementary that they just work at every Sunday. I do not want that. I want your kids to know everybody in this church. I want them to know everybody in here. I want you to know them. So, you are rotating in and out, and you do what you do because that is the way we need to do it. It is just that simple. The activities that we have, they are designed. They are designed. They are designed for you to get everything that you want with people. They are designed that way. The youth meetings, like the progressive dinner last night that you all went to, going from place to place to place. You just meet people, talk with people, and you just have a good time when you put yourself into it. New Year's Eve is going to be another deal. You have a knockdown, drag-out, great time. You come here, have a great time, let God speak to you, let the people that are going to give testimony speak to you. If you want to give a testimony, that is great. You go out of here filled up because of the fact that you put something in it. You are never going to get anything out of it if you do not put something in it.

I hear people all the time, after we play volleyball and after we play softball, we always go to Jason's Deli. I hear people say all the time, "I really do not want to go out and eat afterward." You are not going out to eat afterward. Get it out of your brain. You are going out because that is where the people congregate and meet, and if there is somebody new there, you ought to be all over them. The fact that you do not want to eat with somebody else's food, I do not care. You are there because of the fact that this is where you can put something in. There are times that you need to look for opportunities and say, "I am going to inject myself into this. I am going to put myself into this circumstance." You only get out of something what you are willing to put in it. Get to know your brothers and sisters. We are a family. Somebody says, "Well, I did not get invited to so-and-so." Invite yourself. I do. Do you think somebody is going to tell you no in this

church? I have had things that I did not get invited to that I really wanted to go to, and I go up and I say, "Hey, do you mind if I come? I just like to come hang out." "Oh, we would love to have you. We did not think you would want to come." "Well, if you have got food, I am going to be there. What are we having, by the way?" Nobody cares here. This is the weirdest church in the world. It is so unorthodox from what churches are supposed to be. Somebody has a birthday party, you did not get invited. "Hey, I am sure you just missed my name on the list. Is it okay if I come?" I do it. I have never had anybody tell me no. If they say, "Well, no," you say, "Well, Bob told me to ask," then you will get in for sure, I guarantee you.

I want to tell you something. Listen, let me say that. There are some churches, and I give you this. There are some churches that you could never break into. You could go there for 20 years of your life and you would never get on the inside. I am telling you, they are out there. I have had my share of them. I am telling you, there are churches out there that you could go and we could go to everything, and they will never allow you on the inside. Not here. Are you kidding me? Sometimes over the years, I know my ministry and I know me. I am a lot like my dad. My dad never met a stranger. My dad was friends with everybody. I call everybody "Buddy," even the girls. "Hey, Buddy, how are you doing?" That was my dad. He called everybody "Buddy." His biggest lab, his name is Buddy. My dad, and I got a lot of those traits. I have never met a stranger. My kids and I, we go off to someplace. We were at Disney World, and there are so many foreigners at Disney World. They are all from all over the world. I am going up saying, "Welcome to America. Good to have you here." My family is going nuts. They are saying, "What are you doing?" And I said, "I am just being nice." I see them over there, and I will get in line, and I will say, "Hey, where are you from?" "Oh, China." "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." "Oh, you are from Korea." "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. My uncle killed a lot of you guys over there in the Korean War." Do not say that. But it is okay. When you have the joy, joy down in your heart, you want to tell everybody about it. You never know what you are going to find out. Just be nice to them. I will tell you another one.

I was driving someplace where I was going, and I was going down past Gary Potter's place on Bannister, past the Bannister Road there. The guy was blocking traffic, and he had a big trailer, a large trailer on a pickup truck. He pulled down, and he has got a driveway. It is a normal driveway. He pulled down, and he backs this sucker up and in. I mean, he puts it right in there like it was just born there. Everybody else is honking their horns. I rolled down my window, drove up there, and I said, "What a job you did!" He looked at me, and he smiled, and he said, "I have done it a few times." And I said, "I am impressed." When you are saved and you get your head out of wherever it is at, you know you can be in control of most situations with people. You know you have the power of words to disarm some situation or set it off. I mean, come on. It is just that simple. I mean, I get it. There are some churches that you cannot break into. But, boy, for somebody to say here, "Well, I just cannot find any friends," I mean, that is, to me, that is just, there is a fundamental problem here. I will tell you, come on and see me. I am the greatest facilitator of putting you in any place you want to go in your life. I have had people come in and say, "Here is my schedule, here is my time, here is what I have got, what can I do?" And I just slide right into a slot for you because that is what you have to do. You have to put something in to get something out of it.

Well, there, anatomy of an out-of-fellowship Christian. It drives me crazy. One, you cannot find your niche here and be friends with people. The other one is when people start to get disgruntled, "Well, I do not get fed there anymore." Let me tell you something. If you cannot get fed here, you cannot get fed anywhere. Now, there is no comment on my teaching or my preaching. I am telling you this. You know why you do not get fed? You are not showing up for dinner. That is why. I mean, this is the thing. A guy said one time, he says, "You know what your Bible studies are like?" I said, "No." He said, "You know what your church services are like?" I said, "No, what?" He says, "It is like trying to get a drink out of an open fire hydrant." You ever see a fire hydrant putting out gallons about 900 feet per second? You want to try to get a drink? It will rip your lips off.

When we talk about friends, I want you to know that friends will come into two categories. I think this is very important.

10. You will have your garden variety friends, which we all have. There will be people you hang out with, do things with. You will do things with them. Your kids will play together. You will work in ministry together, maybe at ReStart, or you will disciple somebody. You will do whatever. You will be on your volleyball team and your softball team. You help and work at the fellowship with them, or like I said, on volleyball or softball, maybe in your prayer groups. They are your friends. There are people who you count as friends, and you love them, and they love you. You have fun with them, and you are connected through church, the Bible, and God, you are all connected together. You make them friends by opening yourself up and being friendly, just like the verse says, "showing yourself to be friendly." I get it. In the course of life, you will have many friends that you share and do things with. That is very important. Everybody needs friends.
11. That last part of that verse, and the second kind of friend, it says there, gives you friendship that is very rare. In life, you will find very few of these kinds of friends, and they are the rarest and the most precious things that you will ever find in life, other than the Word of God and your relationship with Christ.

Proverbs 18:24

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

In ministry, it is so very true. People will be your friend today and then not tomorrow. You will pour your life into people and you will win them to Christ. You will marry their kids. You will bury their moms and dads. You will do everything, and it comes down to it that they get a better deal someplace else or they get their nose bent out of joint, and you get the short end of the stick.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

God's people are the most ungrateful people on the planet for the most part. Truman Dollar told me something years and years and years ago, one of the best things he ever told me. Boy, we were driving down to Springfield one time, we were talking about something. He always gave me a lot of great wisdom. He said one time, "Bob, let me tell you something about God's people. God's people will never remember what you did for them yesterday. They are only going to want to know what you are going to do for them today." Boy, I never forgot that. You accept that as collateral damage in the ministry because that is just the way it is. But the thing that makes the ministry worth it all will be the second kind of friends. Fair weather friends, you always have them. People who only need you when they are in a jam, they are always there. That is just part of life and part of the ministry. The real blessing in the ministry will never be those people. The real blessing in the ministry will be the ones that stick closer than a brother and the brother that is born for adversity. Those who stick with you and bear the bonds of the ministry with you.

To me, the greatest quality in a person will simply be one word. It is the word loyalty. I have a lot of bad faults and I have some decent faults, but I am well aware of probably my greatest quality. I do not mean this in a boastful way, but it is just true. It can be my best thing or my worst thing. My number one quality is loyalty. I will be loyal to a fault. I will be loyal to somebody right up to the point where he cuts my throat and sticks a knife up my ear and throws me in the ground. That is not a good thing, but loyalty to me is paramount. When I got saved, I found the most loyal Person in my life, the Lord Jesus Christ. God has been good to me over the years, and God has given me some of the most loyal people who love the Lord, love the Book, love the ministry, and love me. It is an incredible concept. They are the ones that make the ministry work. They are like David's mighty men of valor back there in 2 Samuel chapter 23, where there is a dual loyalty. They knew he was the captain. They knew he was in charge. But when he wanted water over there from that well out of Bethlehem that the Philistines had, David comes out and he looks down through there and he sees that and he says, "Man, that is the best water in the world. I would love to have a drink of that water." David walked back in and said, "You guys get a good night's sleep, keep your eyes open." But those boys were looking at each other and they said, "Let us go get our captain some water." They snuck down there under the nighttime and got into that Philistine camp, got that water out, and they tripped off the trip wires coming back up and got the whole thing going on, man. They are shooting at them and everything else, and they stumbled over that parapet down that trench, and there is the captain looking right down at them, and they looked up and they said, "Here, sir, we got the water for you. We love you. You are our leader." He took that water, realized it was the water that he wanted. It was the water that came from the well of Bethlehem, the house of bread. And he said, "I cannot drink this. These men put their lives in jeopardy," and he poured it out and gave it to God. Because it is a dual loyalty. It is a dual loyalty. It has to be. It has to be. Boy, when you have that key word, loyalty there, nothing ever gets between you. I mean, "A friend loveth at all times, but there are brothers that are born for adversity." In the ministry you find them, and they are the ones that make it worth it. I mean, every one of them.

In the course of life, in ministry, you will find those that God puts in your world and your life that will stick with you through everything that you have to face. It is a loyalty based on what we get in the Word of God together and binds some of us together. It is that old war buddy concept.

Soldiers come in two categories too. You have the combat vets and you have the guys in the rear with the gear. The combat vets never get along with the guys in the rear, and the guys in the rear never can identify with the combat vets. But the combat vets have been in the fight and put their life on the line and put your life in the hands of somebody else and his life into yours. It builds a bond. It builds a loyalty. It builds a trust. It is that unconditional love and respect and the ability to work through anything because of a bond that you have as a brother that is born for adversity, not just for the good times. As I said, fair weather friends are everywhere all the time. But a brother that is born for adversity.

There are two aspects to that.

12. The first aspect is the ministry. The ministry will have its share of adversities. The key to keep a ministry together is the bond that the brothers have. The ministry, the ministry will have its share of adversity. Paul in his life and ministry went through them, and they are great examples for us to know what to expect. There were adversities in great Christianity. There was adversity with the Jews who hated him and tried to kill him. God's people who stuck with him and got him through. You find people like Aquila and Priscilla. You find people like Timothy, like Titus and Philemon, and Luke who was with him, a trained physician because of Paul's problems. God will put people in your life that will get your heart and mind into ministry and then pick up the load and help you carry it. They understand God in their life. They understand the Bible in their life. They understand the ministry and the Lord in their life. They understand the pastors that God has given them in their life. They understand the adversity that we all have to go through. They stand together to get it done. Loyalty is the bond. Loyalty to the Word of God. Loyalty to what God has given us. Loyalty to understanding who we are, why we are here. And then forging ourselves as brothers and sisters that are born for adversity. You do not find them very often like that in life. When you find them, you better take care of them. Because they will take care of you.
13. The second aspect of adversity. You will have adversity that you will all go through personally. Everybody does. People who will be so close to you in Christ that your issue becomes their issue. There will be times when you cannot stand for yourself that somebody will stand for you. There will be times when you do not have the energy to fight that somebody will stand up and fight for you. There will be times when you do not have any strength and you are weak, and their strength will become your strength, and they will carry you through. You do not find them very often like that. They will be by your side when there is absolutely nothing that they can do. There is nothing they can do to fix your problem. There is nothing they can do to help you. But they will be by your side that when you are going through the toughest time you look around and you know they are standing there just waiting for an opportunity. They have got your back. This is the friend that is sticking closer than a brother. In the midst of your conflict, you look around and you see them there. They are like the Lord.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

The loyalty they have for you is not based on just friendship. It is based on what you have in the Word of God together. They realize where your heart is. Realize where your passions are. You share those hearts and passions. They want to be part of that, and they will stand with you no matter what you go through because they know at the end of the day that is what God's people are supposed to do. This is the friend that is born for adversity. This is the friend that when you go through your tough times in life, no battle is too hard. No battle is too long. No battle is too intense. No thought of quitting and going back. You stand together or you go down together. But you stay together. You may struggle on different levels, but you will always find a way. You meet in the middle and you hold the line together because of what God has given you together.

God's people do not have that today. I remember I told you this story a couple of years ago. I remember reading way back when, back in the, oh, I do not know, it had to be in the early 80s. I had a book that talked about encounters in Vietnam with guys that were fighting in the Vietnam War. It told the story of these two best friends that did everything growing up together. Back in the Vietnam War, they had a buddy system that if you had a friend and you went in to do service together, they would keep you through it all the way through basic and then AIT and then to your final assignment. These two boys wanted to join the Marines together. They joined the Marines together. They went through basic together, inseparable. Went through AIT together, inseparable. Both got sent to Vietnam together. Got the same rifle company. They were just friends forever. There were never two guys that were closer, that were always there for each other.

As I read the story, it talked about how one night they were on a nighttime patrol, and these two guys were always together because they never wanted to be separated from each other. Something happened in the middle of the night, and they got separated. The rest of the rifle company got positioned and got dug in, and the Viet Cong were hitting them all around, and there was no way, and they knew they had lost two guys, and it was pitch black dark, and they knew that they could not get out and find them without losing a bunch more guys. So everybody in the rifle company hunkered down, and all their NCOs said, "We are going to find them in the morning. Everybody just get in, dig in, hang tight. We will get them in the morning." After about two, three hours of silence, they knew that the VC had found them. About a quarter of a mile away, maybe a half a mile away, they heard the most horrendous gunfight shootout you ever saw in your life. If you have been in the military, you can tell the difference between an M16 and an AK-47. They could hear the rat-tat-tat of the M16s and the bangs of the AK-47s, and that thing went on for 30, 40 minutes. Then it fell silent. Everybody in that rifle company knew that those boys were dead. But the Marine Corps has a tradition, as do most military branches, of not leaving anybody behind. So that morning at first light, they got in some reinforcements, they went to find them. They knew the general direction where they were.

One of the most sobering things they ever saw in your life. They walked into that little ambush spot where those two boys lost their lives. Here they were. They walked over, and both of them were dead. But you know what they had done? Together in life, inseparable, together in death, inseparable. So one would not run and leave the other one, and one would not let the other one in the lurch. They took their pistol belts and put them together, and they strapped themselves back

to back and tied themselves together that they could not be separated. They fought till every last round of ammunition was gone, and then they died together.

I read that story and I thought to myself, there are two boys that went into the Marine Corps, had such a loyalty to each other and a loyalty to the cause that they were fighting for, that when push comes to shove, instead of running, instead of hiding, instead of panicking and running off in different directions, together in life, together in death, they bound themselves together back to back, and they held the line, and they died together. I thought to myself, if you could get God's people to do that exact same thing in the ministry, if you could get God's people to bind themselves together back to back, have the loyalty, have the commitment that together in life, together in death, whether we stand or we fall, we do it together. If you could get that kind of commitment out of God's people and that kind of loyalty, that kind of brother and sister that is born for adversity, this would take us closer than a brother, this world would be won to Christ in three or four years, but it will never happen. So what God does is give you one here, give you one there, give you one here, give you one over here, give you one here, give you one over here. He will pull them out of the great sea of massive humanity. This old putrefied Laodicean church that everybody just cares about what they want, gets their nose bent out of joint over things, God still has His mighty men of valor. You have to study sometime the difference between Saul's mighty men of valor and David's mighty men of valor. Saul's mighty men of valor are men that he forced to be his mighty men of valor. He had to conscript them to get them there. He had to force them to be his. When it came to David, they were waiting in line to be him. Saul had no loyalty for his men. David had nothing but loyalty for his men.

Loyalty is a big thing, gang. Loyalty in the ministry is everything. It starts with our loyalty to the Word of God, our loyalty to the relationship we have with the Lord Jesus, and then it simply comes down, based on that loyalty, our loyalty to each other. Brothers, each and every one of us, standing together in these last days. If you do not know that we are in a shootout, you do not know where we are at. It is you and me helping each other, living there for each other, living above the circumstances, not getting offended about anything, but recognizing that our calling is a higher calling, and what it is going to take to get it done is simply in this church, you folks in Lincoln, you folks in Wichita, you folks on the YouTube, it is just simply going to take us binding ourselves together back to back and holding the line until Jesus comes back. We may not survive. We do not know what to do, but at least we will do it together. We will stand together and we will die together because that is what brothers that are born for adversity do. Nothing or no one ever comes between us. Nothing or no one ever comes between us.