

I. The Mind of God in Proverbs

Today, we are going to be back in the Book of Proverbs, in Chapter 19. I have told you before, as we come down through this, how Proverbs really represents the mind of God. It really shows us how God thinks, what He thinks about, and it gives us His opinion on the issues of life that we all have to face. Using Proverbs and its principles will always give you the edge in life. I think that is what everybody really wants out of life. Most of God's people want the ability to be able to solve problems in their life. I do not think anybody enjoys going through issues. All of the time, the reason why we go through struggles in our life is simply because we do not follow the very principles that will guide us through those problems. Proverbs and its principles will always give you the edge in life and in overcoming the circumstances of life. It is just that simple.

There will never be anything that you do not face that if you get God's opinion on it, and you know how God looks at it, then God is going to show you how He deals with it. It is just that simple. The Book of Proverbs has always amazed me. It is a lot like the Bible to me. I know for a fact that there were more than sixty-six books written. Paul writes to seven churches. I know for a fact that he wrote more than that. Obviously, he did. But out of all that he wrote, God handpicked what He wanted us to have and put it in a book. To me, that makes the Bible very special.

When it comes to the Book of Proverbs, we are told in [1 Kings 4:32] that Solomon had written over 3,000 Proverbs.

1 Kings 4:32

And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

Here again, the beauty of the hand of God in all that God does for us and all that He gives us, and I love this. He handpicked what He wanted us to have. He knew what life was going to be for all of us. He knew the struggles we were all going to face. He knew the heartaches that we are all going to have to deal with. He knew how problematic life on planet Earth would become. He simply handpicked, out of the wisdom of Solomon through His inspiration to him, what He wanted us to have.

II. The Nine Purposes of Proverbs

You will remember the Book of Proverbs. I told you this when we started. The Book of Proverbs will do nine things for you. Nine in the Bible is obviously the number of fruit bearing. We know that. These nine things will produce the fruit in your life that you want. They are all found in Proverbs 1. We talked about them when we started the book.

Those nine things are:

1. Proverbs will give us the ability to know wisdom and instruction. To know it when you see wisdom, when it is not wisdom, when it is wisdom, and to be able to take instructions from the one you know that is true.
2. To perceive the words of understanding. Perception is to be able to see a circumstance or a situation and perceive what is good and what is not. That is perception. When you get the Book of Proverbs down, the mind of God, it really gives you everything that you need to know to look at and have that perception because you see it from God's standpoint. His perception is perfect. Many times my perception is wrong. Many times your perception will be wrong. God's perception is never wrong. When you get His, you can forget about yours and mine.
3. To receive instruction of wisdom. Wisdom does you no good if you will not take and learn from it. You can have all the books of wisdom sitting before you, but if you do not follow through with it, it is never going to do anything for you. This is why people read the Bible all day long and their lives never change. They are into the Bible constantly. They come to Bible study. Their church has church on Sunday mornings, Sunday night, Wednesday night. They do everything, and they have a Bible. They read the Bible. They get their daily bread. They get all their devotional material. But their life simply never changes because simply reading the Bible will not change you. Applying what the Bible says, getting the instruction of wisdom, is what changes us. That is the key.
4. Justice. Justice means that you understand what is just, what is right, versus what is unjust and what is wrong. There are a lot of things today that go on in Christianity that people like to take things that are wrong and portray them as right. They take things that have been done wrong and try to stand for the fact that it is right. When you get into the Bible and stay with the Bible, especially Proverbs, you understand what justice really is. You understand what right is versus what wrong is.
5. Equity. Equity is balance. You and I having the right balance in our lives and everything that we do. Balance, to me anyhow, balance in our lives is probably the most crucial thing that we ever have to deal with. Because in our life, we all have things. We have kids. We have sports. We have our own jobs. We have our families. We have everything out there. We have church. We have the Bible. It is real easy to get out of balance, and when you get out of balance, the next step is out of fellowship. You have to stay in balance. It is absolutely crucial.
6. Give subtlety to the simple. In other words, you just keep things simple in your life. The Bible is not a complicated book. The Christian life is not a complicated book. If every one of us in here today would just simply, honestly, start in every aspect of our life following what the Bible says, doing what the Bible says. If every one of us would just simply do that, you know how uncomplicated your life would become? What complicates life is when we get creative with life. The Bible was not written so you and I could get creative. The Bible was written by the Creator that you and I could follow. He says we would have the simplicity of life. Simplicity in Christ. Simplicity of the Word of God. The simplicity of the Christian life. I know there are a thousand books out there and a thousand sermons and a thousand preachers out there talking about how tough life is and how complex life is. They say, "Buy my book on this," and "Buy this in it," and "Get my series of tapes on how life is, how you can un-complicate your life." Let me tell you something. You want to un-complicate your life?

Do what the wisest man ever said to live in [Ecclesiastes 12:13]:Ecclesiastes 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. It does not get any simpler than that. Give subtlety to the simple.

7. Judgment. In life, we are all going to have to make judgment calls. There are going to be things that you are faced with in life that you are going to have to make a judgment call on. You come to church and you get the Bible, and I help you wherever I can, and that is my job. But you have to understand, at some point in your life, you have to be able to stand based on your understanding of what the Word of God says and make the right judgment call.
8. Give the young man knowledge. Knowledge is the beginning of your learning process. If you are a child of God, you begin with knowledge. That knowledge turns into wisdom, and then you get to the point where you get understanding.
9. Discernment. The ninth thing that the Book of Proverbs is good for, it says that the young man is to discern. Discernment is crucial. If I would say that there is anything that is lacking in most of God's people's lives today, it is discernment. They do not know how to discern what they should get into and what they should not get into. Some of God's people have a tough time discerning who they should be friends with and who they should not be friends with. Some of God's people have a tough time discerning who they should marry and who they should not marry. Discernment is crucial in our lives because to be able to discern something is the ability to see it, not as it appears, but as it really is.

I want to tell you something. In Christianity, when people do not do what is right with the Word of God and do not follow the simplicity of the Bible, and life gets complicated, the ministry gets complicated, you have to have the ability to discern it. You have to have the ability to see, not as it appears, but how it really is. This is what Proverbs does for us. This is what Proverbs gives us.

III. Daniel: An Illustration of Proverbs in Action

Without a doubt, when I go through things like Proverbs, and we have been doing it now for a couple of years, when I look at what Proverbs does, I am always searching for an illustration in the Bible that really illustrates in a great way exactly what the Book of Proverbs will do for you. It is one thing for me to stand up here and talk about it, give you the nine things. That is academic. I can give you those. But to find a real living illustration within the Bible that shows you Proverbs at work in your life. I thought about this years ago when I first studied the Book of Proverbs, and I want to show you what I believe, in my own humble opinion, is the greatest example of the Book of Proverbs and these nine things that it will do for you anywhere in the Bible.

I want you to turn to Daniel 1 with me. The Book of Daniel has always been a favorite of mine. Daniel goes into captivity. This captivity is down in Babylon. Babylon is a picture of the world. He is taken captive. As far as we know from the record, he never sees his family again. He never goes back to Jerusalem again. It does not look like he is one of the ones that goes back after the seventy years. He is a perfect example and a perfect picture of what we all go through in life. Babylon is a picture of the world system. It is a type of the devil. It is a clear picture where the

devil is trying to destroy the very choice king seed of the children of Israel. Just like God, the devil wants to destroy everything in your life to keep you from being what God wants you to be.

There are two forces at work today in your life. Do you know that? Within this church, within any church, within Christianity, there are always two forces at work. There is a force that wants you to be everything that God wants you to be. And there is a force that wants to take away from everything God wants you to be. This is Daniel. Daniel finds himself, and how many times have I told you, there will be times in life when you are in a circumstance that you did not put yourself in. There will be times in your life where you can honestly say, "I absolutely did nothing to be here, and here I am in a bad situation. I did not do anything to deserve this." I have told you many, many times, sometimes you are not responsible for the circumstances that you find yourself in. That is a true statement. But you will always be responsible for how you deal with it. That is a true statement. Daniel is a picture of that.

Let me read for you here. Let us pick it up in [Daniel 1:8-17].

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Daniel 1:9

Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

Daniel 1:10

And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

Daniel 1:11

Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

Daniel 1:12

Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

Daniel 1:13

Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

Daniel 1:14

So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

Daniel 1:15

And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

Daniel 1:16

Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

Daniel 1:17

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Here is what you have. The king wants to give them a daily proportion of Babylon's slop. All this stuff that represents what the world wants to give to you. But Daniel, they do not want that. They want to eat the pulse and the water, types of the Word of God in the Bible. They want to eat the things that represent God. They do not want the things of the world. Here is what he is saying: "The king wants us to stand before him in a certain time, and I am telling you right now, let us eat what we eat as God's people. Let his people eat what they eat by serving the devil, and at the end of ten days, let us see who is better." You know what that is a picture of? That is a picture of some of you getting into the Word of God and digesting the Word of God and devouring that Bible, and somebody else not. At the end of a period of time, you are going to stand together, and you are going to see who is better. That is what it is an example of. It is an incredible example.

Now, when they go into this captivity, they already have the five wisdom books that you have in your Bible. They have Psalms, they have Job, they have Ecclesiastes, they have Song of Solomon, and they have Proverbs. So God has given them the wisdom and understanding that they have through the wisdom books that you have in your Bible, those very books that they had. It is a picture of them digesting God's wisdom, digesting and getting what God has for them, versus what the world has for them, and we are going to see a comparison. You want to know what Proverbs will do for you? You want to know why I have taken my time walking through Proverbs? You know why I have taken my time to outlay every principle that I thought would help you in life and give you the edge in life? I am going to show you why in just a moment.

Daniel 1:18-20

And at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

You know what that Book of Proverbs will do for you? It will make you ten times better than the world when it comes to you understanding what life is all about. Who would not want that? Who

would not stay in the Book of Proverbs for a thousand years? That is what you are going to get out of it. Is there anybody here when it comes to the world system, you do not want to be smarter than the world system? Because if you are not, then the world system is going to use and abuse you all your life. In many people's cases, that is what it does. The wisdom books, the Book of Proverbs right there, a great example, makes you ten times better. Ten times better. The superiority of the Word of God in your life.

Notice who they are up against: the magicians and the astrologers. That is a perfect example of the world system. There is no such thing as magic. You cannot make things disappear. When David Copperfield made the elephant disappear, everybody in the crowd gasped and said, "Where did it go?" I do not know where it went, but he did not make it disappear. He made a 747 disappear one time. I promise you, it did not disappear. Magicians work with one concept that gives them the edge when they are dealing with people: misdirection of an illusion. You know why they chose the word "magicians" there? Because magicians only operate in the world of illusion. You know why he used that to represent the world system? Because the world in your life will operate in the same fashion, under illusion. You think the life of the world is going to be good for you. You think getting out of the Bible and not doing what the Bible says is okay for you. That is an illusion. The way you keep from getting into that illusion is getting ten times smarter through the wisdom books of the Bible. It is just that simple. Christian life is not complicated, folks. We like to make it complicated because we do not want to do what is right sometimes.

You want to be ten times better? Psalms talks about it in [Psalms 119:98].

Psalms 119:98

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

You know you are always going to have enemies as a Christian. There are always going to be people who do not like you. There are always going to be people who want to hurt you. There are always going to be people that are out to get you. You stop and think about that. That would bother you unless you are a Christian. You have a guarantee that you will be wiser than them. You do not have to be afraid of them. You are smarter than they are. He says, "more understanding than your teachers." You see, when you go to college or you go to high school, which you have to do, and I am all in favor of it, do not misunderstand me. You get taught some things, but you do not get understanding. The real benefit for every child of God is to go to college, go to grade school, go to high school, get all that they teach you, and then evaluate what they give you through the understanding that God gives you. That is how you do it.

"More understanding than the ancients." Everything in our world today goes back to the ancient philosophies, the ancient teachings of those nations back there that the devil used so early, before even Christ showed up, to captivate the mind of the world with an illusion of knowledge that simply was not true. As you get ten times better, you see right through those things.

IV. The Importance of Integrity

With that in mind now, let us begin to look at Proverbs 19:1-3.

Proverbs 19:1

Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

Proverbs 19:2

Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

Proverbs 19:3

The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.

I want to look at these three verses this morning. I could have gone four or five verses to get through the chapter quicker. I am not interested in getting through it quicker. I am interested in getting you good principles for life. There are some great principles here that will change the aspect of how you look at things, and I think that is important. Proverbs probably is the best book we have ever studied together for a book that shows you how to alter the issues of life and change them in your favor.

Proverbs 19:1 says, "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool." There is a word here that I want to talk about for a few minutes this morning. I think there is a word here in this verse that we need to talk about. I think it is probably for you and me as a Christian, it is probably one of the greatest words we could ever study. What would you think that word might be in this verse? The word "integrity."

I want to talk about that word today. What a great word to look at and to study. The word "integrity" carries a lot of different connotations with it. It means for something to be wholesome, that it happens to be a little bit more. It has integrity. Many times you will find it used in a physical sense. Somebody will talk about an aircraft ready to take off, or a space shuttle, or this or that, and they will talk about the integrity of it, how strong it is, how whole it is, how it is good to go. So, the word "integrity" carries with it that phrase to be wholesome, to be held together good.

It also carries with it the concept of purity. Integrity is the antecedent of something that has no integrity. So it has to deal with purity. Integrity has to do with something or somebody being upright in their stand in the things that they do. Obviously, it is a given that integrity would go along with being truthful. A man's ability to tell the truth, a woman's ability to tell the truth or not tell the truth. If they tell the truth, they have integrity. If they do not tell the truth, they do not have any integrity. It is easy, but a great word. The word "integrity" means to be honorable. To have honor that you are going to stand for truth. The honor that you have because you have integrity. The word "integrity" suggests uncorruptible.

Back in my day, there was a series on called *The Untouchables*. It was based on a true life story of an FBI agent by the name of Eliot Ness. Eliot Ness formed a group of people around him. I know they made a movie with Kevin Costner in it, but you had to go back and see the originals in the 50s and 60s with Robert Stack. They were great. As a kid, I grew up on them. His team

that he put around, you have to remember, they were in Chicago, high in the gangster era. Al Capone, Pretty Boy Floyd, Alvin Karpis, all those guys. Bootlegging was the big deal back there because it was during Prohibition. It was back in the 20s. They were making booze everywhere. It was called Bathtub Gin because they made it in bathtubs. They were selling it. People were dying. It was a time in America where you could get beer, but you could not get hard alcohol. The Prohibition came in and they shut it out. America was dry for, I do not know, ten years, however long it was. They repealed it. Now you can get drunk as a skunk.

Back then, all the gangsters and all the mobs were making incredible money off of booze. So the FBI put together a task force, headed up with Eliot Ness, and the whole Chicago police force was corrupt, from the mayor to the police chief, everybody. So he put together a hand-picked unit of men who could not be bribed. They could not be corrupted. They single-handedly took on and really did an incredible job during this period of time of breaking up all the illegal stuff that was going on. Their names, because of their integrity, the integrity that they could not be bribed, the integrity that the mob could not pay them off, the integrity that they were going to stand for the very badge and the very oath that they took to be FBI agents, they were called "The Untouchables."

When it comes to you and me doing right with the Word of God, we ought to be untouchable. You realize that you and I ought to stand aside from corruption? They were FBI agents. I looked it up one time and I thought to myself, some of them got killed, they paid a terrible price, they were hated, they were ostracized. I went back and looked, I think they made something like \$9 a week. For \$9 a week, they were willing to stand for the credibility because they had integrity of what the law said had to be. You know what? I bet you every one of those guys before prohibition came in probably drank booze. I do not think there were a bunch of milk shops. I think they probably all drank, or most of them. But yet, when the law changed, they said, "This is the law, this is what we are going to follow, and I will not be corrupted from this law. I will be untouchable."

God gave you a book. That book is God's law. It is the issues of your life and everything that you are supposed to do and the way you are supposed to conduct your affairs in life. When it comes to the principles of the Word of God and you as a Christian, you ought to be untouchable. Nobody should corrupt you. Remember back there in 1 Corinthians when Paul was worried about the church of Corinth, he was worried that somebody would corrupt the church from the simplicity that is in Christ. It has happened. It has happened.

This quality of integrity that churches and Christianity and pastors and Christians once had is long gone in most cases. You know, at one time in America, believe it or not, it really meant something to be a Christian. There was a time in the 1840s and 1850s if you were a farmer and you needed a loan from the bank, and you went to the bank and you said, "Hey, I need a loan to get my crops finished up, to get them in." The banker said, "Well, what kind of collateral do you have?" And he said, "Well, I am a member of the Baptist Church or the Methodist Church." He got the money. You know why? Because it meant something to be a member of a church back then. Try it today.

Christianity at one time was a power dividing force in this country. It separated the light from the darkness. It was a light that shined in the darkness that the darkness comprehended it or not. Everybody knew what side you were on. You know why? Because the world had no integrity and God's people had integrity. It is hard to tell today in most churches whose side anybody is on. There is no division anymore. God's people use deceit and corruption just like the world does. They will lie and say this and say that just like the world does. Where is the integrity of staying with a book and its principles? It is gone today. It is gone today.

I know that Revelation 3 talks about the church of Laodicea not being cold or hot, being lukewarm, right in the middle of the road. I get it. But for the most part today, not completely, but for the most part, Christianity is a joke. Churches are a joke. You see these great Christmas pageants that all these churches put on? I am not picking on anybody. It is what it is, but I am using it as an example. I have been part of that system before. For years and years and years, we put on a pageant called the Living Christmas Tree. There was a structure that you put up in your auditorium that was probably sixty feet high, that looked like a Christmas tree. Then you had all the choir members dress up like ornaments. Put them in different levels up there, and they would get a cantata off the Living Christmas Tree and how they sang and all the things that were done. I know. I get it. I was part of it.

You know what the bottom line motivation for that was? You had two, three thousand people there every night. Boy, the eyeballs lit up. Offering time. It is all about money. We stopped it after five or six years because one of the guys on the top row got dizzy and fell out backwards and fell down. He was the angel on top. He backed up too far and he fell. He must have fallen forty feet. Bart Lockwood is who it was. He was the angel at the top of the tree, and he stepped off too far, and we shut the whole thing down. Paramedics came. From that point on, Bart was known as the fallen angel. That is a true story. I have been there, man. It is a joke.

God's people today claim to follow the Bible, love the Bible, believe the Bible, right up to where they have to apply it to something in their life that they do not want to do. I get it. They just do whatever they want. Let me ask you a question. What good is it for you to have a Bible? You all got one this morning. What good is it for you to have a Bible if you are not going to follow what it says? What is the point? I told you Thursday night. I think the greatest question asked anywhere in history by God is found in [Luke 6:46]:

Luke 6:46

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Excellent question. Christianity and Christians today need to be about integrity. That is a great word.

The verse says, "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool." Integrity is the key. Christians, Christianity should be about truthfulness. It should be about honesty. It should be telling the truth in love. It is a lot better than deceitfulness in a cloak of dishonesty. We have churches today where the pastor stands in the pulpit, says everything that you want to hear, but his agenda has nothing to do with where you are at or

helping you grow. He figures that you will get what you get when he gives you. His real agenda is building his dream world. When you preach, if any of your boys ever get into the ministry, when you preach, when you do the ministry, if you do it here or wherever you may do it, you do it with integrity. You do it with integrity.

Integrity is simply the greatest quality of the man of God anywhere found any place. I am telling you right out of the back, right out of the chute, my friend, the verse says, if you have to choose between having riches or having integrity, take integrity. You have to choose between poverty and perverseness. Take poverty. When you have integrity, you will simply take your stand for the right things because integrity will demand it. You will take your stand for the right things when others will not.

Talking about taking a stand, most of us do not have a problem taking a stand for something. But sometimes in our world, we have a problem with taking a stand against something. In your Christian life, there is going to have to be a time when you take a stand against something. It may cost you some friends. I have been in situations where I have seen where it cost somebody a husband or a wife. It cost them their family. It cost them an aunt and an uncle. I have seen young men and young ladies that were put in a circumstance within their own family. Because that family was not of the persuasion of the Word of God, and that young man or young lady was, and they were given a situation that they had to be faced with that they wanted to be a part of, that in a Christian world they could not be a part of it. They have the integrity to say, "You know what, I cannot do that." And they paid a price for it.

Do not ever forget. If you do not get anything else of what I am saying this morning out of this great verse, get this: Integrity, you want it? Integrity, you want it? You want that integrity? Well, I will tell you something. Integrity always comes with a price tag. My whole life. A lot of guys go through their life and their ministry and never figure out what God really wants them to do. Honestly, I do not think God's initial thing with me was not to pastor a church. I enjoy pastoring a church. But I think for me, pastoring a church was just a means to an end. I have had one desire and one burden in my life ever since the day I got saved. You know what it is? To take young men and young ladies and train them into leaders. Men and women who will stand.

You see, for me to do that effectively, I had to pastor a church. But my first calling was not to pastor a church. My first calling is to train leaders. I know how to do that better than anything else on this planet. I do not brag about myself. I do not say anything. I tell you all the dumb things I do. At least allow me to tell you one good thing I do. I do not know much in life. I know how to train. I tell you how to take a young man and a young lady and make him something for God. My pastoring a church is just a means to an end that I dare to do to get there.

I want to tell you something. Being a good leader. You are not a good leader because you make good decisions. Most people think that is true. You are not a good leader because you make good decisions. A good leader will make good decisions. But the final analysis of a good leader is not someone who makes good decisions. The final analysis of a good leader is someone who makes the hard decisions. That is leadership. Leadership is your ability when you are faced with something and you know that what is right to do, that you have integrity to do it.

There have been times, confession time, when I found myself in situations that honestly I would have liked to take the back door. I know you probably do not believe this. I hate confrontation. That is why I have two of the mildest dogs on the planet. I hate confrontation. I do not like dogs that bark at me. I do not like dogs that try to... I do not like confrontation. But I have to understand, and you must understand, that in Christianity there is confrontation. You are going to have to stand for it. Sometimes you have to stand against it. You are going to have to come to the place in your life if you are going to be a leader that you just cannot make all the easy decisions that are good decisions. Sometimes you are going to have to make the hard decision, and integrity will always come with a price tag, and it will cost you something. The question of being a good leader is, are you simply willing to pay that price?

I got right with God. I thought heaven came down and glory filled my soul. I went forward that night, and Herb Koonch dealt with me. I had been a long way out, and I was coming home. I remember that night like it was yesterday. Man, they sang that. I was sitting back there. I do not even know what the sermon was. I was just waiting for the invitation. I knew what I needed to do. I did not need a sermon to get me down there. I just needed the invitation. I remember who preached. I do not remember what they said. All I remember was when that first choir said, "Just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me, O Lamb of God," I was out that aisle and on the way down. I went down there and got on my knees, and I was crying. I said, "Lord, I want to get back. I want to do everything I know I do." My dad had passed away now. He was gone, and God used that in my life. Herb Koonch came up, put his arm around me, prayed with me. I was ready to go. I did not say anything to anybody. I went home and I told her. I did not know what I was signing up for. They asked me what I came forward for. I said, "I have full-time service." In my mind, I could not think of a Christian doing part-time service. I had no idea that full-time service meant they were going to go to Bible college someplace. To me, full-time service was, "Let us get up and go fix bayonets. Let us hit it."

So they sent me a letter. My mom opened my mail. She opened everybody's mail. There was no secret of my mother. She read everybody's mail. When they sent me a letter in the middle of the week thanking me for coming forward and praying for me as I pursued full-time service, to get into the ministry and do all these things, which is not what I came forward for, but I get it, you misunderstood it, that is okay. So I came downstairs, my own. Now I got the joy, joy, joy out of my heart. I came down those steps, and my own mother took that letter and put it in my hand. She says, "You, you, you got to be kidding me." She said, "You are going to do that?" I mean, that had the potential of just devastating my world. It had the potential of devastating everything that I did. This is the same woman who put me in a woman's dress a couple of weeks earlier, a couple of years earlier, that had the potential to ruin everything that God had done in my life. But you know what? When I gave my heart to the Lord to do what He wanted to do, I did not care what anybody thought about it. I love my mom. Still love my mom. She is in heaven. She is with the Lord. But you know what, Mom, you were dead wrong. You were dead wrong. Because when God calls you to do something, sometimes you are going to have to take a stand. I could have let that crush me. I could have gone out of there and said, "Well, maybe she is right." You know what God had put into my heart was the right thing to do. I do not care who it was.

You are not a good leader because you just make good decisions. What makes a good leader is when you are in a situation that has gone south, and it is an unpopular decision, but it is the right one, you have to make it. Edmund Burke was not even a saved man. He was a writer. You know what he said one time? He was an unsaved man, probably in hell this morning. He said one of the greatest Christian lines that I have ever heard in my life, and he was not even a Christian. You know what he said? "Evil triumphs when good men do nothing."

You will take your stand for the right things when others will not. You will do the right thing when it needs to be done when others will not. You will embrace the leadership of ministry and realize the awesome responsibility that you hold within that responsibility. When the people got into people ministry, the first thing I had them do was sign a contract. How many of you know where your contract is today? Most of you do. Why? I say, "Why would you do that?" Because I listed in there everything that I expected of them. I said, "Look, if you are going to come up on this level, and I am going to give you everything that I am going to give you, then to whom much is given, much is required. I expect you to do with this truth exactly what I would do to it, and I am going to lay it all out in a contract." They signed it, dated it. We have them on file someplace. You say, "Why would you do that?" I will tell you why, because I know how human nature is, and at some point down the line, when they get sideways and they do their own thing, and they want to justify it, and they want to give all the alibis in the world, I am not going to get to fight with them. I am simply going to pull out their contract and ask them what part of this did you not understand when you signed it. How simple is that?

Everybody who became a deacon, you got a CD. Not one in the bank. When we got back here, we had a meeting. I said, "Here, here is your CD." Nobody is going to force you to be a deacon. You have been asked to serve based on this or this, but take this CD home and listen to it. You got two weeks to decide because if you take that to be a deacon, this is what you are going to be held accountable for. Why did you do that? You know, throughout the years, deacons are human like everybody else. They make their mistakes. They do their things. They decide they do not want to do. I get it. Everybody makes mistakes. My question is simply this. I have to deal with it. I simply pull it out and simply say, "Now what part of this did you not understand?"

You can be a leader here. My job is to train you to be leaders. You may not see leadership in yourself. I see leadership in all of you. The question is, some of you maybe have a few more obstacles to get over than somebody else, but you can get there. My job is not to build a church where you have some people that are leaders and a bunch are not. That is not my goal. It may wind up that way, but that is not my desire because I know what the Bible will do for you. I know that within those four Hebrew children there, you are not going to tell me that every one of them was as sharp as Daniel. But they all were ten times better. It simply comes down to the fact that how bad do you want to be one? But if you are one, you are held to a higher standard than just your garden variety Christian who comes to church whenever they want to. God knows we have enough of them. In other words, there has to be integrity within the ministry.

I have a lot of problems in my life, and I do a lot of dumb things, but I can guarantee you this: when I step into that pulpit, it is with integrity. People say, "Well, you know what, Bob, he does not preach like he used to." I have people who say, "Well, all my life, well, you do not preach the

way you are used to." And the other half says, "Well, you know what, he preached a lot better now than he used to." Make up your mind, which is it? You can go back and find tapes of me in 1988. Seven or eight years ago, 1988. I defy you to find anything I am saying back then that I am not saying now. I am an idiot. I got a lot of issues. I will be the first one to tell you. I will write them on a blackboard, but you got to get a really big one. But I will tell you one thing I have never changed on, period. Never. Never. Nor will I ever. I believe today about that book what I believed thirty-five years ago about that book. I will deal with you today on that book just like when I dealt with somebody thirty-five years ago with that book. There are some things in my life I will not allow to change, and one of them will be the integrity of that pulpit. I wish I had that in other areas of my life. Integrity, you will always tell the truth and not pervert it to mask what you want to do.

The defining verse on integrity within ministry is found, and you need to see this, in [2 Corinthians 4:1-2]. This is worth looking at.

2 Corinthians 4:1

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 Corinthians 4:2

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Let me stop there for a moment and talk about those three. First of all, "hidden things of dishonesty." You have to be open and transparent about everything that you do. You have to come to the point in the ministry where you cannot give the appearance in any way, shape, or form of being dishonest. We do not put out financial statements in this church. All my life, every church you went to, they gave you a financial statement. We do not do that here. You know why we do not do that here? We have an open book policy. If you are a tithing member of this church and you want to see what we are spending money on, all you have to do is go to Danny and say to him, "I want to look at the books. I want to see what is being spent here and there." You can see it. If you are a tithing member of this church, it is your right to do it. I am not going to print out a bunch of stuff, passing it out to everybody, and everybody gets one when you do not even count this church as your own home. If you are a tithing member of this church, you have every right to see everything that is spent for in there, and all you have to do is go in there and ask to see whatever you want to see. I am going to run on an open book policy, and I am going to tell you something right now. There is not another church in this country that will do that. You get what they want you to see. I will give you what you want to have. You know why? "Hidden things of dishonesty." "Walking in craftiness." "Handling the Word of God deceitfully."

You realize that within every situation that everyone will come up in your Christian life. I have been in the church business for many, many years, as many of you have, and you know this to be true. In all of my years, I have never seen a problem get out of control when it was handled biblically. I have never seen it not get out of control when it was not handled biblically. You have

got to come to the place where you realize that the church has some policies and guidelines mandated by the Bible that you have to follow. You may not like them. I may not like them. I do not get to choose the ones that I like and the ones that I do not like. There will always be a biblical process to deal with anything in any church scenario. It is not always easy, but it will always be right. What it takes is integrity to be able to deal with it.

Now let us go on here. He said, "by manifestation of truth." I want to tell you something. The Bible was given for one reason and one reason only. The Bible was given to you and me by God that it might manifest truth versus error. Without truth, you have nothing. You say, "Well, I believe the Bible was given to get people saved." You cannot get saved without truth. First and foremost, that Bible was given to manifest truth in every situation. I do not know about you. I cannot speak for you. I would not presume to. I am a die-hard for truth. I want to know the truth about history. I want to know the truth about my Bible. I want to know the truth about everything in life. When I am faced with a scenario in a situation within a church or within Christianity or dealing with you and you are dealing with me, the bottom line for me is, "What is the truth?" That is all I care about. I am not mad. Do not take it personal. The bottom line is this: What is the truth? That Bible exists for one reason. We claim to love it. We claim to believe it. We claim to read it. Good. Praise the Lord. Then allow it to do what it is supposed to do. Manifest truth. How hard is that? Not hard at all. The Bible says to prove all things.

All I want in life is the bottom line of something. I tell people when I begin to work with them, "Hey, I will do whatever you need to have done for you. I will help you in any way I can. I will spend as much time working through your issues. I will put as many people in your life as you need. If you want to do what is right and you want to get out of the situation you are in, I will get for you. I have the resources. I will put everything and everybody in your life that you need, and we will walk through your issue together. You will never have to make another decision that is bad ever again. I got one rule: Do not lie to me. Do not not tell me the truth because when you do not tell me the truth about something, you send me down a road that is a waste of my time. You send me down a road that I cannot help you."

Many times have you heard me saying, "I do not care what you have done. I do not care what happened in your life. We all got a history. I do not care what you have done. I do not care. I do not care about any of that. I only care where you are at today, but where we go from here to there is going to require integrity. Truth. Truth." You say, "Well, Bob, okay, I shot four guys last night." Good. Probably deserved it. We are good. "Well, I killed my neighbor's dog." Fine. "Well, I killed my neighbor's cat." Good job. I dropped a forty-pound sandbag two stories on one of mine one time. What color eyes did that cat have, Bob? They were blue. One blue this way and one blue that way. I put it in a sack. His name was Skipper. Remember Skipper? Peed in my car. First and last time. You know how tough cat urine is to get out of something. I had to sell that car to a cat lover. I put Skipper's remains in a paper bag. Drove down 87th Street where you got on 435 where Benjamin Stable used to be. Threw it over in the median. Did not even stop. Threw it over in the median. Barb and the kids were somewhere in Ohio where I was home by myself. Really alone after Skipper left. How rotten I am. My kids came home and they said, "Daddy, where is Skipper?" I said, "I have not seen Skipper for a week." So we are driving someplace, and we are

going down 87th Street getting on the ramp. And I just kidding to say, "I think I saw Skipper."
"Where, Daddy, where, Daddy?" I felt bad about that.

I do not care what you have done. I really do not. Whatever you have done in your life is none of my business. My business is where do you want to go from here. Never has anybody ever come to me, even if they have said something to me about me and tried to damage me. I never hold grudges. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." I understand human nature. I understand. I know why people lie. I know why I lie. Lies are an abomination in the sight of God, but a very present help in a time of trouble. I get it.

Look at the last part of [2 Corinthians 4:2]: "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." That is what the ministry is. My job as pastor is not to show you how much better I am than you. My job as pastor is to show you how worse I am than you, and if God can use me, He can use you. I have never told you I am smarter than you. Every time I have had words in my mouth, I am dumber than you. That is a true statement. You think I am smart. I am really not smart. You are much smarter than I am. All of you. You young kids. You are much smarter than I am. You see, my success lies in my stupidity. You are smarter than I am, and I am dumber than you are, but I am just dumb enough to believe that that book is everything that I need. My job as a pastor is not to tell you how much better I am than you. My job is to show you how worse I am off than you are. You know what? If God can use me and do what He has done with me, He can do it with you. You have to commend yourself to another man's conscience. You do that by truth. By allowing somebody to see, and I will tell you, you call me a liar in something. I will stay up for the next four weeks finding somebody and whoever said it to validate the truth.

I will lie. When a state highway patrol pulls me over, I will say, "You know what, yeah, well, my speedometer was off, it has been broke for a week." I will lie. Yeah, I will say to you, "You know what, yeah, I do not know where Skipper is at. Skipper is gone." I knew where Skipper was all the time. Skipper knew where Skipper was. God knew where Skipper was. God did not care. We will come down to that book in the ministry, and dealing with you, it has got to be right on the button. There is no room for error. There is no room in my life for handling the Word of God deceitfully. There is no room in my life for walking in craftiness. There is no room in my life for not doing what is right with that book. I have enough areas and my holes in my life and my character that I have to work on every day, but I can guarantee you that is not one of them. Because without integrity, you do not have anything. You have an empty shell called Christianity today. You commend yourself to a man's conscience by your integrity. You tell the truth and you stand by what you say. Look at the last part of [2 Corinthians 4:2]: "in the sight of God." God is watching what goes on. God knows who is lying and who is not, and God's job through the Word of God is to manifest through His Word the truth. I have an old saying I say, "When somebody will not tell, time will tell." Time always tells the truth.

In the Bible, the word "integrity" will always be connected with a man's heart. [Genesis 20:5-6], [Psalm 78:72], other places.

Genesis 20:5

Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

Genesis 20:6

And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Psalm 78:72

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

The verse is very clear that integrity is the number one quality that we should have as a church, as individual Christians when it comes up to any issue. My byword to you would be simply this: Never rest, never close your eyes, never rest, never stop till you get the truth. When there is no truth, there will be no integrity. Christianity is not about souls, it is not about people, it is not about programs, it is not about building, it is not about activities. Christianity is about truth. We as God's people having the integrity to always manifest it in our conscience toward others.

V. The Danger of Leaving the Battle

Then he says in [Proverbs 19:2], "Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth." I want to finish that up next week. I want to talk to you about something here. I want to show you something. I want to give you something. Just listen to me for a minute now. You do not have to even write this down. Nobody here today probably is planning on getting out of fellowship with God anytime soon. I do not think you are sitting here contemplating this morning, "Well, I am in church, but Tuesday I am going to get out of fellowship." But you know what? God's people get out of fellowship, all of us do. I want to show you the greatest guarantee that you never get out of fellowship with God. It is worth a million dollars. If you are sitting here this morning and you never want to get out of fellowship with God, never want to walk away from God, you know what God's people do. All my life and all the years I have been in the ministry, I have seen people just for whatever reason quit serving God and quit doing their own, and go do their own thing. All my life I have seen it. A lot of them were really good people, they really were. I have watched that phenomenon all my life, and I have thought about it many, many times, and one day I was reading through the Old Testament, and it just hit me.

You know that the Bible goes completely contrary to the world. In every aspect of the Bible, it is opposite the way the world thinks. Let me show you what I mean. In the world system, if you are in the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, Navy, whatever, very few men and women ever want to find themselves winding up in combat. Real combat where your life is on the line every day of your life is the most terrifying thing you could ever go through in life. You actually live one minute to the next. Those boys in World War II, some of those guys never slept in a bed for three or four months. They were tired, they were hungry, and yet they got to keep their bodies in shape and their minds on task because only one step the wrong way, you blow your legs off, or a sniper

bullet gets you. You just let down for one second. Death is tugging at your arm every day of your life, twenty-four hours a day. Fighting a war is one of the most terrible things a human being can ever subject himself to. Death will be at every corner, one of the hardest things you will ever experience.

Back in Vietnam, when the young boys would go over there, most of them did not want to be there. Most of them were in a place where they got drafted. There was a draft back then. You just got drafted for two years. You were guaranteed to go to Vietnam. They stuck those boys over there in that meat grinder. Guys over there that had been over there that survived, they learned very quickly that in combat you do not make friends. You just do not make buddies. It is hard when you have buddies and you see them die in front of you. You see them die screaming with their intestines hanging out, screaming for their mother. After a while, you get hardened to it, and you do not want any more friends. You do not want that feeling. That may have been okay for them, but it did not help the new guys coming in because they had nobody. It was a terrible time.

I remember sitting down in lectures where some guy that got there was a first sergeant that had been in Vietnam four or five tours. He talked to everybody that was getting ready to go over there. You know what he would tell us? He would say, "Look, you are going in harm's way, and some of you are going to die. Quit worrying about it. The best advice I can give you after four tours in Vietnam is this: Consider yourself already dead. Quit thinking about going home. Quit thinking about your new Camaro back there or your girlfriend. Quit forgetting about your mom and your dad. Think yourself already dead. Once you accept that, that you are already dead, it will be easier for you. Every day of your life, forget home. Forget everything. Forget going back to the real world. You are in a place now where you are already dead. Accept it." That is what they told these guys. I do not know if it worked for them all or not. I do not know. But that is what they said.

War in this life is a terrible thing. That really can benefit no man in any way. We all grew up with the old war movies that we all like, but they were all kind of protected movies. It was not until the real horror of war, in my mind, never got displayed on the screen for people to even understand it. I guess the first movie probably was Saving Private Ryan. That 29th Division coming ashore on Omaha Beach is one of the most unbelievable. I remember sitting there watching that for the first time, and I had never seen anything like that in my life ever portrayed in the movie. I thought to myself, as graphic as this is, and as true and as real as this is, I bet it is not half as terrifying as it really was when those boys went off those landing crafts. It is incredible. It was incredible. I watched The Pacific, Eugene Sledge, Robert Leckie, John Basilone, and you watch how this young man was a kid who wanted to go to war, and you watch after he went through Peleliu, wound up in Okinawa. He was left as a broken, battered shell of a man for the rest of his life, screaming in nightmares, waking up in cold sweats. War is a horrible thing. War is a terrible thing. War is something that no one should ever have to go through. Somebody said one time, "Well, war is hell." Well, war is not hell, but I would probably say that war is as close to hell on this Earth as you will ever get to.

In Vietnam, we lost over 30,000 young men. World War II, we lost over 300,000 of our young men. The chance in combat, real combat, of you getting killed is very high when you go to war.

During World War II, the B-17 crews, ten men on the B-17, they got sent home after twenty-five missions. They had to fly twenty-five missions, and they got home. The average crew never survived past six missions. I remember reading the story in Korea, 1950 to 1953. The Marines were surrounded at the Chosin Reservoir. Chinese and Koreans had surrounded them, and they had to retreat and get out of there. Freezing. Most of them had frostbite, did not have winter clothes, did not have shoes. There, they were in the rear area there when they got some of those guys back. A whole line of Marines eating their C-rations, picking them frozen with their bayonets, trying to get something out to eat. A news reporter just in from the States, wanting to captivate the picture back home, goes down that line talking to all the GIs and talking to all the Marines, saying, talking to them, trying to encourage them. There you go, there is one old G.I., and he is sitting there trying to do with his bayonet, trying to get the thing out of his can, and he says, "Well, G.I.," he says, "it is Christmas time." He says, "What would you like for Christmas? Tell the folks back home." That old boy looked up at him and said, "Tomorrow. I just like tomorrow." Have you ever been in a situation in life where your greatest desire was just to be alive tomorrow? War is terrible. It is a terrible thing. It is a terrible thing.

You know, that is not true in the Bible. One of the greatest studies in the Bible suggests just the opposite. Turn with me to [2 Samuel 11:1]. This is what I found in the Bible. If you want to keep from ever getting out of fellowship with God, if you want to ever have the guarantee of your life that nothing takes you away from God, that you stay ministering to God for the rest of your life, here it is.

2 Samuel 11:1

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

David's fatal furlough. You know where David commits two of the most grievous sins under the Old Testament structure. You know where his sin started? It started the same place your sin will start: when you get out of the battle. You see, in a worldly sense, combat is the most dangerous thing for a man or woman to be in. In the Bible sense, it is the safest place for you to be. It is stated when he got out of the battle, when he got out of the combat, and he stayed home, that is when his trouble started. The Bible says there was a time when kings went forth to war, but David tarried at Jerusalem.

You want to guarantee that you will get out of fellowship with God? You want to guarantee that no matter how you try to rationalize it, what you try to say, it will be the departure from your relationship with God? It is the day you take that furlough. My Bible says there is no discharge from this war. You do not get a day off. You do not get twenty-five missions and you get to go home. You fight and you fight and you stay in the battle and you stay in combat. It is the safest place for you to be, and when his sin started in his heart, it is the day he said, "I am out of the battle." If you are listening to me today, let me tell you something. Your issues are not a church, they are not a person, they are not a pastor. Your issues are because of any situation on Earth, none of those. Your issues started the very day you got out of combat and you started to take the

easier route. You took a fatal furlough. You went AWOL. You took a fatal furlough. But the MPs are out looking for you.

When it came to David, here is how it works, folks. David stayed home. He committed adultery and murder. Every foolproof plan together you ever saw in your life. Uriah is now dead, he is free to marry Bathsheba. He takes her in. Oh boy, what a great plan I put together. [2 Samuel 11:27] says this:

2 Samuel 11:27

And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

David says, "Man, I did good on that." Read the last part of the verse, "But the thing displeased the Lord."

I will tell you something. In this life, the most dangerous place for a young man to be in the world will be in war and combat. In Christianity, it will be the safest place you could ever be in your life. You know why? Because God has called you, [2 Timothy 2:4], to be a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:4

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier;

You know why? Because [2 Timothy 2:3], He saved you to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:3

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Because [Hebrews 2:10] says, that Jesus Christ is the captain of our salvation.

Hebrews 2:10

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

David's fatal furlough is nothing more than an illustration of our fatal furlough, what happens to us when you get out of the number one thing that God saved you for, that is combat. Being in the battle. There is no discharge from this war. You stay in it and you stay in it with the integrity that God has given you, the book God has given you, and you realize what God has called you to do.

I was eating at a restaurant here a couple months ago and bumped into a guy that I had known who was a youth pastor. When I was a youth pastor, I had not seen him for many, many years. Then he pastored a church, completely flopped in the church. I mean, he was not a pastor. I saw him and I talked with him, and I said, "Hey," I said, because I knew that he had bought some land up in Peculiar, and they were going to try to move from the building they were in because they thought it was in a bad neighborhood and try to... I was out, and I asked him. He said, "Oh,

no, no." He said, "Oh, I am in the process of retiring." He said, "I did my part." I said, "Oh, okay." I said, and I asked him. I said, "Another guy that was a great preacher." I am not giving another name, but it was a thing. I said, "How is...?" He ever hear some soul damage? He said, "Oh, he is going to be here in about fifteen minutes. We have dinner together or lunch together about once every month." And he is retired too.

Let me tell you something. This old preacher was one of the greatest preachers I ever heard in my life. He flat could preach the paint off the walls. He was incredibly a good preacher. Terrible pastor, great preacher. He retired. A number of years ago, he retired. I mean, he retired probably when he was sixty-five. When he does, he gets a little circuit where he goes around and gets his beer money from the guys he preaches for. He plays golf on the weekends and does everything he wants to do now. The mindset for these guys is simply this. These are your modern 20th, 21st century pastors. "I am sixty-five years old. I pastored the church. I have done my part. I am out." I will tell you something. God saved you to preach, and you are never out. You never get out of the ministry. I will stay in that pulpit, and I will preach the Word of God till I cannot do it anymore. If I have to do it from a wheelchair, I will do it. If I cannot speak anymore and lose my teeth, I will gum you to death with it. I do not care. God calls you into the ministry. He does not put any time frame on it. God takes you out. You cannot do it. I get it. But you know what? Most of the guys out there probably hit the peak of their ministry when they decided to get out. They spent all these thirty, forty years learning how it all works, and then suddenly because "I have done my time now, I am out." No, you have got to be just getting started.

Do not get out of the battle. The greatest guarantee you will ever have of never getting out of fellowship with God is the sting of combat in your face in the morning spiritually. Staying in the fight. You know why? Because staying in the fight will keep you sharp. Staying in the fight will keep you alert. Staying in the fight will keep you to the point where you do not let your guard down. Staying in the fight will keep you to the process that you keep on learning and growing and everything that you have to do because you have got to survive within any army and every military.

I had a friend of mine one time. He was a Navy SEAL. The purest warrior. You know who he is, Bob. Purest warrior. Bill Irwin. Bill Irwin was the purest warrior I ever saw in my life. He was a Navy SEAL. He got out. He was at least some of the police officers. He is still in the reserves, and then he went back in full time, and he was all over the Middle East. I do not know what he is doing, but he is doing it behind in the dark. Believe me. Bill was an incredible guy. Loved the Lord. Incredible guy. Bill always was looking for a war. Bill is the kind of guy that he would stand on the beach of the seashore looking out at the ocean. Somebody would think to themselves, "Wow, he is really enjoying the view." Walk up to him and say, "Hey, Bill, is not it pretty?" Bill said, "Ah, I guess it is." "Well, what are you looking at?" He says, "I am looking for a war. I am looking for a war." You know what we as God's people ought to be doing? Looking for a war. Looking for a battle. Looking for a fight. You are in it. It is all around you. You have to do it hard to assure you do. You have to, sometimes it is tough. It is not always easy, but you know what? It will make you everything that God wants you to be. You can never, never, never take the furlough that David did because the entrance to his sin and his getting away from God

started when he got out of the battle. You have to stay with it. Integrity. Integrity is the key. The integrity that you and I have to be everything God wants me to be. The integrity that you have, that truth is paramount. You may not always get it, but you are always looking for it. You can recognize when you see it.