

Proverbs 15:30-33

Sunday 4/24/2016

We are coming down to the end of Proverbs chapter 15, and chapter 15 has been a great chapter. Last week, you will remember, we looked at, I think it was five or six verses, and we gleaned a lot of key things out of there. I began to show you how there are so many good things in the book of Proverbs, hoping that you will learn in helping you put the Bible together. That is my main goal in everything that I do here: learning your Bible, helping you to learn how to divide the Bible up in such a way that you can understand it as it lays out to all the different aspects.

We know from the Bible there are three fundamental main divisions in the Bible that the Bible lays itself out. Most people never get to that level.

- Inspirational Application
- Historical Perspective
- Doctrinal Application

You will hear me talk a lot about a person getting a working knowledge of the Scriptures. What I mean by that is not just you working to learn the Bible, though we know that the Bible takes work. You have to be a workman, as the Bible says, but also getting to the place where you see and understand how the Bible will do most of the work for you. When you get to that point in your life that the Bible really does the work for you, this is what I mean when I talk about a working knowledge of the Bible. Not you just working to learn it, which you are going to have to do, but getting to that place in your life where you follow some simple rules and principles, and the Bible then begins to unlock itself to you.

In the world, working people have a cute little thing that they say. They say that we ought to work smarter and not harder. That is true, but it is never more true when it comes to learning the Bible and getting the Word of God down. In life, in the Bible, in Christianity itself, there are certain principles you follow, certain rules that you have to follow. You follow them, and in life you will be successful. You follow them when it comes to Christianity, and the Bible will unlock the Scriptures for you right before your very eyes. It will be everything that you could ever want from it. When you do not follow them, and most people do not, not only in life but when it comes to the Bible, then you will find a life of disappointment in all your purposes. We talked about it a couple of weeks ago in Proverbs 15:22, where the purposes were defeated. As the Bible said a couple of weeks ago in Proverbs 15:21, you will wind up with a destitute life, nothing really working for you.

Today, we want to look at our last set of verses in this chapter, and we will close out Proverbs chapter 15 today. As I said, it has been a good chapter, and hopefully we have learned a lot from our study in this chapter. One of the good things about Proverbs is that it does not matter where you come in. It does not matter if somebody shows up as a visitor today and says, "Oh man, they are in Proverbs chapter 15. No, I am not going to be..." No, no. Every sermon, every lesson in

Proverbs will not only be a continuance of what we are studying, but you will see that it is a study unto itself. It will give you exactly what you need.

I want to begin reading in Proverbs chapter 15, verse 30, and we will read it down through 33. It says this:

Proverbs 15:30-33

The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

I. The Light of the Eyes and Spiritual Vision

Proverbs 15:30 says, "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat." The light of the eyes rejoices the heart. In the Bible, the light in a man's eyes will reflect his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear that that spiritual light that shines in his soul and through his spirit is all based on his attitude of heart toward the Lord. Our eyes are the windows of our soul and our spirit and represent the life that we have. In fact, when a person dies or they think that he is dead, one of the ways that they will tell and make sure is to look into the eyes because the eyes are the windows of the soul. When a man is dead and the soul is gone, the eyes reflect that. In the Bible, eyes are a great study in the Word of God.

We know that in life there are basically two kinds of people, and I realize that people come into all categories, but you bring people down into two fundamental categories that we know in the Bible. We know that we have saved people and we have lost people. As a general rule, they will represent the two ways that man looks at things, the eyes as we find them in the Bible. You will either look at things through the eyes of God and you will see things the way the Lord wants you to see them, or you will look through the eyes of the world. That may be your education. It may even be your religion. You have a lot of people who are far, far from the Bible truth that are in religion. When you talk to those people, you will find that they claim that they believe in God. They claim to believe the Bible. They claim they are in churches. They claim that they are a religious group that claims to have, but you talk with them and you will see that they are far from what the Bible says that they should be. They are looking at it through the eyes of the seminary where they went, the people that taught them. We look at things based on the way we have been taught.

We either look at things as a saved person through the eyes of God, or we look at things as an unsaved person through the eyes of the world. The eyes of the world will look at sin. It will look at ungodliness. It will look at rejecting God and all of the things of God as an okay thing. You see it in the world all the time where once sin was counted as sin and it was wrong. Now it is accepted today. It is the way people look at things through the eyes. We talked about a couple of

weeks ago in Proverbs 15:20 how an unsaved man, and unfortunately many Christians, take their folly and, being blinded by the things of the world, think their actual folly, the sin they are in, is really their joy.

I remember teaching you on a number of occasions, especially in the people ministry, about dealing with people. I remember a great passage that I used many, many times back in 2 Kings chapter 4. You have the story of Elisha. Elisha took over after Elijah was taken up into heaven, and he takes over the ministry and carries it through. In the story there, we have a boy who just went out to do something one day and he died. His mother sent for Elisha, who was the man of God. You remember the story: Elisha came in and the boy is dead. There is a strange process that invokes here to bring that boy back to life. The Bible says that Elisha crawled on top of that kid, and put his eyes to his eyes, and put his mouth to his mouth, and put his hands on that boy's hand. When we step back and look at that for a moment, we think to ourselves, I know I did many, many years before I really understood the Scriptures, I thought to myself, "I am not sure what this is all about here or how this is really going to help." But sure enough, when he did that and he stretched himself on that boy and put his eyes to his eyes and his mouth to his mouth and his hand to his hand, the Bible says the boy came back to life.

Years later, as I looked at that and learned some things about the Bible, I have taught you that that is one of the greatest places in the Bible that really helps you understand how we win people to Christ. All of us, hopefully most of us, want to be used of God to touch other people's lives. But you just cannot work your way in. Many Christians make the mistake of just trying to knock down the door, so to speak, of making things happen in a person's life. 2 Kings chapter 4 shows you a process. I have taught it to you many, many times. This boy who was dead is a picture of an unsaved person. The Bible says that a man or a woman who is unsaved is dead in trespasses of sin. The man of God gave them life, but he gave him life by putting his eyes to their eyes, his mouth to their mouth, and his hand to their hands.

I have told you many, many times the key to reaching people, even as a Christian, is to understand why men and women, unsaved, do the things that they do, hand to hand. Why they say the things that they say, so he puts his mouth to his mouth, and how they look at things and see the things the way they are, eye to eye. Some of God's people are so caught up in what they believe about God, which is fine, they are so narrow-minded in their understanding of the things of the Word of God, that there is no tolerance for unsaved people to be unsaved people. We expect them to become Christian before we will deal with them. Of course, that is not the way it works. When you deal with people, when you reach people, it comes because you have made the investment in their life of understanding why an unsaved man says the things that he says. Why they do the things that they do, and through the eyes to the eyes how they see things the way that they do.

There are only two ways that people look at things. They will either look at things through the eyes of God or they will look at things through the eyes of the world. The eyes of a saved man should look at the same thing that an unsaved man sees, but he sees it through the understanding and the spiritual discernment that he has, and therefore he rejects those things that are not what God wants him to be. He sees them because he has understanding, as the Bible says in the book

of Ecclesiastes, as vanity, where an unsaved man will look at an opportunity and try to take that opportunity to better himself, no matter what it may be. A saved man will look at the same opportunity and realize that it is a dead end street and is not going anywhere. What gets us as Christians in trouble one hundred percent of the time will be when we as God's people quit looking at things from God's standpoint and then begin to look at them from the world's standpoint.

The Christian life, and I have told you all through this chapter, is not very complicated. I have told you that and preached to you and taught you and really harped on it to you over and over again the great concept of Isaiah 55:8-9, that the Bible says that God's ways are not our ways, that His thoughts are not our thoughts, and that the responsibility of every Christian is to get to the place in your life, and nobody expects you to be there if you just got saved, or even if you have been saved and going through discipleship and discipleship two, nobody expects you to be there that quickly. But at some point in your life, you work toward a goal that you see everything in your life from God's standpoint. You see it through the eyes of the Lord. Eyes are really important in the Bible, and until you do that, nothing in life or the Bible will really work for you. You have to get to that point in your life. Most of God's people will never do that.

We use a phrase in conversation. We say, "We are talking to somebody," and I will say that you will lay something out to me and I will say, "Oh, I see." But when I say, "I see," I am not looking at anything. You are talking to me. We use the phrase, "Wow, I never looked at it that way." And yet I have never stopped and looked at what you are talking about. You see, the phrase "I see" means more than just with your eyes. It means to comprehend it. "Oh, I understand it. I get it." We will say, "Well, we just do not see eye to eye on this issue." That is not a reference of your physical eyes, but rather your ability to grasp and understand a situation with somebody else, and you do not agree on it. So you simply say, "We do not see eye to eye," when it has nothing to do with your physical eyes. Most of God's people have that basic problem. They do not see eye to eye with God.

The book of Song of Solomon, without a doubt, is one of the greatest books in the Bible that talks about what my relationship should be with Christ. It also details out how He thinks and looks at me. In Song of Solomon 5:12, it is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, and it talks about Him when it gets down to His eyes. It says that He has the eyes of a dove, dove's eyes. But then when you go to Song of Solomon 4:1, just one chapter back, when it is talking about the bride, the Christian, you and me, it also says that we have dove's eyes. I looked at that years ago where one verse says that Christ had the eyes of the dove and then the other verse says that we have eyes of the dove, and to me it became so clear that we are to see things just like God sees them.

A great passage that illustrates this is found in Matthew chapter 6, verses 19 through 23. Let me read it for you.

Matthew 6:19-23

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

What an incredible passage. Verse 22 says first of all that the light of the body is the eye. What you look at will affect everything in your life. It will affect your attitude of heart. It will affect your love for something. It is the lust of the flesh. It comes down to the point where it is the lust of the eyes. Everything that you are will be based on what you look at. Verses 19 through 21 say that what you look at will be based on the treasure of your heart. When you love the things of God and the things of God are your treasure, then you will look on those things. When you love the things of the world, then you will look on those things. Not complicated.

Verse 22 says that if your eye be single and full of light, your whole body will be full of light. It says if your eye be single. That means simply focused on the things of God. You are not looking all around. You are singly focused on the things of God. It says that your whole body will be full of light. But verse 23 says, "But if thine eye be full of darkness, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." It comes down to what we look at. What we look at forms the imagination and forms the thoughts. What we allow to come into our spirit will affect everything about us.

Now look at the last part of verse 23. I think this is pretty telling here. It says, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Wow. A light that is a darkness. A light that has no light. A light of darkness. At Halloween time, one of the favorite lights that they use in displays to try to fool people is a black light. If you have ever been around a black light, a black light takes the edge off of what you really see. A black light will not allow what is really there to be seen the way that it is. It kind of masks it. They put them in bars all over the place when you go to bars, and that is so that the women will look better and the guys will look better. It is a thing where a black light will mask the true identity of something. Here is a case where the Bible says that there is a darkness that is a light that is in somebody. Of course, that is a reference to Satan. That is false religion. That is the man's folly in him thinking that it is his joy. It is the fact that Satan blinds you with a false light. The Bible says there is no marvel that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, but he is not an angel of true light. He is a black light. Whatever light is in you, in your eye, will be what fills your body.

II. A Good Report and the Health of the Bones

Now look at Proverbs 15:30 here: "And a good report maketh the bones fat." A good report will be the answer from the Lord in any issue that is right and it is good, and it is basically God's viewpoint on it. We know that we have a physical health and also a spiritual health, a well-being. That is because we have a physical body and a spiritual body. A bad spiritual health in time will

lead to a bad physical health. This is called psychosomatic in the professional world. You find that in Mark 2:5, you find it over there in Numbers 5:27, and you find it in John 9:1-2.

Sin can cause many physical issues. The Bible calls it the destruction of the flesh in 1 Corinthians 5:5 because a person committed a spiritual sin. Over there in 1 Corinthians 11:29, the Bible says when somebody comes to take the Lord's Supper and he takes it unworthily, that it says that some of these people, "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." The sin that they did of coming to the Lord's Supper had a physical impact in their life. Sin, when it becomes in your life out of control, unconfessed, will lead to conviction. Conviction will lead you to guilt. The guilt will lead you to worry. The worry will lead you to stress. The stress will lead you to anxiety. The anxiety will lead you to depression, and from there it goes to the fact that once you get to that point, you do not sleep the way you should or you sleep very little. You do not eat the way you should or you stop eating. It affects then your job, it affects then your family, it affects then your marriage, and the sum total of man's physical issues will go back to where he is out in his relationship with God. Your spiritual well-being and your physical well-being.

Proverbs 17:22 is a great verse that shows you the Word of God is likened to a medicine. It says, "A merry heart doeth good like medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." It says a merry heart does good like medicine. Back in Jeremiah 8, Jeremiah 46, and Jeremiah 51, it talks about the balm of Gilead. Now the balm of Gilead was a plant that grew in Gilead that had medical properties to it, that if somebody got it and applied it to whatever they were struggling with, it had a healing agent to it. But in the Bible, you find that God uses the balm of Gilead in relationship to Israel's spiritual issues, and here He is talking about a physical medicine that He says that Israel needs to get themselves right with God. Of course, in the context, the balm of Gilead is a picture of the Word of God. It is the medicine of Proverbs 17:22, and that is a reference to your spiritual body that in time will affect your physical one.

We know that as a Christian today, our spiritual body grows. We know that it matures. We also know from places like the book of Hebrews that it needs to have exercise. Your spiritual body goes through things and changes just like your physical body does. There was a time when you were a baby. Now you are an adult, and there was a time in your spiritual life that you were a baby. Now many of you have entered into the maturity level of your Christianity. In fact, we have talked about it many, many times. There are seven stages of spiritual growth found in the Bible that brings a Christian in a spiritual sense from a baby Christian to someone who reaches the apex of where he should be.

The Bible talks about:

1. Babies in 1 Corinthians 3:1.
2. Little children in 1 John 2:1. They are not babies anymore, but they are still little children. That would be maybe three or four or five years old in a physical sense.
3. Children in Galatians 3:26 and 2 Corinthians 6:13.
4. Young men in 1 John 2:13. You are growing up spiritually.

5. Fathers in 1 John 2:15. Now this is interesting because in physical life, when a man becomes a father, his life changes because up to this point he could do whatever he wanted to do, go wherever he wanted to go. But once he gets married, that kind of carouses a little bit, but I will tell you something, once you have a child, it really carouses it. Now the child dictates where and when you go where you go, and that is just the way that it is. But now when you become a father, it brings it down to now you take tremendous responsibility. You are not your own anymore. Now you have a wife. Now you have a child, in many cases more than one. That demands a tremendous responsibility in a physical sense. But when you look at the same concept in a spiritual sense, it does the same thing. When you get to the point as a Christian that you enter into the father mode, that means that you have grown to the place now where you are taking responsibility for somebody else. You are now not just free to do whatever you want to do. You are discipling somebody. You are working with somebody. You are helping somebody here. You are going down here or over here, and you are laying out the scriptures, and now you have come to the place where you are responsible for somebody.
6. An elder. The Bible is very clear in elders in 1 Peter 5:1. They are the people in the church that help the pastor. They take on the same responsibility that he does in dealing with people.
7. The aged in Titus 1:9. That is someone who has been around such a long time and knows the Bible and has been through the experiences of life that people look to because they want to learn.

Many times the spiritual growth process in people's lives gets delayed. It does not always go the way that it should. That is true in a physical life too. There will be young kids that will not grow properly. There will be people who are adults. They are thirty, forty years old, but they are still small. They are midgets, so to speak. Something went abnormal in their growth process, and they did not develop the way that they should. There is an enormous there that everything did not go exactly genetically the way that it should have went. But you see that in a spiritual sense too.

Let me tell you something. There are many, many spiritual midgets walking around Christianity. You walk into every church. A healthy church will have a nursery physically and spiritually. A healthy church physically will have young couples like we have that just keep having kids. Your church grows just by that rate right there. But also spiritually, your church should have a lot of babies in it, people who just got saved. You walk back in the nursery back there and open that first door, and you will see babies in cribs. They are changing diapers. They are giving them bottles, and some of the kids, they bring them in here that just had them. Zach just had his little girl in here. Sometimes bring your little guy in, and they are very cute, very adorable, and you will watch them, and we love them and all those things. Everybody loves a baby. Everybody loves to hold the baby. The first thing you do when you go to the hospital and the parents just had a baby is, "Can I hold them?" You want to hold them. I never hold them. I mean, you do not want me to hold them, okay? But women love to hold them, and they are walking around holding them, and then they all get the idea like Jamie does after she holds the baby, she wants to have another one until we talk her out of it.

But it would be weird if you walked into a church at eight or nine grown men and women in their thirties and forties laying in a baby crib back here. Big hairy legs hanging out. Sucking on a

bottle. Put them little bonnets on. You go up and you want to talk to them, and they just cry. Drop the bottle on the floor. If you do not pick it up right now, they whine and cry. I mean, just crazy. You would know that there was something wrong. That is abnormal. I want to tell you something. There has to come a time in your life, in my life, where we have to grow up. That process of spiritual growth. You cannot stay a spiritual baby all your life. You are whining. You are dirty in your own diapers. You are throwing your bottle on the floor. You are having temper tantrums because you do not get your own way at forty years old, thirty, twenty. You see, there are some issues. Baby Christians are okay. Every church should have a spiritual nursery, but you need to grow up. Many do not.

This is the point that he is talking about here. Your physical relationship, your physical growth, will be in conjunction with your spiritual. We saw this earlier in Proverbs 12:9 where he says a rottenness in our bones. He is talking about your spiritual bones there. Now the context of that is the wrong woman in your life. Or in a practical way, it could be a wrong man in your life too. In a spiritual sense, your bones, your skeleton structure, represent the structure of your spiritual relationship with God. In this case, the rottenness of the bones, in this case a woman, weakens the spiritual structure in a man's life. It can work in any format. It does not have to be a woman. There will be other things in your life that will weaken the structure of your body that you ought to keep as strong as you can. We saw in Proverbs 3:8, when you depart from evil, the Bible says it "shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." The need for a strong spiritual structure in our Christian life, our skeleton structure. Your physical skeleton holds everything together and holds everything up. In your spiritual skeleton, your spiritual structure, the bones, when it gets a rottenness in them because of sin, just like your physical bones when it gets a rottenness in there because of disease.

In Ezekiel chapter 37, one of the greatest chapters in the Bible on the resurrection of the nation of Israel, it is the chapter that talks about the valley of dry bones. It is a reference to Israel being dead now for hundreds and hundreds of years, nothing but bones. Those bones being strewn all through the land. It is a representation of Israel's spiritual condition. But God begins to bring that nation back. In that chapter, you actually see the pulling together and the meat going on the bones, the flesh coming to it. Then Israel as a nation stands up and gets the breath of life from God and becomes alive again. But do you know where it starts? It starts with the bone structure. We sing the song about it: "Them bones, them bones, them dry bones, them bones, them bones, them dry bones, them bones, them bones, them dry bone. Now hear the word of the Lord." It is your structure, your skeleton structure that holds you together. When God wants to put together the nation of Israel, He starts with a structure because He has to build everything in that nation on a skeleton structure. When God wants to build you spiritually, you have to have a strong structure in your life. A strong spiritual body by seeing life from God's standpoint, not your own anymore, and departing from evil.

I do not normally stick my nose into people's business. I really do not. If somebody asks me and I do not know, I do not give advice to people who do not ask for advice. I do not think that is my place. But if I might for a moment, could I give you some really good practical advice in the art of finding a spouse? You already got one. What is wrong with him, Court? For the sake of

getting Will off the hot seat over here, would you like a bit of advice about how to find a spouse? Thank you. This is simple, but it is very powerful in its point. My first suggestion to you is, do not marry somebody who has AIDS. Do not marry someone who is HIV positive. But at the same time, in a spiritual sense, do not marry somebody that is NIV positive either.

I have probably three hundred or four hundred VCR tapes that I made over the years of war movies that I saw off TV. I was watching one the other night, and I love, now I watch them for the commercials because the commercials go back to the seventies and the eighties. I broke on the commercial, and it was Ronald Reagan speaking. How long has it been since Ronald Reagan has been the President of the United States? Years. I have to laugh at how things change. On one of the commercials in there, this guy comes up and he says, "Do you want to lose weight? I got the great weight program for you that will curb your appetite. Get AIDS." And he holds up a little tube of pills called AIDS. AIDS to help you lose weight. Now that was back in Reagan's era in 1986, 1987, 1988. Wow, how things have changed. He said, "You want to lose weight, get AIDS." But it is true today if you want to lose weight.

Now the reason why I say, "Do not marry somebody," and I thought probably some of you think this is cruel, but it is not; I am making a point here. The reason why I tell you not to marry, my advice to you is not to marry somebody with AIDS, and do not, it is the fact that do not join yourself in a physical sense, your body, to someone who has through the filthiness of the flesh and their lifestyle of the world now contracted that dreaded disease. Now the reason I tell you not to do that is very simple, because if you do, in time you will get it too. It is just that simple. They will pass it on to you. You may think, "Well, I will not." Let me tell you something, I guarantee you, you will.

I said that to say this: forget about the physical thing now; that was just to get you to hear. In a spiritual sense, in finding a mate or finding a spouse, do not marry or join your body to a man or a woman who has a disease-ridden spiritual body. That is my point. Do not join your flesh to someone in a spiritual sense, that is a husband or wife, who is not healthy, clean, strong, mature, and in the spirit of God. When you find that, join yourself to them, because if you join yourself to someone who is in a disease-ridden spiritual body, just like the physical, you will get what they got in time, and you too will die spiritually. You find someone who is healthy spiritually, clean spiritually, strong, a spiritual leader spiritually, mature, a spiritual body, and then you join yourself to them, and you do it through a biblical process which is laid out in Genesis 24, 1 Corinthians 7, a number of places in the Bible. You do not go to christiansinglehowannamingle.com or eharmony.com or the newest one ibumate.com. You see it as God sees it. You understand it, and there is a process in the Bible. There are rules that you follow, and when you follow the rules and everything, you are okay. When you do not, then you get into problems.

III. Embracing Instruction and Reproof

Now look at Proverbs 15:31: "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise." I love the term, "the reproof of life." What a great term. Let me ask you a question. How well do you take reproof in your life when you are faced with areas that are not right? Last week I told

you that you can measure the measure of a man's relationship with God on his ability to handle things when they do not go well or he does not get what he wants, but I will give you another one to that. You can measure a person and their spiritual relationship with God by how well they handle reproof.

Everybody likes instructions, and there will be some people in life, saved and lost, who just have to have everything in life their way. They are spoiled beyond recognition. It is all about them. It is all about self. They will throw the little temper tantrums when they do not get it. They are like a three-year-old child when he does not get what he wants. They will love you right up to the point that you have to deal with them on some issue, and then you are the bad guy. I have seen parents the same way. I have seen parents have kids. The kids were just about great kids right up to the point that you had to correct them on something. Then watch what happens, and I will tell you, in my forty-plus years of the ministry, they are everywhere.

When I buy dog food for my three dogs, I always get them these bones that have the stuff on the inside. I do not know what it is, peanut butter, whatever, because it keeps them occupied for hours. I have Izzy downstairs most of the time. I have Buddy and I have Daisy, so I have three of them down there. So I will get four bones. Otis is upstairs. I know what she is saying over here. We have four dogs. I get that. I am making a point about the three that I deal with. I do not deal with Odie. Odie deals with himself. He is too busy going to the bathroom and everything upstairs. I have three dogs downstairs, but I have to buy four bones. I took a picture of it one time. It is the cutest thing in the world. It reminds me of so many of God's people. Buddy, the big male, he has to have all the bones. It is not enough that she has hers, she has hers, and you have his. He has his. No, no. He goes, and I bought an extra one figuring that that would make him happy. But when you are immature, nothing makes you happy except having everything that you want to have when you want it. The cutest picture I got of him is standing over in a corner, sitting down, all four bones in his mouth. They are sticking out everywhere. They are this long. He has got two behind each other, one on top of it, and a fourth one coming down from here. He cannot eat them. He cannot chew them. He cannot do anything with them. But all he wants is the fact that I got them all. There are a lot of people like that in life. They have everything, and they cannot use half of what they got, but they just want it all. The other two dogs drive me nuts. They are standing there barking and barking and barking and barking, and he will sit there all day long, and he is satisfied because he has got all the bones. He cannot chew them. He cannot eat them. He cannot even bear them. He cannot even walk without one falling out of his mouth. Boy, I have seen a lot of people in life that same way. They get everything they got and want everything they got. If they do not get it the way they want it, they go crazy. What they do after they get it, they just sit in a corner and just take satisfaction in what I got. I got everything I could ever want. My goal in life is to stay as far away from that kind of drama world as I can.

A man or woman who has the spiritual insight to see the value of reproof, as much as the value of blessings, the Bible says it is a category all by themselves. Proverbs 15:31 says that they "abideth among the wise." That is elite company. Most of God's people will never see that level of Christianity. On a point scale from one to seven, that would be where father, elder, aged. But they never get there.

Now along with Proverbs 15:31, look at Proverbs 15:32: "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." Now Proverbs 15:32 takes us up a level from Proverbs 15:31, if you are paying attention. Note the word "soul" here used in the Old Testament context, like I have told you a couple of weeks ago, for the body. They are used interchangeably because we know they are stuck together. What he is saying here is that in time your rejection of instruction and reproof will destroy your body, destruction of the flesh.

When you go to school, no man, and anything in life, no man can learn to read or to write or to do math or to learn science without both instruction and reproof. You have to have them both. Most people do not like it, but you have to have it. In Christianity, no man can learn the things of God without both instruction and reproof. In Proverbs 15:32, both words are used in the same verse. I have the greatest respect for school teachers. Great people out there do great, marvelous things, and they get a lot of notoriety, but the bottom line is, it all goes back to when they were kids. Someone taught them and trained them in a school system. School teachers are the great unsung heroes of life, in my estimation. They do not take the job because they make a lot of money, because they do not. They should, but they do not. They take the job because they love to teach. They love to teach others and instruct them. It is a great, noble profession. All of us have been to school, and you know that you learn what you know today through two core ingredients that were infused in you in school. One was instruction, and the other one was reproof. You cannot have one without the other and learn.

Now we will take it when it comes to the things of schoolwork in most cases, but never when it comes to the things of God. Uh-uh. When I do not get the guy I want, when I do not get the girl I want, when I do not get what I want in my life, when I do not get this, when I do not get that, we fall apart. Look at the last part of the verse: "But he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." As I said, Proverbs 15:32 will take us up a next level from Proverbs 15:31. What he is saying here is throughout the passage he keeps using the word "heareth," meaning not merely to hear, but paying specific attention to what you hear. I love the places in the Bible where it says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." In every case when you find that, there is something really special going on that he wants to draw your attention to.

Any instruction, and this is so true, any instruction that you and I may get that lacks the negative element of reproof will not be real instruction. To get understanding, you must have a contrast, a negative and a positive element to see the real issue to understand it. Illustrate the positive by the negative. You will never fully understand the concept of light, which is positive, until you have darkness, that is the negative. Accepting both in your life is the key to getting to the goal, the prize of Christianity, and that is understanding all things through instruction and reproof. In the army, in the Marine Corps, in the Navy, in the Air Force, you have what they call basic training. Basic training is eight weeks, ten weeks, or eleven weeks, whatever it is now, and it is two fundamental things: instructions and reproof. You cannot get instruction without reproof, and when you have instruction and there is no reproof, you do not have any instruction. The Christian life is about coming to the end of self. The Christian life is about being submissive. You being in subjection to the Word of God and the structure that God has placed you in in the New Testament

local church. God uses the instruction and reproof found in the Word of God over and over again in the Bible to get you to a place where you can see things clearly.

IV. Humility, Wisdom, and the Pastor's Heart

Now look at the next verse here, Proverbs 15:33: "The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility." This goes along with the last verse. It is a great verse. Fundamentally, it is saying before you get any honor with the judgment seat of Christ, there must be a life of serving God through humility. That is the fundamental principle on it, but let us look a little deeper. Honor only comes through instruction and reproof. We all must humble ourselves to accept instruction and reproof. Some people have a tough time accepting instruction. You cannot tell them anything. A lot of people, if not most people, have a hard time accepting reproof. For all of us, we have to equally embrace both because without the reproof, there is no real instruction. For all of us, we are here to learn from the Bible.

In my own life, I have found in the pursuit of understanding three key things that I always try to keep before myself, and I learned this over forty-some years ago. You put these three areas in your life as the focus and the form of structure in learning, and you are going to get it. You simply will. In learning from God through the New Testament local church, our attitude of heart should be about three things. Wherever I go, whatever I look at, whatever I am encountered with, whatever I have to deal with, honestly, sincerely, I try to put these three key areas of learning in my life. It is like the Lord said to me one time, "Bob, if you really want instruction and understanding and you want to figure the thing out, ask me three things."

8. Lord, show me what I need to do. Instruct me. Teach me. Give me the truth. My job as a pastor is to work hard all week to come to you and give you the best rendition of the Bible and its truth that I can. Your job is to work all week to keep your heart right in the right place so you can receive it and then do something with it and apply it.

1 Corinthians 2:16

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

God has instructions for you and for me. We have the mind of Christ. The Word of God, its principles, are the instructions of the Lord given through His mind, the Word of God. So the first thing I always ask the Lord in my own life is, "Lord, show me what You want me to do. I will do whatever You want me to do, but You need to show me what You want me to do." If you can keep that first thing in your mind in everything that you deal with, you are going to get there. But there are two more.

9. Lord, show me what I need to do, but show me what I need to change. Reprove me where and when I need it. Life is a constant reforming and changing in all that we do. As you grow, as you grow spiritually, you are going to see things differently. I have told you before that people come in with issues, they come in with problems, and I never blame them for where they are at. I never castigate them for what they have done or what they are dealing with. My

job is to try to help them. But I always tell them this, "Look, there are some things that you have to change. It is not enough for me just to show you what you need to do. You need to understand that there are some things that you need to change because you cannot solve the problems you have with the same kind of thinking that caused the problems you have."

Sometimes this is true of all of us. We do not want to admit we have issues. We do not want to admit there are things we have to change. The spiritual life and growth is like looking at the moon through a telescope. You walk out and the moon is bright and full, and you say, "Wow, man, that looks so good. It looks beautiful." Somebody across the street has a telescope, and you say, "Hey, can I have a look?" And they say, "Yeah, come on over," and you look through that telescope, and he has got about twenty or thirty power, brings it thirty times closer. You go, "Whoa, wow, man, that looks totally different. I can see much more than I did when I just looked at it with my naked eye." And he says, "Oh, that is nothing. Watch this." He puts it in an eyepiece and brings it up a hundred times. "Whoa, man." He says, "Oh, that is nothing. Watch this." He cranks it up to two hundred, three hundred power, three hundred times closer. You can look down in the craters. What looked like a serene, pretty place that glowed with a naked eye, when you put the magnification on it, looks like a junkyard. Busted craters, busted holes, busted rocks, strewn everywhere, and that is just the way your life goes. You see, when you just look at your life through your natural eye, you look pretty good, do you not? We all do, but boy, when you start to get the magnification of the Word of God in your life through your spiritual growth, do you know what it does? It does the same thing a telescope does with the moon. It begins to show you the cracks, the crevices, the imperfections, and sometimes you are looking right down inside those craters of life to see what is in there. People sometimes do not like that. You do not like that. You will have some people who will point your problems out to you to try to keep you down, to try to hurt you. Then you will find other people who will try to take those same issues, and they will try to help you, and let me just say, the person who tries to take the Word of God to help you will be one of your best friends in life.

10. Lord, show me the right way to look at things. Help me get Your perspective. Help me to learn biblical principles. Help me to let this mind be in me which was also in You. I understand, God, that You never violate Your own principles, so we have an unchanging rock, an anchor to hold on to. My job is to instruct you and to reprove you in all areas that need to change to get you where you need to be.

Did you ever look at the word "reprove"? The word "reprove" is an incredible word. It is to reprove something. Take the word "re." Take the word "prove." "Re" means again, "prove" means you are going to prove something. Reprove simply means that somebody is getting you to rethink your position and to prove to you in a Christian way that a life with God and following Him, prove it to you, is better than a life following the things of the world.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

You and I as Christians, we have something to prove to the world that is lost. Do you understand that? For you and I to get there, we have to reprove some things in our own lives, some things we have to change. You put all three of those areas in your life and be accountable to them, and you will get where God wants you to be. You will get the understanding that God wants you to have, and you will be invaluable to God. You will be invaluable to this work of God. You will be invaluable to me and the ministry, and you will be invaluable to others.

Do not take what I am about to say the wrong way. In most cases, outside maybe your husband and wife, in one sense, I am probably the best friend that you will ever have, and I will tell you why. The reason I say that is because I have, nor never will have, an ulterior motive to anything that I do for you. I personally want nothing from you. I have no hidden agenda with you. We do not have rich people in our church, but I have seen many, many churches, and you all have too, where if somebody has a lot of bucks, the pastor shows him all this, and if you have nothing, you get nothing from the pastor. He does not even know you are alive. It would not matter if a hundred-million-dollar billionaire came to this church; he would get treated just like everybody else. Do you know why? Because at the end of the day, it is not about whether you are rich or you are poor or middle class; you are all the same. I am no better than you are. We are all in the same trench together. We all eat the same mud. We all share the same foxholes. We all do the same work. I have no hidden agenda with you. Everything I do is for one reason. Everything I do for you is for one reason: it is to make you better. Sometimes you do not appreciate it. Sometimes you do not want it. I get it. I understand, but there will never be a day in my life looking at my people that God has given me that the number one goal for you that I have behind everything I do is that you will be better. You will be better.

I follow the principles and the models of the Bible in everything I do to the best of my ability. I never try to make a move in life without a biblical principle behind it that justifies what I am doing biblically in my own heart, my own mind. As far as I know, this church is the way that God intended a church to be after the model of the book of Acts and down through church history, but I spent the majority of my adult life going through as far as I can see in the New Testament. I want this church to be an absolute safe haven for every man and every woman and every child.

I have told you many, many times my model of a church in the Old Testament is in 1 Samuel 22:1-2, the cave of Adullam. David is running from Saul. David is way out, and he is struggling with his own issues, and he finds a cave that belongs to Adullam, and he takes up residency inside that cave, and the word spread that David was down in that cave. The Bible says that all of the people that were distressed, all the people that were hurting, all the people that were struggling, all the people that were in debt, all the people that had infirmities came down to be part of that because they knew that with David there was a haven of safety.

I know many of you have been beat up by churches. I know many of you have got the short end of the stick in Christianity from some pastors, from churches, and some Christians in general,

and I want to tell you that I am truly sorry for that. I am embarrassed for that, that my profession of being a minister, and I know I cannot speak for everybody, but it is a profession that churches get and pastors get, like all preachers, all they care about is money, and all big churches just want to get everything they can from the people. That sickens me because that should not be the goal of a pastor in a church. The goal of a pastor in a church should be one solitary concept, and that is to help you be better. I am sorry for that, and I know that many of you have been beat up, you have been hurt by other churches, you have been lied about in other churches, there were ulterior motives in those churches, you threatened somebody in those churches, you were made to be the bad guy in those churches, and I understand that because you did not get what you needed to get the way that you should have had it. It had an effect on you.

All I can tell you is this: welcome to the cave of Adullam. Nobody will hurt you here. Nobody will ever hurt you again. You may hurt yourself, but no one here will ever hurt you. No one here will ever take advantage of you. No one here will ever have an ulterior motive of being your friend or saying they love you when they want something else from you. I have one goal for you in everything we do, and that is to make you the very best you can be for God.

Trouble comes in churches when a pastor wants that for his people, but the people do not want that from the pastor, and I get that and I understand that. Every sermon I prepare and every Bible study I teach, the endless hours of one-on-one, the people ministry, the singles ministry, the athletic ministry, everything that we do, we have one thing in mind, I have one thing in mind, and that is to try to make you better. But you need to understand that real growth and learning and spiritual maturity will have to have with it not just instruction but reproof, and without it, we have nothing of any value. You will never become the man or the woman that God wants you to be if I only tell you what you want to hear. You will never grow and never be stretched and never be exercised if there are no challenges in your life that you have to meet every day. If we go through life and I just blow smoke in your ear and I tell you how great you are, and you are, and I love you very much, but the bottom line is this, everybody has change in their lives. Your job, my job, is to continue to put in the eyepieces of the telescope of the Word of God to keep looking at the imperfections and then working on them.

I have no ulterior motive when I preach. I have nobody in mind when I say what I say. I have had people call me up and say, "Well, so-and-so must have told you about my problem because you preached right on it." I guarantee you nobody did, and if somebody did, I would not make it the core value of my message. You give yourself too much credit, but I am not responsible for what the Holy Spirit of God does. If you have an issue in your life, I do not care what it is. I could preach "Mary Had a Little Lamb," and the Holy Spirit of God would get to you, and that is a good sermon because Mary did have a little lamb, and its fleece was white as snow. You will never become what God wants you to be as long as somebody keeps telling you what you want to hear. I have known preachers that would tell people what they want to hear just so they would stay and they would not leave, or so I can get something from you.

Let me tell you something, my dear people, growth is change, and we as human beings, we just do not like to change. We do not like it in our job when you have done the same job for twenty years and suddenly they put you in another place that you have never done it before. You do not

like that. I do not like that. But growth is change, and change requires instructions, and change requires reproof, reproving something to you, giving you the reproof that a life with God is a lot better than a life where you are at. That your viewpoint, the way you look at things, needs a reproving because to reprove that the way to look at things is God's way. Reproving to you that a life with God is better than a life in the world. The Bible says a light in your eyes that makes your heart rejoice and your bones fat, making you spiritually strong in everything that you do, having people look at you and you look at them. You see them the way God sees them, and they see you through the eyes of someone who looks like Christ.

Years ago, Mel told a story of a little girl that was in his youth group, and she really was a witness at school. She really loved the Lord, loved the Bible, just a sweetheart little girl. She went into the restroom one day on a break at school, and four or five of the other girls were in there. She always carried her Bible. She always had a great testimony, and the girls, as girls can be, turned around and looked at her and said, "Good morning, Jesus. How is Jesus today? Well, Jesus, that is a nice dress. Jesus, I see you brought your Bible today," and just went on and on and on and on. They went on their way, she went on her way. Mel told a story that she was talking to him about something else, and she said, "You know what? That was the greatest thing that anybody ever said to me, that they would see me and think I was Jesus."

What does the world think when they see you and me? The light of the eye is what shines deep down inside us that the world sees. The structure, the bones, being fat, your spirits, the structure being strong, that wherever you go, walk into a place that people know there is something different about you. That is the key. My goal for you is just that. Never think for a moment that anything I do is not about trying to help you be better in everything you do for the Lord. Proverbs chapter 15 has been a great chapter. Next week, we will move into Proverbs chapter 16. Let us pray. Father.