

Proverbs 16:1-3

Sunday 5/1/2016

SEC: Introduction to Proverbs 16:1-3

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, today, as you know, we are in the book of Proverbs, have been for quite a while. Today we are going to move into Proverbs chapter 16. We finished 15 last week, and today we are going to move into chapter 16 of the book of Proverbs. I think that probably you are going to see that this is one of those key chapters in the Bible that you do not come across very often. Every chapter in the Bible has some great stuff, but some of them just really have some goldmine material, and this is certainly one of them.

We will not get into it this week, but probably next week we are going to cover one of the greatest concepts about the Bible, found in the Bible, about what all that God is doing and why. It will answer so many questions for not only yourself, but as you talk and deal with people, a lot of times questions come up that people have, and you can find one place in the Bible that when you thoroughly understand it, it really opens up to be able to answer those questions. We will get into that next week. But first, we want to look at what we have here today in Proverbs chapter 16, verses 1 through 3. Here is what it says:

Proverbs 16:1-3

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

SEC: The Prepared Heart and the Answer of the Tongue (Proverbs 16:1)

The tongue is from the Lord. On the surface, and you have heard me mention this many, many times, this verse will certainly illustrate a great truth. You prepare your heart in learning the Bible. You study the Word of God. Last week we talked about spiritual growth a little bit in the sermon, and I showed you how that there are seven stages that a person goes through spiritually to get to maturity. You prepare your heart and learn the Bible. The standard, and it is absolutely correct, the standard teaching on it is that when God puts somebody in your life, puts somebody in your world, you may run into somebody at work. You may be on a plane with somebody sitting next to them, or God may just bring somebody into your world through some other circumstance. When you begin to witness to them or they ask you questions, you have the ability because God brings back to your remembrance and actually puts the words that you need to say.

I do not know how many times over the years somebody has called me on the phone or caught me at Bible study or Sunday morning and been so excited because they are a younger Christian, they are learning the Bible, and then God actually put them in a scenario where God used them. They were astounded how they could not believe how they just talked about everything, and everything came back to their remembrance as they witnessed to that person. That is exactly what God does, and that fundamentally is what the verse is talking about.

There is an old concept in the Bible that I have talked to you about many, many times. It is really taught in Acts chapter 8. It is how the Holy Spirit of God puts things together. I have told you before that it is the concept of God having a prepared servant and then God having prepared sinners. While you are preparing your heart to do what God wants you to do, out there today somewhere God is preparing the heart of a lost person, or maybe somebody to save, but really a long way from the Lord. God, in time, through the Holy Spirit of God, wants to get the two of you together. I have always said it, and I have talked to you about it many, many times: when you do your part as a prepared servant to prepare your heart, then God does His part. When He brings somebody to you, He gives you exactly what to say when He wants you to say it. Nothing could be more clear from the Bible. Over and over and over again, we have seen how important that attitude of heart that we all should have toward learning the Bible and making that effort to really get it into our hearts and our lives.

You will remember, we defined man's heart a couple of weeks ago, it might have been a couple of months ago by now, by understanding it in the Bible, that is a reference to his spirit. That spirit which forms the basis of our relationship with God. The right attitude of heart through the Spirit of God in our heart and our life, where we put our spirit with the things of God, then leads our hearts toward God and all that He wants us to do. As the verse says, it is so true with many of you, and I have seen it in your life, you prepare your heart to get the answers from the Lord.

A couple of weeks ago, I told you how that one of the great ways of learning the Bible is just simply asking questions about the Bible. I think that is probably one of the fastest ways to really learn your Bible if you have somebody that will allow you to do that. I have done Thursday night Bible study for all of my ministry from the first Bible study ever held, always was any question you want to ask about the Bible. I learned that you can learn a lot about the Bible. If you stop and think about it, if you just come to Bible study for ten weeks and you go through three things on a Thursday night, you add that up, and in ten weeks' time, you have learned a bunch of things about the Bible. When you put that on a constant basis of your life, just that alone, if we just did three things a week and you went home and learned them and got it together, put it into your Bible, you really would learn the Bible in time just by that. Fortunately here, it is everything we do. You have the option to come over one-on-one, ask any question you want about the Bible. Our people up in Lincoln, this Tuesday night, I have a seven o'clock conference call with them where twenty-some people get on a conference thing and they ask questions about the Bible. That is the way that you learn.

But the verse here goes much farther than just you and me asking questions about the Bible, studying the Bible to try to get some kind of answer for God. I want to go a little farther with it for you today. This verse not only speaks of you, as we have already talked about, just studying the Word of God to get an answer from the Lord that God will put it into your heart when you have to speak to somebody. But the verse really speaks to a depth within a Christian's life and what he knows about not just the Bible, but about God. The depth will be a child of God who has his heart prepared to deal with all the things of life that will come his way. I am not talking about just in the sense of talking to somebody, giving them the right answers, but in your own personal life, being able to deal with whatever bad cards come your way in life, so to speak.

The Bible makes it very clear, and I have talked about this many, many times in Romans chapter 14, verse 7, that there is always somebody watching our lives. I do not care where it is, at work, in your neighborhood, or where you go in life. Somebody is always watching your life, especially like at work or in your neighborhood, where they obviously know that you are a Christian.

Romans 14:7

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

There is somebody always watching our lives, and whether you know it or not, they will watch to see if it is real in your life. They will watch and see, do you really have the answers? Not just the answers you give them, but their answers to the issues of life, of everything that you and I face and that we are going to face. There have been some tough times in Christianity down through the history of the church. There have been some times where the church has suffered severe persecution. We look back on those today in history, and we take great strength and great courage and have great respect for those men and women who faced those issues so many hundreds of years ago, but stayed faithful because they knew and had prepared their heart for what was coming their way.

I want to say to you this morning, there are some things coming our way as Christians today. This idea that everything is just wonderful and rosy in America, and we are having a great time. One of these days, my dear friend, it is going to come to a screeching halt. The real question is, what kind of answer do you give, or what kind of answer do you follow in your own life when all the world is falling apart around you? The real witness for you and for me may cease to be what we say to other people about how nice it is to serve God. The real witness may come in your life and my life because of the destitute of where this world goes and our standing for the things of God in it.

I remember years ago, I heard Dr. Ruckman preach a sermon out of Ephesians chapter 6, when he was preaching on the armor of God. He got down to the verse where it says, "Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." He went into a great dissertation of how the child of God should always be ready to witness anywhere he goes. He used some great examples. I remember he used George Whitfield. I remember he used John Harper, who was on the ill-fated Titanic, who was coming over to the United States to preach in a Moody Bible Conference. But God had a different conference for him to preach at, and it was in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. The last thing that survivors ever heard of John Harper was him standing there in the darkness of that cold night while people were thrashing around in the water, asking for help, begging for help, asking for somebody to help them, "What do I do? What do I do?" A witness said, out of the fog in the darkness of that night, in a thick Scottish brogue, came the voice booming across that night, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thine house." He was preaching going down. He had prepared his heart for that moment.

Ruckman used to say, the real mark of a Christian, the real test of a Christian, is not when everything is going right in life. You have heard me say it many, many times, but I love his illustration. He said the real mark of where you are at with God is what you are going to do when

you are flying at 30,000 feet in the 747 and the wings come off and you go down to a nosedive, and you have got three and a half minutes at that altitude before you auger into the ground. Will you either be begging or will you be preaching? That would be the fastest three and a half minute sermon you ever preached if you prepared your heart. Getting to the place in your life where you are prepared biblically for all that is coming our way.

Generally, 99% of God's people today, when it comes to the world events or the social issues or the breakdown of our country or the things that are happening around the world, they are just running as scared as the unsaved world is. They really are. Most never see what is coming. Most never learn to use even the times that we live in to reach people. They never see the depth of something like this verse past the surface of you just preparing your heart, which is great, to learn the Bible that God can use it. But it is also about going deeper, preparing your heart for what is going to come in people's lives and our lives, that you can actually use the terrible things of life that we have to go through to be able to reach somebody for the cause of Christ.

Most people, honestly, I look around today and I watch and I listen. Most people today have absolutely no idea how important this year's election and what is happening to America and what is about to happen to America. They have no idea the importance of this probably single year with where it has all led up to, with where we are at now, with what we have already come to, and we have fallen apart as a nation. This year's election is absolutely critical. I am not saying in any way, shape, or form critical in the sense that we have got to get rid of the Hillary Clintons or the Democrats and put a Republican in that has some value. Let me tell you something. In politics today, there is no one of biblical values. You need to buckle your seatbelt, but you need to understand that things are going to change. The nice cushy life that we have right now and we enjoy all the things that we do right now for the last what, ten, fifteen years, have been slowly eroding right under your feet because we are so focused on the fun times and the good times and the things that we want to do. We are totally unprepared.

I had to laugh the last time we had the few meeting, and sometimes the people that come in, they love our church. They love the people in it, but I do not think they quite know how to figure us out yet. One of the guys asked me, he said, "You are kind of a prepper church, aren't you?" A prepper is somebody who is preparing for the zombie apocalypse or something, the end of the world. They store ammo, they stare. I think they are looking around thinking that we probably have sandbags in there and claymores over here and rocker M16s in the back, which we do not. I thought that was so unique because in a way we are, just not in a physical sense. I learned a long time ago, passing out rifles and twenty rounds of ammunition to everybody is not going to stop anything. But what will make a difference is you have an old blackback 66 and that two-edged sword in your heart. That is the preparation that God's people need to have today. That is where it really needs to be. That is where we try to be as far as getting not only you at that point, but that you can go out because there are a lot of people that are afraid out there today. There are a lot of people who are afraid.

SEC: Understanding God's Transitions and the Current Age

Now this verse says in it, "preparing a man's heart under the answer of God." This will speak basically to one thing on the depth level that I am talking about right now, and only one thing. I have talked about it all the time, and you hear me say it all the time, and it should be the thing that we all strive for, and it is the point where you get understanding. You see, here is the difference, and this is a vast difference. There is a vast difference between knowing who God is and understanding who God is. There is a vast difference between the two. Most people that are saved have some kind of concept of knowing who God is, but very few of God's people understand who God is. Next week, when we get into the next verse here, which is probably one of the single greatest verses, you are going to walk away next week understanding a little bit better who He is, not just knowing who He is, but understanding how He operates.

I have given it before out of Proverbs chapter 8 and many other places, verses 8 and 9 in particular, a couple of weeks ago, a couple of months ago:

Proverbs 8:8-9

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

The word understanding will be the final key ingredient to any situation. When you have understanding, you see a scenario, no matter what it may be, a problem in somebody's life, an issue you have to deal with in your own life. Maybe it is a global issue of what is going on around the world or a local issue of what is going on in the government or something, a situation at work or someone you are dealing with on a particular circumstance or situation. When you have understanding, you go beyond just what it is. Understanding will always show you how God figures into the equation. It will always put the element that will be missing, that will give you the final answer until you get understanding. God understanding will be looking at this nation, looking at this world, looking around the world, looking at people with their problems and understanding why things are the way they are and what God is doing in it or not doing in it in some cases. That is key.

Being able through the preparation of your heart to answer for yourself first, and then any man who asks of the times that we live in, the situations that face us, but speak to it with understanding, not the typical garbage that you always get. I probably get on a weekly basis eight or nine emails, and I do not say this so if you are listening to this you stop sending them to me. I am not saying that. They are not a waste of time. They are very valuable to me even though many of them are a waste of time. But it shows me the mindset of some of God's people. I get this guy down south that keeps sending these things. Every time we come up to a political thing or an election, they get on this bandwagon that Republicans are somehow Christian and have values, and the other side does not have any values, and all of this and all of that. They just go on and on and on, and they never have any understanding that it does not matter who you put in the White House today. This country has done some violation of the things of God that are irreversible. I am not saying this to scare you. I am saying it because it is true. The fact that you do not know it is the fact that you have been spending the wrong time, the wrong place, and having to learn some of these things. But it is an absolute mess out there. There is not anybody

that is going to fix it at this time, and getting Christians to rally around a moral majority or a group of Christians that stand up for rights in our government. You lost your rights so many years ago in this government, it is unbelievable. You live in a figment world of your imagination where you actually think that things are going to change.

I am not a, do not go here to say, "Well, he is just a preacher of doom." You do not understand me. What I am preaching is not doom. I am preaching this, that we are going to get to the glory of God when He comes. If you are sick, you usually have to take some bad tasting medicine before you feel better. Now I know they try to flavor it up, but it really does not work. I know that when you go to the doctor and you have got something, he has to give you a shot. A shot does not feel good. It hurts. It stings. Sometimes you have to go through something that is not very pleasant. I one time had to get these injections in my lower back, and he puts you on this table, and this guy watches this screen. He is a great doctor. One of the best doctors I, and I really liked him a lot. Very down to earth, only doctor ever had to bring you a cup of coffee and sit down and talk with you before he sticks that big needle in your back. I am laying on this table, and he is looking in the screen and seeing my spine, and he is going to put this needle right between where my problem is. I feel a needle go in. Then he starts to, he tells you, he says, "I am going to inject this now, you are going to feel it." Was that an understatement? That was an understatement of understatement. You bet I felt it. He put that needle in there, and I felt it go in, and it just like somebody plugged my fingers into a light socket, and my legs are just shaking and quivering. I mean, I cannot stop it. I am feeling like an idiot. Here I am, a 185-pound man, laying on a table, and my legs are shaking like I just, and here he is. He is putting this needle in my back, telling me, and I am dying, and he is patting my rump. He says to me, "No, no, no, no, no." He was not that kind of guy. I know where you are going with this. He is patting me on the backside, and he says, and this is what he said, he says, "I am sorry, pal." He says, "Sometimes I have to hurt you to make you feel better." You know what? Sometimes that is true of life. You know what? For God to come back and we experience the glory of God and all that he has for us, we are in a mess, and sometimes it has to hurt to get to that place where it is all okay. Some of God's people, they want Christianity without the hurt. "Oh, it is okay that he hurt on the cross for you, but it is no, no, I cannot take any hurt for him." That is understanding. That is understanding.

Being prepared in your heart to explain and understand yourself the fact of why things are the way they are. I wrote a book here, we preached a sermon on it, or I think it was on Thursday night, and we put it into a book, "The 18 Steps Down That Destroyed America." I walked you through so you would have understanding. Being able to understand why from 19-whenver up to the last year or the last ten years, gay marriage and lesbianism was absolutely looked on with disdain. Now it is accepted in everything, and the states are buying into same-sex marriages. It is absolutely why. What changed? What happened? How do you explain that to somebody? How do you explain that somebody will get up and run for president and say, "We are going to make America great again"? You know what? Listen to me. America will never be great again. Because America lost the greatest thing, the greatest possession she ever had. What is the Word of God? You as a nation cannot be great without the Bible, and you as an individual cannot have

a great life without the Word of God in your life. What is so complicated about that? Why do not people understand?

I have had people all the time saying, "Wow, man, it is so hard to find a church." No, it is almost impossible to find a good church. Now you can find plenty of churches that will tell you what you want to hear, and if that is your persuasion, then you have no problem at all. But you know what? You do not get better by people telling you what you want to hear. You get better by people telling you what you do not want to hear. Lovingly, kindly, not to hurt you, but to make you better. We do not get that today. We do not understand that there is no more great movement of the Holy Spirit of God across this country. Oh, you see it in pockets of churches or people's lives. I am talking about in the national sense, like the seven great awakenings that swept across this country from the 1700s to the 1950s or the 60s, which God's people know nothing about today. So how do you explain all that? To prepare your heart to understand. Be able to explain to somebody the great prophecy of Matthew chapter 24, how that the disciples asked two questions of the Lord Jesus Christ: "What are going to be the signs of thy coming and the end of the world?" That is the exact same questions that people are asking today. Why do you think all the zombie apocalypse movies are so popular today? Why do you think all the movies about the end of the world and the apocalypse and the destruction? They made a movie well back about 2012, about the Mayan calendar that was all going to be over. It was a great movie. They all built, they always have to come back to the Bible. They had to build an ark to survive, my, my, my. Well, the Mayan did not have it right, but the Bible does. I am telling you.

The disciples back in Jesus' day were asking the same two questions that people are asking today: "What is going on, Lord? What is the sign of thy coming and the end of the world?" For the rest of that chapter, He answers that. He answers that in such a way that anybody who would prepare their heart would have understanding to see how the key to everything is the nation of Israel. He says in Matthew chapter 24 that the nation of Israel is likened to a fig tree. When that fig tree puts forth leaves, He says, you know that the generation that sees that is going to still be alive when all these things happen. He gave you the greatest key of understanding. I go over in Song of Solomon chapter 2, and I find that great chapter on the rapture of the church. You know when it says that about the figs at the rapture of the church? In Matthew chapter 24, which runs back to 1948 up to now, Israel put forth the leaves. But at the time of the rapture, those leaves have turned now into green figs. Boy, I will tell you. You understand things like that. You understand what is going on around you. You realize that right now we are at the place where Israel in God's mind is putting forth those green figs. The tribulation is going to be the fertilizer, so to speak, that brings that fig tree to the point that in the millennium she finally bears that fruit. Now how hard was that? Was that complicated? Was that theological that you could not get it? Did I run to the Greek or the Hebrew to get the words? No, no, because the Bible says that when you have understanding, it is all plain to you.

Being able through the preparation of our hearts to speak to the times that we live in. Not just getting the answer to witness to somebody, though that is vital. But you have got to go beyond that. You have to come to the place in your life, like in the Bible, the concept of the times of the Gentiles in Luke chapter 21, or in Romans chapter 11, the fullness of the Gentiles. God's people

have no idea what those two concepts are. And yet, when you have understanding, you have to probably realize and grasp the fact that in God's mind, the times of the Gentiles probably already ended in his mind. Because with all the things that are going on, God is now getting ready to reestablish his people, the nation of Israel. When you understand something like that, it makes perfect sense why things are the way they are around us today. If you do not have any questions, understanding that concept will answer in life what is going on around you.

One of the greatest things I ever learned about God that I got understanding on, it really helped me in everything, is the fact, it is a simple thing: God is the God of transition. God never did anything, ever stop anything on Monday and pick up something different on Tuesday. He always transitions everything that he does. From Genesis 1 to Exodus chapter 12, you are having a setup structure of the nation of Israel. You know what it is? It is a transition to it. When you get into Judges and 1 Samuel and David, when you are heading toward the Kingdom of Heaven, it is a transition to it. When you get David on the throne and Israel begins to go into apostasy after him, a Solomon, and then what, 600 years later they go into captivity? It did not all end one day and start the next. It transitioned through it. When you see Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it is a transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament. He just did not say, "Okay, John the Baptist is here, it is Monday, Old Testament done, New Testament starts." He transitions everything. Your life, your spiritual growth is a transition. You start as a baby Christian, and your goal is to get to the age of through those seven steps. You know what those seven steps are? It is a transition of your spiritual life. He does it in everything. He does it in everything.

You see it in the books of the Bible. The order of the books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in Acts will transition you from the Old Testament, nation of Israel, into the church age. What happens when you pass Acts? Paul's books are all lumped together. You are into the church age. Here it is. Those first five writers brought you up through a transition, dumps you right into Paul in the church age. After Paul writes his final book, he writes the seven churches and three New Testament Christian gentlemen. Once he finishes that, you know the next book you have? You have Hebrews, then you have James, then you have 1 and 2 Peter, then you have 1 and 2 and 3 John, then you have Jude, then you have the book of Revelation. You see? The first five writers transition you into the church age, dump you off. The next five writers after Paul writes transition you out of the church age, dump you in Revelation, tribulation period. Transition, transition, the transition.

I am getting ready to do my little expose for you that we talked about a couple of weeks ago about giving you some roots, and I think very honestly I am going to have to probably move it to a Thursday night where I have the time to do it and do it right. But that will be okay. As I was coming through there looking at some things this week, and I looked at the great Philadelphian church age, and I looked at the time period we are, and I started going back and categorizing the pastors who really, and I began to see at a glance, and I will give you these guys when we do this, but these pastors that represent from that period of this, they are transitional pastors. They transition us from the great Philadelphian church age to the Laodicean church age. It is incredible. Somebody says, "Now why is that so important?" The answer to why it is so important is because whether you know it or not, you and I today, you and I are privileged to live

within this transitional period taking us from one place to the Lord of glory. We live in it. Somebody says, "Man, what crazy times out there." When it is in a transitional period, it is always a crazy time.

Look at the book of Acts. Did you ever stop and put yourself how absolutely mind-boggling the book of Acts must have been to live during? I mean, it is changing almost on a daily basis as this transition works its way through. No wonder Peter got confused about not being able to eat pork and eat the things and God going to the Gentiles. I get his confusion. God had to take him over to Cornelius, the Gentile, take him up on a roof and show him a vision that it was okay to hang out with the Gentiles and eat things because the law is gone. But it took three times to give it to him, and then he still did not get it completely. It is confusing. I mean, I will be the first to tell you. One place you find there, "Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sin," you always seem to get to the Holy Ghost. Next time you find it, they get the Holy Ghost without anybody being baptized. Next time they get it, they have to lay hands on them and get baptized. Next time you see it, it is completely reversed and really different. There is never one way it works all the way through the book of Acts. This is why cults and heretics have such a heyday basing their foundation in Acts. You know why? They have no understanding of it. They do not see it as a transitional period. In the Bible, when something is going through a transition, if you do not have the understanding of what God is doing, not who he is, but what he is doing, you are going to get confused. You are going to get confused. Do you have the ability to see it? Do you understand it? Can you intelligently speak with somebody to it? I want to tell you, to use it, you have to first understand it. Have you prepared your heart for it? That verse, Proverbs 16:1, is one of the greatest concepts in all of the Bible. It shows the real depth that we should have as a child of God.

SEC: Man's Self-Righteousness and God's Judgment (Proverbs 16:2)

Now look at verse 2:

Proverbs 16:2

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

Boy, that is a good verse. Now this is a great verse that will go along with verse 1. It talks about two of the favorite pastimes of Christians in Christianity: denial and self-righteousness. The main reason why our attitude of heart is wrong, and we can never get an answer from the Lord, is because of denial and self-righteousness. See it all the time. People say they are lost, justifying what they enjoy doing, or what they want to do when it clearly goes against the Word of God. Hey, I see it all the time. I am sure you do too. I deal with it all the time. Self-righteousness and self-justification are the two outstanding universal occupations of human nature.

The importance of having biblical principles behind everything we do, I talk about it all the time, and yet it is an amazing thing to me. I have known guys, gals, women, men who know the Bible, who have taught the Bible, who read the Bible, who are saved and on their way to heaven. They have taught other people the Bible. But when it comes to a point in life that they want to do what they want to do, they will simply—it is an amazing thing to me. Human nature is such an

incredible thing. They will simply pick and choose the principles that they want, leave the ones that do not fit into what they really want to do, and then try to justify themselves to others. They will leave the principles of that book and then rationalize and justify their desire when they could not justify it from the Bible if their life depended on it. But they still want to pretend, "I am okay. Do not judge me. Why can't I take out of the Bible what I want and leave what does not fit so I can do what I want to do?" That is human nature. That is denial. I learned that great truth first year in the ministry, that denial was more than a river in Egypt. That will hit you sometime this afternoon.

Job 11:4

For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

Yeah, your doctrine, but not God's doctrine. A couple of weeks ago, we talked about people who want to justify what they do, and they always do this. They always compare themselves with others. "Oh, well, I am not the only one who did this." I hear it all the time. "Therefore, my situation is okay because so and so did it, and they are a Christian. Why is it right for them to do it and for me not to do it?" I see parents do it all the time. Parents, all my life, parents who have problem kids who are headed for issues, who ultimately do not go to church anymore, do not get involved in anything with God by the time they grow up, their parents put them there simply because the parents, all of their lives, were rationalizing and justifying what their kids did instead of throwing them down the cellar steps. In my house growing up, it was a long way down them cellar stairs. The art of self-righteousness and denial. I want to tell you something. It is an art. It is an art form.

I told you a couple of weeks ago the difference between comparison and contrast. You do not compare yourself to what others do and then justify yourself to it. But that is human nature. We like to do that. I will tell you why in a moment, but that is what we do. You never compare yourself and what you want to do to what somebody else is doing. You always have to contrast yourself to what Jesus would do in the same situation that you are in. Comparison is rationalization. It will always be a rationalization to what you want to do every time of your life.

Now here is a verse you can mark in your Bible and turn to if you so desire, 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 12. Paul says to the church at Corinth, who had the same problems that we have:

2 Corinthians 10:12

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Ouch. That stings a little bit. That verse says that comparing yourself to others in your situation is not wise. You know why? Because there will never be a time in your life or my life when I want to rationalize what I am doing. I cannot find somebody worse than I am. You know why? Because God will not deal with any two people the same way on the same basis. No two situations are alike. He is dealing with them on a basis of where their heart is with God, and your

heart will never be exactly where theirs is at. So it will not work. You bet it will work as a rationalization. Most important, when we compare ourselves to other people, we are looking for a back exit out of what we are dealing with. We are looking to justify what we are doing. In doing that, it simply takes the personal responsibility out of our lives to follow the Word of God. It is easier to compare ourselves and feel good about what we are doing than it is to contrast it to the Word of God and not feel good about what we are doing.

The unsaved man is famous for his last words: "Well, I am not what I ought to be, but at least I am not like so-and-so. I try to live up to what I think is right. I am no hypocrite. No, I do not go to church. Too many hypocrites in the church." Let me tell you something, that statement will land you in a lake of fire, assured the devil saying, "I want to be like the Most High God." "Clean in your own eyes," verse 2. Famous last words of a saved man: "Now I am not perfect, but do not judge me. God is not finished with me yet. I am okay, you are okay. Me and God know where we are at." Boy, that is an understatement. That kind of talk will get you as naked as the Judgment Seat of Christ. "My doctrine," Job 11:4, "my doctrine is pure. I am unclean in thine eye." Yeah, your doctrine, not His.

Now the truth of the matter is, after the attitude of heart about God and after your understanding of New Testament Christianity, God is finished with you in both cases. He is finished with you as an unsaved man, and you can never get to God as long as you have that attitude. He is finished with you as a child of God because you will rationalize and live in self-denial all of your life, and God will never lose you again. He will put you on the shelf. Your salvation or your relationship with God, and listen to me on this one, your salvation or your relationship with God is never on your own terms. He says in verse 2, "God, try the spirits." That is a good one. You could not find five of God's people maybe outside this church in this city who understood how to try the spirits of others in a situation that you are faced with dealing with or trying your own spirit. People would not know how to do that if their life depended on it.

Listen, the cry of a man who is prepared in his heart for the answer of God about himself requires you and I to try the spirits, my spirit.

1 John 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

I want to tell you something, some of the greatest false prophets you ever heard who prophesied delusion, denial, self-righteousness, self-pity, some of the greatest heretics and the greatest heretical preaching you ever heard came from you and me when we look inside ourselves. Do not you kid me. You do not have to find Jimmy Swaggart or Katherine Kuhlman or some clown out there to find out who some, we deceive ourselves. Listen, the cry of a man who was prepared in his heart for the answer of God about himself will be the cry of a man with the right spirit, with the right understanding in his heart, and he will be the cry of Isaiah, where in Isaiah 64:6 he said, he cried out and said:

Isaiah 64:6

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

This cry will be the cry of Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-5 where he said:

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Now here is understanding, here is spiritual insight, here is what a real Christian should do when he looks inside. Verse 1 says that I saw the Lord lifted up in all his glory. Well, Bob, what did that do for you? Did it puff you up? Did it make you self-righteous? Did it make you want to compare yourself to everybody else and live in a world of denial? No, verse 5, "Then said I, Woe is me, I am undone, a man of unclean lips." Let me tell you something, when you really see God, when you really experience a relationship with God, when you really have the understanding of who he is, it does not put you into some fantasy world, it shows you and me how unclean and unworthy we really are. "Woe is me, mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." It is contrast, never comparison. When you see who He really is, when you understand who He really is, then we better understand who we really are.

SEC: Committing Works and Establishing Thoughts (Proverbs 16:3)

Look at verse 3:

Proverbs 16:3

Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Now the preparation of the heart in man in verse 1 not only has to do with what man says with understanding, but it also prepares his heart for the work of God, what God wants him to do. This is one of the greatest promises in the Bible that is hard to beat. I was talking to Delano this morning, and he was showing me his verses, and then I talked to Mattie a few moments later, and he was showing me their verses on their 3x5 cards, and I have in my sermon this morning about this very verse. If you do not have this one on your verse cards, and you probably do not, you need to get it because it is one of the greatest promises in the Bible. "Commit thy works unto the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established." When he showed me his card this morning, he says,

"Here is the new one, Proverbs 16, verse 3," found it on his own. Good job, good job. It says in effect that if you want peace of mind and you want your thoughts to please God in all that you do, then commit everything you do 24 hours a day into his plan for your life.

A couple of weeks ago, we talked about Proverbs 15:22 to talk about establishing yourself in the things of God, your purpose in life. That starts with you and me being established in our thoughts with God. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, "bring every thought into captivity under the obedience of Christ." The great need in America today. Boy, I look across this country, and not only do I see this country in a mess, do I see people confused, but I also see the generation coming up. Many of you young kids here today. Brother, let me tell you something. Left on your own without a good Bible church, without men and women, moms and dads who love you and love the Word of God, you will not stand a chance. The great need in America for the next coming generation, for our kids, your kids, my grandkids, which will be the greatest challenge of parenting today at the church and dealing with our young kids from the elementary to the high school to the singles, will be for them to have their thoughts established instead of twisted. For them to have their thoughts established and not perverted. For them to have their thoughts grounded and not groundless.

I told you a couple of weeks ago where our church has come from, how we have grown, how God has added different dimensions. We talked about four years ago our first camp and how God has brought us and brought the men and women of this church in a rallying point around our kids and the point of camp this year for me personally. I am sure for all of the folks. But the importance for me this year is a week alone with our kids to work hard every day, every time at everything that I do for one purpose. That is to add to what Zach and Jenny do on a weekly basis all the time, to add to the workers of camp, Joe putting it all together, and all of you laboring so feverishly to get it done and make it a success. But my goal is one thing to do with our kids: establish their thoughts. I will have them for a week where there will be no TV, there will be no radio, there will not be any outside influences. Probably the only time maybe in many of their lives where they will just have one week where there is nothing but them and God. I am going after it. I understand their needs, I understand their challenges that they face every day. The month leading up to camp will be a month, as I told you that night, of me helping you the parents to be ready to pick up that established thought pattern and carry it through the rest of their lives once we get to that final night. I want to prepare them for that week when I have them by myself with the people here in the Word of God, and before that, I want to prepare you. That is the problem. Kids go to camp, they have a great week, but they come back to parents who are good parents, but they have no idea where they are at because they were not there. This time we are going to make a difference, they were ready for it. I am going to prepare the parents that you are going to know exactly what your job is, where your kid is going to get, what God is going to do in his life, that we can put it all back together, that you will have everything that you need to carry that thing on.

I asked you that night, what price would you pay to have your children be right and do right the rest of their lives? The price is you and what you are willing to do with the Word of God in your life. With all that they see every day and hear, experience 24/7 in school with their friends, with

the TV, the radio, the music, the things that they have involved themselves in, there never was a time in the history of this world when young people were harder or pressed to keep clean thought processes. Verse 3 says, "Commit thy works unto the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established."

I want to talk about the importance of getting your child involved in ministry with others early in life. In those early years of forming up their character qualities of life, establishing their thought process of how they look at others, the commitment of a work of God in their life illustrated through mom and dad first of all, their commitment will establish them in their thoughts. Then it is a process of just getting them in the Word of God and directing them and maintenance in that. Hey, anybody with half a brain can see the results that God accomplishes with men and women who let God do this work in their lives. The differences, the attitude difference, the difference in children, what it does for their mindset toward God, the thoughts, working with people, the idea that we put together a team concept in ministry, ministering through the athletics or whatever we do, families going up to Lincoln to teach, going down to Wichita, teams going into Clinton and all the things. When you commit to a work of the Lord, then He commits Himself to establish you and your thoughts along those lines.

A couple of years ago, we sat down and we put together an outreach starting with our own youth group that they would start to take responsibility for their own youth night. That one of them would preach, they would orchestrate the events, we would help them and support them, they would bring their friends, and we looked at it as an outreach. It has been a tremendous success. It has been a tremendous building thing for our kids. I will tell you what, we have some of the finest kids on the planet as far as I am concerned. Now God is going to take that level of commitment one step up for our kids. I got a call last week from the people up in Lincoln. Kids are going crazy up there with all kinds of people, but all kinds of kids. They want to form once a month a youth activity. We are going to put together a program for them, and our kids are going to go up on Friday night, teach them how to do the devotion, teach them how to run the activities, and then on Saturday morning, our kids, your kids, we are going to hold a workshop, and they are going to teach those young kids how to disciple, how to do this, how to do that. Now we are taking it from the little realm of just doing it in our own world, which we do, but now we are going to do the same thing with our children, what God did with the adults of going up there and doing what you do, except this time it is going to be our kids teaching their kids, bringing them along. I cannot tell you the value of that, of infusing the pattern of mindset into your kids that they are most impressionable. Let me tell you something. If God does not do it, the devil will. Right now we have perfect control of it.

I am blown away by some of these young kids, guys and gals, of how well they know the Bible, of how well they can do it. I know Drake is a little older than most of them, but Drake has been in this church, and I do not mean to keep picking on Drake, but he knows I love him, but I need an illustration to end this thing. In this church, two years he said yesterday, really I told him yesterday, the first six months he probably was just looking around, a year and a half. Now that is just true of anybody. He took one of the hardest, when he said the verse that he was going to yesterday in Proverbs, I thought to myself, "This is going to be good. I hope." This is one of the hardest, this is not a verse that I would pick. This is a tough verse. Now let us just see what he

has got. He laid that thing out. I mean, he just took 22 minutes. I timed it. I should not give all my secrets. 22 minutes. He laid that, and I thought to myself, there is a guy who was in this church for about a year and a half, seriously. To take that verse in that depth and do what he did blew me away. Yet I have seen your kid do the exact same thing. You ought to see them. You ought to see them on the firing line. You ought to see the ones that will go out this afternoon, and it will be down there out on the street teams. I have seen them over there, and it burns in my heart because my grandkids are in it. But I have watched your kids. I went out to them down at that bus stop where some of the older kids are passing out tracts or witnessing to maybe other teenagers down there. I watched my grandkids like little Macy and Kenzie that maybe are not old enough, they are over there in a circle praying for the person doing it. I know I am bettering out on this planet. You think that does not establish their thoughts? You think that is not better than being out on a video game someplace? You think that does not do something, that God does not take that and instill that into their hearts that they see at this early age when the devil wants to impress them and they are so impressionable with everything in the world that a God will take that and do that with them? We have some great kids. I watch them in action on that firing line. I will use this camp to build a team out of those kids and then bring them back to mom and dad and put the team back together with the parents. We together can establish their commitment, their thoughts of a work to the Lord, and then establish their thoughts to the things of God.

SEC: The Supernatural Transformation

So in case you have not heard yet, we are canceling the Awana program. I have never understood that. Opening up little kids in little uniforms and picking somebody to be a chum commander. Put fake little medals on them for memory verses, little patches and little things. I guess it is okay for some churches, but let me tell you something. Do not you ever doubt it that your kids cannot do the work? Do not you ever doubt that they cannot be on that firing line and doing something for the Lord? I am not going to waste my time pretending we are playing to be a little Christian when I will take them and build into their thought process the very principles of the Word of God. We have some of the greatest men and women in this church who have incredible steel in their backbones, who have incredible character, who are good fathers, who are good mothers, who are good husbands, who are good wives, who have good strong families. Those are the ones that I want your kids to grow up seeing as the examples, not the idiots. That is what I want to establish their thoughts, that when I grow up, I want to be like my dad. I want to be like my mom. I want to be like this person. I want to be like that person. When I grow up, I want to have a marriage like them, not like them. It is right here, right under our noses. Now we are going to play at it. We are going to buy them little uniforms. Let us get them some combat ribbons of doing the work of God. Let us get them their CIB, of being in combat for 30 days. Let us get them a bronze star with valor for standing up at school and doing what is right. Let us get them to carry their Bibles to school. Let us get them in a cafeteria where everybody is chowing down. They will bow their heads by themselves if necessary. Let God use that. Do not you tell me these kids do not have the ability to do something?

I want to tell you something. During World War II, and the hell holds the places like Guadalcanal and Tarawa, Palau, some of the most terrible battles with some of the most terrible, unbelievable

stuff that you ever saw in your life. You realize that during that time there were hundreds, maybe thousands, but hundreds of young men from Nebraska, Kansas, mostly farm boys who were much bigger than their age. But they lied about their age and went into combat in the hell of Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima and Okinawa when they were 14 and 15 years old. I remember reading a story about one kid that he celebrated his 16th birthday on Iwo Jima, 16 years of age on Iwo Jima. He had been with the Six Marines that had been in two combat maneuvers before that. The older soldiers, they loved them. They protected them. Those kids were afraid that they were going to find out how old they really were and send them back to mom and dad. Those old soldiers, they took them in, they protected them. They fought with courage and honor, hundreds of them. I am telling you right now, you ought to come down sometime and see our kids on the firing line, learning the rope from the older soldiers who take care of them. I am not going to trade that for some fake little Christianity mindset. You are nuts.

Years ago there was a TV program that was one of my favorites called "The Six Million Dollar Man." It was a natural guy, killed in a tragic way. The government stepped in, the government scientists, and they used his body to build a man of superhuman capacity. He could strong, he could pick up whole vaults of steel. I remember watching it, how at the beginning he would run, and then he would run faster. He had the little wires on his chest, and suddenly it showed the heart meter, and he is down in his speed, 20 miles an hour, 30 miles an hour, 40 miles an hour, 50 miles an hour. I tried running like that. He made me look like a \$29.95 fire sale. He was genetically engineered in a physical sense to have great abilities. Well, I want to tell you something. Actually to me, to you, every one of you, is the Six Million Dollar Man. Your kids are a hundred and six million dollar men and women. Because in a spiritual sense, in a biblical sense, that is exactly what the Bible will do for you when you establish your heart and your thoughts and your mind. When you and your children commit your works unto him, he will establish your thoughts. He will take that spineless backbone that we all have, and in time he will replace it with a titanium one that will never bend or break. He will take those weak little sissy legs we all got that cannot stand for anything, that tremble in the face of anything. In Song of Solomon chapter 5, verse 15, he will screw those suckers off and replace them with legs that are pillars of marble, the hardest stone known to man.

Song of Solomon 5:15

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

He will take those puny little arms we got and make them strong enough. Psalm 18:34 says:

Psalms 18:34

He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

He will take that cowardly spirit. Most Christians remind me of the Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz. You are on a road to the Emerald City, and you are all once you got saved, you are following the yellow brick road. You want to get to see the wizard. But the old wicked witch, she wants to stop you from getting there. She has got all these, oh, we old guys are going to keep you from

getting there too. Her job is to stop you from getting to the great wizard in the Emerald City by throwing everything on that path. I look at the three guys that went with Dorothy, and boy, if they are not a picture of Christianity. You have got the Tin Man. Tin will not stop anything. When your life is surrounded with the tin things of your Christian world, let me tell you something. The devil has got a speedy can opener. Here to rip you up. Then you had the guy who was the straw guy, the man, what was his name? The Scarecrow. Why the first time when it all began to fall apart and they were trying to do something, he just got too close to the fire, and he went up just like, that is the way a lot of God's people are. You get just that close to the fire, up you go. Then you had the Cowardly Lion. No, he is afraid of everything. When it all goes, at least they are out there. He is back here, and I never got there. He is holding his tail. You ever notice that? He needed courage. So at the end of the movie, he pretently got courage because the wizard gave him a medal because a medal is what you have to have to have courage. Most of God's people, you are just like those three. Some of you are made of tin. Some of you go up in flames the moment the situation gets hot, and some of you, you are just cowards all your life. I am telling you something, you need a transformation from the human being you are to the supernatural being that God wants you to be. But it only comes with you establishing your heart and your thoughts and committing your ways to him. If you do your part, he will do his.

I am not going to stand by and lose another child out of this church to the world. Yet there is not a thing I can do about it except preach to you, pray for it, and try to do the best I can and try to do the best with the people who are trying to work with the kid. But at the end of the day, it comes down to you. They will never establish their thoughts if you do not establish yours. That is what we are here for. That is the great passage of Proverbs chapter 16. The ability to stand for him in any time period of history. But for us, the time that we are so privileged to be a part of, this transitional time as we go through some of the craziest stuff that the world has ever seen. The world is looking to you and me. Your kids are looking to you, mom and dad. That is what the Waldensians did. That is what the Albigensians did. That is what got the Polynesians through the Dark Ages. That is what will get us through the preparation of the heart of man and then the answer from the Lord, the understanding of an established, committed mind through the thoughts established in our heart.

Let us pray. Father, we do thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We do love you so much. We thank you for these good people. Lord, I love them so much, and I thank you for the privilege to be their pastor. Lord, I thank you for the kids in this church. God, I am so impressed with them. I love them so much. They are such good kids. Lord, they just do an incredible job. They are young. They are impressionable. Help us this year to really focus. Help us to pull out all the stops, to have moms and dads and families pull together that we might be able to do everything we can do to establish the thoughts of these kids before they have to go back in the fall to school. Help us to establish the parents and the men and the women in this church, all of us, realizing that we have to have those components in our life to be strong for you. Father, we will bless the rest of this day as we go out and we accomplish your will as we go out and put out the Word of God and feed the homeless and take care of those who have nothing. Lord, let us think in our own lives that as we go down to those who have nothing, that there was a time in our life when we had nothing. You loved us enough to send somebody to us that we might have eternal life. So

let us love these people enough today that we may take to them what you so graciously sent to us. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you. I will call you back up here in about 10 minutes.