

Proverbs 16

June 12, 2016

Now, I know that some of you thought when I made the announcement about the tires, you thought to yourself, "What's he doing that for? I mean, tires and this?" Let me tell you how God works. There's a young guy in our church today that needed a set of tires, was going to have to go buy the tires, probably didn't have all the money to get the tires. And if you went back and talked to Nate, they went out and checked, and they fit perfectly.

See, I need a boat, a large boat. I can see it now, painted across the back is the name "Visitation." So when you call my house in an emergency, my wife says, "He's on visitation, doing the Lord's work."

I. The Wisdom of Proverbs and the Foundation of Nations

Last week, I know that when you go to most churches, this is when you get serious. We get serious. But you're going to see that we have a lot of fun around here, and this is just another level of having a good time with the Word of God this morning. You remember last week, we're in the book of Proverbs, have been for quite some time. We talked last week about chapter 16, which is where we'll be today, about the instructions for a king. This is really the fundamental theme of the book of Proverbs when Solomon wrote it, and I showed you this last week.

Historically, he gives twelve great declarations of instructions to kings, and they form for us, as we saw last week, if Israel was to have a good king, he needed to follow these instructions. Inspirationally, we talked about how Romans 8:17 talks about that someday you and I are going to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, and we're going to be part of His kingship. So we ought to follow the same great practical applications that we talked about last week.

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, and he sets the example of what a leader should be to God's people. In reference to leadership from a historical context, our Founding Fathers understood this great truth. Most people do not know that today; they do not get that today, but it is certainly so true. They saw the Bible and its principles as being really good judgment and doctrinal concepts to follow. You will find that in our early years, in the beginning of our country, we used to call it "Judeo-Christian," meaning that our country was built on the Ten Commandments fundamentally, but also on the principles of New Testament Christianity. It is a term you do not hear much today.

One of our Founding Fathers, by the name of John Locke, said this: "When we form our government, if we have good laws, we're going to have good government." Now that sounds good, and it probably is true to a certain degree. William Penn, who was another Founding Father—they named the state of Pennsylvania after him, I think he was the first governor of Pennsylvania—he said, "No, no, no. If we're going to form a government, the key to good government is not good laws, but rather the key to good government is men, good men that are saved men." He said, "Governments are like clocks that men set in motion." He said, "Yes, good laws do good, but good, saved men will do better." He said, "For good laws may lack good men, but good men will never lack good laws, nor will they support bad ones." That is about as sound

advice as you could ever have in starting a government, running a government, and keeping the government where it needs to be.

Then you remember I showed you one of the best things that God ever gave me, and that is in the life of David. David is starting out as a shepherd boy and then rising through a process to become a king. I showed you how that is so true in your life and my life. Someday we are going to be a king. Right now, we are to take care of the flock of God and be the shepherd. That is one of the best biblical concepts that we looked at.

We looked at two effects. The Bible talked about the light of God's countenance. We looked at two effects that the light of God in our lives will do. I showed you that those passages are a picture of the second coming of Christ, but inspirationally, they show two great truths. First of all, when God lightens you on the inside, you and me, it shows us our true condition. This is why a lot of people do not like to come to church or get around the Bible. The Bible is like a flashlight that God turns on when you begin to hear it, and it makes you look deep inside yourself and see sometimes some things that maybe you do not want to see. The second thing that it does, it shows us our pathway through life. It gives us and illuminates the walk that we go through in life.

This has been some of the best practical material that you will ever get, based on the book of Proverbs, written by the wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, understanding how the principles apply to your life and my life. Our church has gone through a process. This will be our thirteenth year of being in existence. Through that time, the church has grown. The people that are coming in it have grown. Some of you that came back ten, eleven, twelve years ago now hold a position in this church that is unparalleled. This church has some of the best leadership that I would put up against anybody on the planet. We have men and women here who really love and understand the Bible, who know the Bible, who can teach the Bible. We have thirty, forty men who could preach the Word of God as good as I do, that you could go out and cross three or four states and teach and preach the Bible. The potential here for so many of you is absolutely incredible if you want to do what God wants you to do.

Today, we are going to have another great practical lesson, something that I think will really, really help you. We are going to look at the next section of Proverbs 16, and we are going to break this chapter down into some natural concepts and some natural themes.

Proverbs 16:16-19

How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Better is it of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Today we are going to look at and examine out of these verses four key words. I think these four key words, found in the context, really are the basics of our walk with God and our ability to

grow spiritually. I know that is my goal for you. It should be the goal of any pastor. The number one goal of a pastor anywhere ought to be that his people get everything that they need in an environment and an atmosphere that is conducive to spiritual growth, a controlled atmosphere, so to speak, that you get everything that you need, no matter what it may be, to be able to help you get wherever you want to get. Understanding these four words and how to use them will be the difference between success or failure in your life.

I can create the perfect scenario for you, but what I cannot do is to force you to put these four words in your life. I cannot do that. That is something you have to do yourself. Hopefully today, as we come through here, we have been blessed by God that God usually brings us people who have been running around looking for something and cannot find it. But when they find it, the truth of the Word of God, and they find a place where they can be everything that God wants them to be, with nobody on your back, nobody giving you problems, nobody out to hurt you, it makes a difference in their life.

II. The Superiority of God's Wisdom

Verse 16 says, "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" The wisdom of God over the gold and the silver of the world. The world we live in today, the Christian world and the secular world, will always put an emphasis on education. Education to the world is everything. They think it solves every problem. Whenever there is a problem or an issue, they think that starting another program and educating people will be the key.

It never ceases to amaze me. We have discrimination in our country. Unfortunately, there are people who do not look at other people and see them the same way, and it is an unfortunate thing. But in our government, the way we deal with it, we simply think, "Well, we will educate the people better. We will give them more education, more understanding." We have a lot of violence in our society. Down in Florida last night, fifty people stepped out into eternity, all because one guy wanted to go in in the name of Allah and kill a bunch of people. Violence is everywhere. It will always do the same thing. The people have not come out yet, but the liberals in this country, by the time we go to bed tonight, will come out and say the problem is all the guns in America. No, the problem was that everybody in that place in Sarasota did not have a gun. That was the problem.

But we live in a world where we think that now we have got to reeducate people. We have got to educate people about violence. That in the gangs in Chicago and in New York, if you could just get them into a classroom and shut them down and educate them and get them a good job, they would not be violent. We see violence in school. We try to have classes on tolerance. We have sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, so the government says you need to have sensitivity training. You need to have education. Develop a program. We have people who fall into alcoholism or drug abuse, so somebody came up with the idea of Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, putting a program together that teaches somebody through twelve steps and educates them about alcohol and drugs.

We live in a world, we have talked about this before, that now same-sex marriage is being accepted across this country. There was a time when it would have never been accepted, and now it is being accepted. Do you know why? Because the federal government and all these organizations, they are taking people who do not have any understanding of anything and reprogramming them to think that it is okay for a woman and a woman and a man and a man to be joined in holy matrimony. It is through the education process and everything that you see. Now we are faced with the next level, transgender, men who want to be women and women who want to be men. They want to be able to use whatever bathroom facility they feel like, whatever gender they are that day. The government comes back and supports that and says, "You know what? We need to have more education. We need to train people to be more tolerant with people who want to embrace an alternative lifestyle." That is a new word today, by the way: "alternative lifestyle."

This year, the FAA, who searches all the baggage that goes through the airplanes and all the stuff that goes around to keep the terrorist explosion of a plane to a minimum, when they were tested, they failed ninety-five percent of the time. Ninety-five percent, if somebody wanted to smuggle something through to bring down a plane, they would have made it. Ninety-five percent of the time. What does the government do? If you have a government job, you can never be fired. The government says, "We need more training." You can take a monkey and train him to do what you want, and he is still going to be a monkey. You get a guy who, I mean, here you have a jet airplane that costs, what, seventy million dollars. You have passengers, three hundred of them, who are worth what? Billions of dollars. Then you have a guy protecting them, being paid minimum wage. Is there anything wrong with that picture?

In the communist countries, one of the things that they did when they took over was the first thing was reeducation. About eleven o'clock at night, you got a knock on the door. Some party official was there and says, "Everybody be down to the city hall tomorrow morning at eight o'clock. We are going to have a reeducation ceremony, and we are going to really let you get reeducated now to what is going on." In communist countries, reeducation was a bullet in the head.

We see the same thing in our churches. Every church who looks for a pastor, they care nothing about what he knows about the Bible. They care nothing about if he wins people to Christ. They care nothing about what his plan is to make the church grow. Do you know what they want to know? "Where did you go to school? How many degrees do you have after your name? BA, MA, PhD." BA, a bunch of applesauce; MA, more applesauce; PhD, piled higher and deeper.

Now let me say this. I do believe that education is the key to fixing every issue we ever will face. I think it is true of our country. I think it is true of you and me. That may shock some of you because some of you think that I am against education. I am not. But here is the problem: Education without a solid moral base built on absolute truth is only a waste of time and money. Bob Jones Sr., one of the greatest evangelist Methodist preachers the world has ever seen, used to say, "Education without salvation is damnation." To that, I add to that great phrase, "The bigger the belfry, the more room for the bats."

I told you this Thursday night, and I am a nobody, and so are most of you. In the world scenario, our opinion really does not matter. Most of us can see at a glance what is wrong today in our country, and we know how to fix it. It is the educated folks who are educated beyond their intelligence who cannot figure it out. I say it all the time. I have thirty or forty of you guys and probably gals here that I would put up against anybody, anywhere, anytime, when it comes to understanding the Bible. You are outside the norm. That is one of the reasons why Donald Trump is so popular. He is not a career politician. I do not know anything about him, and I really do not care one way or the other, but the world looks at him, and the Republicans cannot get it. They do not understand. They do not like him because he is not one of them. But they cannot understand why the whole world in America is for him, and he just went from nothing to everything and won the nomination for the president. They do not get it, and what they do not get is we are sick and tired of the status quo. We are sick and tired of being lied to. Now he may not be any better, I do not know, but as far as we are concerned, or the world is concerned, or America is concerned, he is better than what they have got out there at this point. At least he looks like he is going to do something and do it right. Maybe he will not, I do not know. I do not care. Whoever you get is not going to make any difference where this country has gone.

But I am making a point. The demise of our society is simply based on a complete breakdown of the core fundamental concept that God built this country around, and it is called the family unit. No moral education of the kids in the fundamental area of the home. It starts with the mom and the dad. It starts with the family. It does not start with the federal government. It does not even start in the church. It starts at home that moms and dads begin to build moral concepts into their kids.

In the 1780s, a guy by the name of Robert Raikes lived in England, and he saw the plight of so many English kids that their moms and dads were working all day, and there was no discipline to go to school. He just ran the streets of London. Robert Raikes started what is commonly known today as the concept of a Sunday school. Completely lost today in churches. They do not have a clue of the fundamental core reason that Sunday school started. He brought these kids in off the street to teach them values based on the Bible, to get them out of the ghettos and the gutters of London. A Sunday school to teach these kids a moral base of truth.

When I was in the public school system in my day, this would be back in the fifties and the sixties, it started to change in the seventies. But back then, God and the Bible were still the solid standard, believe it or not. In school, back in my junior high and grade school, when we had an Easter service, they had a preacher come in, and he preached on the resurrection of Christ. At Christmas time, they had another preacher come in, and he preached on the Christ being born and how salvation had come to the world. I was there. I know. In fact, one of the Easters, I still remember it. They asked me to introduce the preacher. I must have been about nine or ten years old, and they always had the student come up and do it. My mom thought that was the proudest thing I ever did in my life. I went up there, and I still remember it. His name was Reverend Barker. I went up there and I said, "We are so happy today to have with us Reverend Barker, who is going to bring us the invocation and tell us about Easter." Then I turned to him and said, "Reverend Barker." I was the cutest little thing you ever saw in your life.

In 1963, a woman by the name of Madalyn Murray O'Hair and her crowd began to go to the government and complain, and the first thing that went out was prayer, and later on the Bible went out of our public schools. It is so simple. I guarantee you, almost every one of you this morning, without exception, could fix that problem in a heartbeat. Do you know what happened? When the Bible went out, when prayer went out, the drugs, the violence, and the sex came in. How hard is that? How hard is that? Today, you can put all of the DARE programs, all the sex education classes, all the gender awareness classes you want, but without a moral, righteous standard that sets a course on a spiritual heading, it is all a waste of time and money. That Bible says that it is better to get God's wisdom than all the gold and silver in this world.

Now let us look at our first verse here, verse 16. "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" Here are two words that are totally missing today, and these are not part of our four, but here are two words that are totally missing today. We are getting to the point here where we are going to break these down, but the words wisdom and understanding, these two fundamental ingredients, are the base for what we would call common sense. You know as well as I do, common sense is not very common today. It all began with the rejection of the Bible.

You will remember, I have told you in other times coming down through our studies, that from a historical perspective, no country that ever dumped the Word of God, no country that had the Bible—this would be Germany with the Reformation with Luther, it will be England with the bringing out of the King James Bible, it will be Czechoslovakia, who under Jan Hus at one point in time, ninety-five percent of the population was born again; it does not even exist today. Every nation that once had the Word of God that rejected the Word of God never survived two hundred years past that rejection. It is a historical fact from the Bible and the Word of God. For America, that was 1888 in Sarasota, Florida. We are 128 years into it, and what a mess we have today. We went from a nation that at the end of 1945 had never lost a war, that from 1945 to today has never won one. People look around and say, "What is the problem? What is the issue? I just do not get it. I do not understand what all the problems are today. What a mess." I cannot wait for the next seventy-three years.

III. Key Word 1: Chosen (The Power of Choices)

Now with this as an introduction, let us look at our four key words. Verse 16 says, "understanding is rather to be chosen than silver." Our first word is the word chosen.

I have a message that I preach. I have preached it several times about the fact that I am quickly going to be sixty-six years old. I look back on my sixty-six years, and I can pretty much boil sixty-six years down into seven of the greatest things that God ever, I learned in life. My life, and I am sure it is probably true of your life if you are an older folk and you look back at it and have some understanding of the Bible, I mean, I learned six or seven, maybe eight of the greatest things out of my life that life is built on. I would say without a doubt, the first number one thing that I have learned in my sixty-six years and my travel through planet Earth is life is about the choices we make.

Now I would never pressure or presume to speak to you or for you, but I will speak to you on this matter. Wherever you are at in life today, good, bad, or indifferent, wherever your marriage is at in your life today, wherever your kids are at in life today, and wherever you want to get to in your life today, your life, good or bad, is where it is at simply because of the choices that we have made. We like to blame our problems on other people. It is very much a convenience because that takes away from us personal responsibility. I will be the first to tell you, this is not a message that is going to beat you up because you made some bad choices in life. We have all made bad choices in life. I have made bad choices in life. I never care about a mistake people make. I do not care what it is because we all make mistakes. What I care about is, did you learn from your mistake? I am going to clarify that here in just a little bit.

We have a ministry here that works with people. We call it the "people ministry," basically a counseling ministry. I have probably twenty, thirty, forty, maybe fifty of the sharpest people that you will ever meet who understand the issue. We have been working now for three or four years putting it all together. Basically, to break it down, when somebody comes in with problems in their lives, no matter what it may be—it may be marital problems, it may be personal problems, it does not matter—when somebody comes in and they have issues, real biblical-based trying to help you and get you out of what you are in has to start with one thing. One thing. That one thing is you have to stop making bad choices. You can never fix the problem in your life today with the same thinking that caused those problems. You have to start making good choices.

When somebody comes in and they talk to me, and we go through this and through that, I will say, "Hey, you know what? Here is what I will do for you. I will work with you one on one. If you are a lady, I will put a group of support ladies around you. If you are a guy, I will put a group around you, and we will work through this thing, and we will get the principles down. We may not be able to go out of here and fix all of your problems today, but I am going to tell you, we are going to do something that fundamentally is absolutely amazing if you will do it. That will be the beginning of you solving all of your problems." It is simply from this day forward, let us quit making bad choices. Let us quit making choices on your emotions. Let us quit making choices out of your anger. Let us quit making choices out of your desires or your flesh. Let us start making choices based on the principles of the Word of God. Now, if you will start doing that, we can then begin to fix every other problem you have got. Do you know why we cannot ever get there? Because you just keep adding to the pile, and we never get anywhere. Do you see how simple that is? It is the key to whatever you and I are today.

I am telling you, I have seen so many people that they never get their problems fixed because they just jump out of the frying pan into the fire. Get out of a bad marriage, jump right into a new one. Get out of a bad relationship. Do not even stop and ask themselves the question, "What happened here? What did I do? What is wrong with me that I need to fix so the next one does not go the wrong way?" Do you know why? Because it is always, "That is her fault. That is his fault. Well, let me tell you about my ex." Let me tell you something, there are always two issues in every marriage. You may not be able to fix him or her, but you can begin to fix you. To tell you the truth, that is the hardest part. It is easy to yell at your spouse. It is easy to blame them for everything. Look in the mirror and say, "You know what, Bob, you are the problem." Because in

my mirror, it just simply says, "Oh, no, you are not. You remember that Reverend Barker. You are the sweet little guy."

In weeks to come, about three weeks from now, we are going to begin a study on biblical parenting. We are going to get every parent that has a kid that is going to camp understanding what I am going to do, what I need them to do. For all of you who have little kids, your kids are not going to camp, it will be an absolute benefit for you. But I want to tell you today, the number one job of a mom and a dad, the number one job of parenting, it is real simple: it is to begin to instill a biblical value system in your children's life. Begin a process of insulating them against the things of this world. Parents get the reverse. They think, "I will just isolate them." You will never isolate them. That is a myth. That will never happen. You cannot be with them twenty-four/seven the rest of their life. You cannot continue to make choices for them the rest of their life. The reason why they get to be sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, and they start making terrible choices, it is because you never taught them not to make terrible choices. Oh, I am not saying you did not yell at them. I am not saying you did not whip them. I am not saying you did not set them down and correct them. I am saying you did not take the biblical approach that the Bible talks about providing a vision for your child. We will talk about it.

I am often asked. I get people all the time over the years that have kids that are fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, and they are incorrigible, and they cannot do anything with them. They try to look at the church as the fix-all. They try to think at me or Zach or some of you guys out there and some of you gals that just put them with them, and they will be just fine. That is fine. You guys are great for them, but I want to tell you something. The reason why many times you cannot make a difference in a child's life, even at fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, in the world we live in, do you know why? You have got nothing to work with. The parents have done absolutely nothing at building a foundation of a moral compass in their life. Now, we are supposed to come in and fix all of that? I say it all the time. The problem with incorrigible kids is not incorrigible kids. It is incorrigible parents. They get the wrong value system in life.

America as a nation, she is what she is today based on the choices that this country has made. I have always been an investigator of history. I have always thought that things in history are never portrayed right through Fox News, CNN, or whoever. I think they always give you the world's perspective on it. I think in major areas there is some real to get to the bottom of it. You have got to have a concept of God and the Bible in history, the Bible in the country, and lay the whole thing out. Man, I will tell you what, investigating history is an incredible thing. You have got to take your Bible, get a good understanding of history, and go back and scrutinize the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. There is a video back there in our bookstore that I did, what, thirty years ago, on the assassination of President Kennedy. Some of you were there when I did it.

Did you ever notice how in every election cycle in the last forty or fifty years, no matter who got in office, whether it was a Democrat or Republican, things continually got worse? The economy is not getting any better. The problems are not getting any better. The gangs in Chicago or East St. Louis are not going away. Last night was proof that you cannot even go to a nightclub. Though I will say if they had been in the Bibles today last night, they probably would all be alive

today. But that is just me, instead of being in a bar. Some of them are probably Baptist preachers because if they have congregations, they will drive a preacher to drink. This cycle will be no different.

The problem in America, the problem in America is not the Democrats. It is not the Clintons. It is not Obama. It is not the Republicans. It is not Nancy Pelosi. It is not Donald Trump. The problem in America is America now is a sixty-year stint on making bad choices. I do not care who you put in office until you put God on the throne of this country again, it is not going anywhere. Now, if I could get that, and I am a nobody, I have no college education. I was in the sixth grade so long that kids brought me an apple. They thought I was the teacher.

To make the right choices in life, whether it is you individually or us as a country, we must make our decisions based on wisdom and understanding. Common sense from a common Bible that was given to a common man. Whether you do it or not is totally a choice, our first word. It is totally a choice, a choosing you make, and you can never blame it on somebody else.

I have told you many times, there will be times in your life, there are times in my life, when something will happen in your life that you are not responsible for. Something bad will happen. Something unfortunate. Something tragic. Something unfair. Something that you did not deserve will happen in your life, and you have absolutely no responsibility of it happening. It was not of your choosing. But there will never be a time in your life in one of those situations where you may not be responsible for what happened, but you are responsible for how you deal with it. That comes back to choices. That is based on your core value system. The reason why I put such an emphasis on biblical principles around here is because they are the principles of life. They form your core value system. They give us the ability to make right choices in the face of issues that we are confronted with.

IV. Key Word 2: Highway (Life's Journey)

Now our second key word. Next verse. "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul." Our second word here is the word highway.

I do not know if you have ever noticed it or not, but all through the Bible you will find our choices in life are likened to you and I traveling on a highway, our journey through life. When the Lord comes back, one of the great studies to study is He comes up the King's Highway. What Jesus tells His disciples over there in the Gospels, to go out and gather people from life, He says, "Go out into the highways, the hedges, the byways." He compels them to come in from the highway. Look at Matthew 22:9 sometime or Luke 14. Why in Matthew 7:13 He says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Yet you are going to get destroyed. Life is a four-lane highway or the old paths.

Every town in America where sin, vice, and all the ungodliness of the world will have a street right down the middle called Broadway. You want to go to New York City to get sin on an educated cultural level? Go and catch a show at the Broadway. In life, I heard Hillary a couple of weeks ago talking about Donald Trump and how his nasty accusations and how she was so, she

was going to be clean, and she said, "You know what, he may take the low road in life, but I am going to take the high road." Life is a road. How many times somebody told you life is paved? The road of life is paved with good intentions. It is a road. When we win somebody to Christ, we open up the Bible. We win them to Christ by the what? Romans road of salvation. That is Romans 3, Romans 6, and Romans 10 if you do not know that.

In life, as you travel this highway of life, you are going to be faced with many detours, many side roads and exits for the little side trips of life. Just stop over and see the sights, the choices we make. I want to tell you something, getting off the main highway of life and getting onto the side roads of life is never a good idea.

I like classic horror movies. I like them because they are so stupid. I like them because they were done in a time, and they are so fundamentally ridiculous how anybody could be afraid of them. But I enjoy them. I enjoy watching them because they are all so predictable. Every horror movie I ever saw where people got killed, I mean, I got it in my mind. I remember when Psycho came out. Remember Psycho, the Bates Motel, Norman Bates? It was a classic that most of you, I can obviously tell, have missed in life. Well, anyway, this woman steals a lot of money, and she is running, and she is trying to get away, and she is going down the highway, and she is afraid that they are going to catch her. So she gets off the highway onto a side road, gets tired, drives up, and there it is, the Bates Motel. Remember the scene when she is taking a shower, that screaming music when Norman Bates loses his mind? He is talking to his mother up in the room, and she has been dead for about sixty years, and he is a taxidermist, so he has a taxidermied mommy. At the end of the movie, I have got to tell you, it is terrifying where she is walking up the steps and trying to find his mom, and the door opens, and all you do is see this shadow in a rocking chair going back and forth, and then it shows up. The petrified, dried up prune who has been dead for forty years, and he is from out of hide her, I guess, I do not know. But she is in the shower, and she is taking a shower, and he is stabbing her. He has got a wig on, he is dressed up like his mother, and he is hacking her to pieces. He puts her in a car and drops her in a swamp. Nobody comes looking for her. He kills him, puts his car in a swamp. That is a valuable swamp. It all started with her getting off the main road and getting on a side road.

Here is a test for your movie skills: Two Thousand Maniacs. Did you ever see it? I love it because it is always a bunch of goofy teenager kids, half guys, half gals, who get brainless, and they are always going to a beach party someplace down in Florida. In this particular movie, here again, "I know a shortcut." Drop the main road, start going, and then they run into this town that during the Civil War was a Confederate town that got wiped out by the North. So every hundred years, this town comes back to life and has a celebration, and anybody who comes into that town becomes the main course, dinner. It is an incredible movie. Well, here they are. Here is the girl, "Oh, we are going to a big party." Here again, they all got killed. Half of them got eaten. Nobody got out. They took a side road.

The Hills Have Eyes, one and two. Remember that one? These goofy looking, this family that lived out in the desert where they blew up the H-bombs in the test, and they became mutants. Here again, "Oh, we are going down to my family's thruster. We are going to Wally World," just having a... now that would have made Family Vacation even more exciting if they would have

went, but anyway. Here again, Dad, you cannot tell him anything. He knows everything. "I know a shortcut." Gets off the highway, goes down through here. You can guess what happened. One by one, they all got killed. You would have thought they would have learned, but no, The Hills Have Eyes Twodid the same thing.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Same thing. "I know a shortcut." You always have three or four girls who are the goofiest bimbos on the planet. Then you have two guys who are just nothing. Then you have one or two guys that are always rivaling for the leadership. It is all the same. They all go the same way. They take, "I know a shortcut. I know a way to get there." So they get off the main road. They start going down there, and it will happen. They either run out of gas. They break down. They are out in nowhere. Four or five, six goofy little teenagers. No cell phone service. Alone. "Well, there is a farmhouse. We can get a phone." It is over. Nice short trip. All the horror shows I have ever seen on TV, the folks get in real trouble and get killed by getting off the main highway, trying to take a shortcut, and get on a side road, and they wind up dead.

I want to tell you something this morning. Some of you here today, bless your hearts, and I love you, and I would do anything in the world to help you. I never get mad at anybody. I do not hold any grudges. I just want to help you. But I want to tell you something. Some of you are in bad shape spiritually this morning. You are the starring role in your own horror movie. Your life is a mess, and we want to try to help you. I want to try to help you. I am not just going to pass you off to somebody else because I am the reverend who never deals with anybody. But we cannot. Do you know why we cannot? Because you keep thinking you know a shortcut to success in life, and you will not listen to anybody, and you are wasting your time like somebody down today this morning in Cawker City, Kansas. Anybody know what is in Cawker City, Kansas? It is off the main highway. Anybody know what is in Cawker City, Kansas? It is the world's largest ball of twine. We are going to take a trip there someday. A waste of time. I wonder how many divorces came into being because going down Highway 70 through Kansas, he said, "I want to go to Cawker City, Kansas, and I hear they have the... this is spectacular, darling." "What is it, honey?" "The world's biggest ball of twine." You took a side trip, and you never got back on the main highway.

Now life on this highway, you are going to find a number of crossroads in which you will need to know which way you need to go. You have to choose, and to choose right, you need a value system. In life on this highway, you are going to meet people. Not everybody you need to meet needs to be your friend. There are some people who want to be your friend you need to steer clear of. There is some time in your life you are going to have to make a decision about marriage. Most people get married today like you pick up a hitchhiker. You are driving down the road, and you know you should not pick up hitchhikers. Here is this guy, it is raining, and here is this guy with this shivering look on his face like, "Please help me." For just a moment of time, you say, "Here it comes, oh, he looks okay." So you pull over. He comes up and he gets in the car, throws his bag in the back, and he says, "Thank you." He starts saying, "Man, I just tell you it was so cold out there, and I was so wet, I am sorry to get your car." You are thinking, "Oh, I did a really good thing. This is a good guy." And he is saying, "You know, I just want you to know I really

appreciate it because I have not killed anybody all day today, and you are the next one." It is over.

You meet somebody and you say, "He looks like a really good guy. She looks like a really good girl." You take him in life just like you get a hitchhiker in your car. You know nothing about them. You have never seen them operate under pressure. You know nothing about their biblical integrity. You know absolutely nothing about what they know in the Bible. You have never worked with them at any length of time in ministry. You never saw them in a leadership role in anything. They are just a hitchhiker along the road. Then you wonder why it does not work out. You need to watch more movies. You need to have a value system.

God will give you a job. The devil will also give you a job. You better decide which one when you have got to make that crossroads. How about God? Do you understand God as well as He understands you? You should. How about the Word of God? What was your choosing process? What in life do you know more about today than the Bible? How about family? Sometimes you have good family. Sometimes you have bad family. Sometimes it becomes the most unfortunate thing on the planet. But sometimes that is a crossroads. You just have to have a real value system to make the right choice. All the issues of life. All our lives will be faced with the issues we have as we travel through them. It is just that simple.

There are road signs in life in the Bible. There are. You go through life, and you go down the Bible as you drive your car on a highway. They put road signs along the side to tell you what is up ahead. That is what the Bible does. The Bible will tell you when up ahead the road is uneven, so you better slow down a little bit. There will be some times in life the Bible will tell you that your life will be a little uneven. It will say, "No passing." You have a lie. How many times have you seen somebody say, "Ah, I can make it," and a truck comes right over the hill? You made it. You made it real good. Made the six o'clock news.

I see signs that say, I always love this one, "Fresh oil." Now that is a good one because oil is the type of the Holy Spirit of God. You and I should have fresh oil every day of our lives. But you know what? When we are driving our cars, the worst thing we hate to see is that sign that says "fresh oil." Do you know why? Because it sticks all over your car. You do not mind the speed limit because you just go faster. You do not mind the curves because you are smart enough to get around them. You do not mind the uneven road. But with that fresh oil, you just want to avoid that fresh oil all the time, do not we? Yeah, fresh oil, that Holy Spirit of God, He will get all over you. He will stick to everything you do.

There are some road signs. "Curves up ahead." Better watch some of those relationship guys or girls. "Stop sign." Stop. Do you know what most people think stop means? Slow down. I had a buddy who was a state trooper one time. I have not talked to him for years, but he was a great guy. We had fun together. He always told me the latest highway patrol jokes. He was a Massachusetts state cop. He always told me the latest joke. He says, "I have got to tell you, Bobby." He says, "Look," he said, "I pulled over." He would always put himself in it. "I pulled over a guy the other day. He came up to a stop sign, just slowed down, and then just went right on through it. I lit him up, and I pulled him over. I went up there, and I said, 'Sir?' He said, 'Why

did you pull me over? I was not speeding.' I said, 'No, sir. You ran right through that stop sign.' And he said, 'That stop sign?' He said, 'Well, I slowed down.' He said, 'I slowed down.' And he says, 'Sir?' He says, 'Slow down and stop are two different things.' 'Yeah, but you do not understand. You are going to give me a ticket. I know it says stop, but I slowed down.' He says, 'I did not know what else to do. I grabbed him out of the car, got my PR-24 stick, and started beating him along the side of the head as hard as I could.' He kept yelling, 'Stop, stop, stop, stop.' He said, 'You mean slow down, do not you?'" Hey, when He says stop, stop.

Every ten years in Missouri, you have got to get your driver's license redone. I just got mine last year. I had forgotten. You go in there, and there is always a bunch of people. There are two things I just hate to do. I would rather go get my tooth pulled without any novocaine, and one of them is going to the license place. Nobody cares. I saw people in there, I think, were there for weeks. I am not kidding. So I am sitting down there, and I am watching all these people, and I am coming back. They are really bothered. I am thinking, "What is going on? What happened in the last ten years?" I said, this one lady, she had this book that she got off the thing. She is sitting back there. She says, "Oh, I flunked the test." I said, "Were your eyes bad?" She says, "No." You have to do an eye test, but then they give you a test on the road signs. They will just put the shape of the signs up, and then you have got to tell them what they mean. Well, I panicked. I had not even been up there yet. So I go up and get one, and I am doing a crash study. You talk about, I felt like God just told me I was a new Christian, and God just told me I was going to win somebody to Christ in twenty minutes, and I had to learn the Romans road in that short time. I am looking at that sucker, man. I am thinking on how to cheat. Can I write them on the back of my hand? Can I put them into a song? Stop, do not go. Move. I mean, I do everything I can do. So I go up there, and I look through the thing, pass the eye exam, came back, and I blitzed it. I passed it. But I thought about that. I thought about that this week as I was putting this together. I drive all the time. You drive all the time. I see those road signs on the side of the road all the time, and I just never pay any attention to them. You come Sunday morning, you get in your Bible, and you do everything spiritual on Thursday night, and I talk about them all the time. You do not pay any attention to them. Till the test comes.

V. Key Word 3: Pride (The Unteachable Spirit)

All right, our third word. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Now our third word will bepride.

Our third key word here will be the reason why a man or a woman will never choose wisdom and understanding. A man or a woman will always get off the highway onto the side roads. Pride is the number one issue in life. That is because it is the number one issue in the Bible. It was the first original sin. Nobody thinks it was Adam and Eve in the garden. No, it was the devil in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. "I will be like the most high God." By pride, if it counted, he would lift it up.

A prideful person, and we have all been around them, and they all have different tendencies. Some of them pick apart every person that they ever meet. They will pick apart every person they ever meet, but they will never turn that high pressure on themselves. I have seen them come

to church and pick apart every sermon a preacher preaches, and he applies nothing to their own life. It says "a haughty spirit." That means a proud, disdainful spirit. Somebody that has a very high opinion of themselves, lofty, arrogant, with a contempt for others.

I say something about the reason why I talk about the number one thing about a prideful person is they are always unteachable. You cannot teach them anything. Their greatest weakness is their inability to see their arrogance and refusing instruction from somebody who understands something better than they do. It is incredible. I have seen husbands that you could not teach a thing about how they treat their wives. They have no clue and want to learn about in the Bible the role of the husband. I have seen wives who would reject any notion that they needed to change some things about their life and their marriage, the role of the woman. I have seen Christians. You could not teach them a thing about the Bible. They think they have got it all down. I have seen parents absolutely blinded when it comes to their own children. Little kid being disrespectful, disobedient.

We used to have a little kid here. Oh, he is grown up now. This has been years ago. He was a meanest little kid, meaner than a stripe of the snake. He was the meanest little kid that you ever saw. You go up and say hi to him. I went up one time. One time I went up and said hi to him, and he looked at me and he kicked me right in the leg. Me, the preacher. Me, Bob Alexander. He did not care that I am on YouTube. His mom came over and said, "Isn't he cute?" And I said, "Yeah, I wish he was mine for about a week. Dragging him around a parking lot of Walmart on a chain at fifty-five miles an hour. We will see how he likes to kick then."

We had this kid this last week that raped this girl. He has got six months for it. Do you know why he got six months for it? Because he wrote a letter to the judge and said, "I did what I did because of the parties I went to." If I had a judge, I would have wrote him back and said, "I just gave you one hundred years. I did what I did because I am the judge, and you did wrong, and that is my courtroom, and you are going to jail." Six months. Remember the kid that killed those people or however he did it, and he got off completely because his lawyer said he had "affluenza"? The influence and the affluence of his mom's money and dad's money made him do it. Where are these people when we need them?

When pride is the determining factor in our lives, it will always lead to destruction and our downfall. I am going to tell you something, guys. You can play it all you want. One morning you will wake up, and she will say, "I do not love you anymore," and it is over. It is over. One day those kids will move out right into the undisciplined world based on the undisciplined lifestyle they had in their family. Arrogant pastors will lose their church. Parents will lose their kids, and an arrogant husband and wife will lose their marriage. As the Bible says, this is only the beginning of sorrows.

VI. Key Word 4: Humble (The Teachable Spirit)

Now let us look at our last key word here. Verse 19. Really goes along with the other one. "Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." Now our

last key word here is the word humble. Having a humble spirit. This will be a teachable spirit in relationship to the last one, which was unteachable.

I have got to tell you, one of the great blessings of the ministry in this church anyhow, and one of the greatest aspects of the ministry in dealing with people, is to actually watch this take place in a person's life. From my vantage point, being able to see it all and understand it all and be involved in it, I actually see this process play itself out. That is an incredible thing. The fact that God gives a man or a woman a new spirit, takes away the old life and all the old problems they had, and gives them a new one with Him because they have a teachable spirit. It is an incredible thing to see.

I have seen it so many times. Somebody will come to softball or volleyball. As far as I am concerned, two of the greatest ministries of this church have outreached people. They will come out and they will play softball or volleyball, and then after a while, they will come to church. Maybe first they are really not into it, and they have sat through the devotions in the softball or the volleyball, and then they come to Jason's Deli, and then first thing you know, they are showing up on Sunday morning, and then bang, you see them on Thursday night, and then you see them back there coming out with a Bible, or one of you people buy them a Bible like you all do, and then they start hanging out with everybody at the events and all those things. The next thing you know, they want to get disciplined, and off they go.

I put this sermon together this week, and I know I could say this over and over and over again with so many people in here, but this family came to my heart, and it is a classic example, and that is the Oring family over here. Two of the best family in the world. Little Logan up here blowing his trumpet, and last night when that guy hit that foul ball, I never saw a guy run so fast with that little Jaybird guy going after that ball. But I talk about them because, what was it, three or four or five years you came to volleyball and softball and never one time came to church. But somebody cared about you enough to keep inviting you. You kept coming out, and you guys are invaluable to me today, and I love you very much, but you are a classic example of what I am saying here and how that we reached out to you, we provided something for you, you came never knowing that God was behind the whole scene to look where you are at today. See, it is incredible to watch that trend, and I have seen it in so many of you.

Everybody thinks, "Well, I have to stop ball," or "We are at volleyball." Maybe to you it is; to God it is something else. I do not know how many couples and families have come into this church through something like that, that they came because we never would have got them into church, but because it is a ministry, and somebody reaches out to them and gives them something that they want, and then God uses it to take them and to bring that tender, humble spirit to Him. Incredible, incredible.

Sometimes, unfortunately, I have seen them come and not get moved by anything. I have seen them come and get the same things that these people got or many of you got that responded to it. They get the exact same thing. They have the exact same opportunity. The Holy Spirit of God does it the exact same way. One will say, "Man, this is what I want," and the other one will say,

"No thanks." One will be teachable, and the other will not be teachable. Pride will always be the sin behind an unteachable spirit.

Quickly, I want to give you eight warning signs of an unteachable, prideful person. I am not saying they have all of these, but you begin to see two or three of these, you begin to pay attention. The first thing I always look at for a person who has got a lot of pride in their life and has an unteachable spirit, did you ever notice how they cannot ever get the basic things down in the Bible? They always struggle with the basic things, and they always go through life majoring on the minors, and they cannot get the simple, most practical things out of the Word of God. Many times, most of the time, and not all of the time, they all have a whole year and hour approach to life, but they all have some problem in their own life they are not willing to deal with.

- They become very judgmental over stupid stuff.
- Very judgmental.
- They think they know more about it when it comes to life in the Bible than anybody else.
- They always have trouble in relationships with people.
- They will hold people to a higher standard yet not hold themselves to that standard.
- They will always have standards for others that are unrealistic based on their preferences, not Bible.
- They are totally unteachable past a certain point.
- Many times, most times, when they have an issue, it is never them, it is always somebody else.

The Bible says in Proverbs 16:19, "Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." You see, the proud are always dividing the spoil because they always have got to be right, they always have got to conquer, they always have got to have the victory. So they all get together and divide up the spoil. The point here is this is why Jesus never hung out with that crowd. He never hung out with the rich and the famous. He always was with the poor and the lowly.

Now on the subject of staying humble, these two go together. Here is the other side of it, here are eight aspects of staying humble in the Word of God in your life.

1. Always respect and submit yourself to God and to those whom God has put over you to hold you accountable and help you. A good leader will be a good follower. Do not go out and try to do something until you approve your leadership through your followership.
2. Be honest in your limitations. Know your strengths and know your weaknesses.

3. Take personal responsibility for your actions. Do not blame it on somebody else.
4. Do not pretend you know the Bible when you really do not. It is okay not to have all the answers. A lot of pastors will not do a Bible study on Thursday night because they are just afraid to death that somebody will ask them a question that they do not know, and therefore they will lose face with some other people. Well, I will tell you right up front, there will be questions people ask me that I do not know. I have a distinct advantage over most pastors. I can make something up, and most of you will not catch it. That is not true. It is okay not to know everything. There are a lot of people in the world that know more than the Bible than I do. There will be times they do ask me a question, I will just look at you and say, "I do not know. I do not have a clue." It is okay. You have got to know your limitations.
5. It is okay to ask questions; that is what we are here for. Did you ever notice how some people ask them so they can start an argument with you over it? You ask to learn. If you really want to learn, shut up and listen. You want to argue, join a debate club.
6. Do not allow yourself to get judgmental toward others, especially when you have your own issues that you are dealing with.
7. Build a life of biblical principles and make your spirit follow those instead of your own pride. Work at seeing others like God sees them, not in the judgmental, prideful way that we all have a tendency to do sometimes. Be kind to everybody, not just those in your social class.
8. Most of all, weigh what you say. Think before you speak. Some people really look like an idiot when they think they know the Bible, and they really do not.

Proverbs 29:11

A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

Ecclesiastes 5:3

For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Proverbs 24:7

Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

Reading books on a subject does not make you an expert on a subject. You get the Bible principles down on any subject, and you be sure you have searched the Scriptures and got them all. The key to the Bible is one simple basic thing: definitive verses. On any subject you are going to have, know, or talk about, the first thing you better do is find out where the definitive passage is in the Bible. I am going to explain that to you one of these times here on a Thursday night when we get around to it. Or you will just wind up showing the world how little you really know about the Bible. I call them dirty, hairy Christians. They are all legends in their own mind.

You can pretend you know the Bible right up to the point that you tangle with somebody who really does, and then the game is over.

VII. Historical and Biblical Examples of Pride and Humility

The pride and arrogance of a man or a nation, the haughty spirit that thinks it can do its own thing and play with God's Word. The dustbin of history is filled with the nations and their arrogancy. The Bible says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." For so many years England cried, "Britannia rules the waves! The sun never sets on our pretty soil!" And then they dumped the Bible and God's Word, lost all their possessions, and today they are bankrupt and basically overtaken by the Muslims. Germany cried, "Today Germany, tomorrow the world!" She lost six million of her prime young men in World War II, lost ten million in World War I, and now seventy years later, still an occupied country. Greece cries, "Scholarship, art, culture, philosophy, we are the greatest!" Rome tramples over them and buries them. Greece today has remained a fourteenth-rate power ever since. Rome cries, "All roads lead to Rome, the eternal city, look at us!" Buried by 400, 500 AD when the Huns and the Vandals sacked her and burned her with fire, and today, outside of maybe Shanghai and Cairo, she is the filthiest city in the Eastern Hemisphere. Spain, the greatest sea power in the world, bragged about conquering the world, looked at that little island England and said, "We are going to come over with the Spanish Armada, and we are going to defeat you, and we are going to bring England back under the Roman Catholic Church." In 1588, July 29, off they sat in an English Channel. A typhoon came up and wiped out the whole fleet, and that is why you got the Bible you got today. That is the same God that gave you your tires, the same God that worked in your life. He will give you tires, He will give you your family, and He will sink an enemy in the English Channel. Same God you have got.

It is also true of men and women. Whether they are saved or whether they are lost, pride leads to destruction and always comes before a fall. That will be October or November. The Bible is filled with great examples of this, and there are two I just want to close with here.

Genesis 27, probably my favorite chapter in the Bible for me personally. It is about Jacob and God. If you look at my Bible right across the top of the pages in kind of big letters, you see this little title, "The Day God Gets You Alone." God had a plan for Jacob. Jacob, by the way, means "schemer." It means "some planner." But God had a plan for Jacob, and Jacob wanted no part of that plan. Jacob was enjoying his life of scheming and getting, doing all the things he was doing, and he was living a high life. But God had a job for him, and there was a day that God dealt with Jacob, and it is a day when God got him alone. God said, "Jacob, I have got a job for you." And Jacob said, "Ah, you know what, I am having a great time." The Bible says he wrestled with the angel. If you read the book of Hosea, you will find out that that wrestling was not a physical match. It was between two wills of what God wanted him to do and what he wanted to do, just like you and I go through. Do you know what God did? God reached down and touched the hollow of his thigh, and that muscle shrank, and for the rest of Jacob's life, he limped. Do you know why he needed to limp? He needed to limp the same way that you and I need to limp sometimes with something that stupid we did in our life that God uses that always is a point of

reference never to go back to it. The old saying is, "Never trust a man who does not limp." Because it always reminded him, the rest of his life, it always reminded him of the day he wanted what he wanted over what God wanted. Yes, he may have limped the rest of his life, but he took the satisfaction of knowing that God loved him enough and cared about him and thought he was valuable enough to touch that thigh so he could do it. Do you know what happens in Genesis 27 right after that? God changes his name from Jacob to Israel. There will be a time in your life when you have to choose which way you are going to go. You are going to wrestle with God over it because, oh, we think we know better. We have got it. We are educated. We have got all the answers down right up to the point where He touches your thigh. Jacob was a lot better the rest of his life limping than he was running a hundred-yard dash without it.

I will tell you the second one. The second one is over in Judges. Judges 7. The great story of Gideon's three hundred. The Midianites. God says to Gideon, "How many soldiers are there?" He says, "We have got thirty-one thousand, Lord." God says, "That is too many." He goes through a process of elimination, and he winds up with three hundred. Do you know God does that same process? This is not just a thought. God does that same process in every church. Do you know that? You get a big church of twelve hundred, one thousand, three thousand, four thousand people. Do you know what the thing you need to do? You need to go on a diet. You need to lose about three quarters of what you have got. You need to get down to a fighting weight. He had thirty-one thousand in his church. God said, "We cannot get anything done with thirty-one thousand." He came back and he said, "Well, I have got it down to nineteen thousand." God says, "That is still too many." Come back, and I have got three hundred. God says, "Now we will get something done."

So they are going to go take the Midianites on. This black night, dark picture of the church. He says, "Okay, guys, we are going to beat the Midianites. Here is what we want to do. Joshua, you get every man to go get a trumpet. You get every man to go get a torch. And you get every man to get a clay pitcher or a pot." Three things they had to have. Now he had to have a trumpet because they are going to sound the alarm. That is the message that God has given you to preach. They had to have a vessel because that is a picture of your body, an earthen vessel of clay. They had to have a light because the light is the message of God, the light of God shining His countenance in you. So they put that light in the clay vessel. So now we have got a picture of you and me about the new battle. We all have a message. We all have the trumpet. If you are saved today, you have the light inside you. Your body is the clay temple where the light is in. But I want you to notice when the battle time came and the war was to be fought, he told them, "You take that vessel and you break it." And when you break that vessel, the light will come out, and then you blow that trumpet. I am telling you. You have got a message, and you have got the light of God in you, and it is in your body, your vessel. But it will never go forth, and you will never sound the alarm, and the world will never see the light until you get broken. You have to come to the end of self. Then God can use you.