

I. Introduction to Proverbs and Today's Message

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn to the book of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter 16. Today we're going to be back in the book of Proverbs. We've been out of it for the last four or five weeks before running up to camp. I was gone last week, and I appreciate the great job that the guys did last week in preaching. But we're back in Proverbs today.

We have been working with the parents before camp and took that time to really prepare the parents for what God was going to do at camp. God certainly did some great things at camp. Now we're in the final phase, and that is putting it all back together. We've now got our teams ready to go, our teenagers in our high school that are going to be going to Lincoln. They're broken down into evangelistic teams, but they're also accountability teams.

Then I've got the single ministry, the young men and the young ladies that work with me there. We have our meeting here coming up. We'll put some real direction to it when we get to that point. We're trying to get everything we can to make sure that these kids get everything that they need. So we're excited about it.

Today is going to be a very practical message. I think it'll probably be a message that'll really help you no matter where you're at in your Christian life. The job of this church is to always give you what you need to edify you, to help you be better. Obviously, there are times you have to preach hard and you have to preach against some things, but that will not be the case today. There are many times, especially in the book of Proverbs, it's such a practical book, and it has so many great practical lessons for us.

Today we're going to be in chapter 16, and we're going to be reading here in just a few moments, verses 23 through 25. You'll remember, just so we've been out of it for a while, to put it all back into context for you, the book of Proverbs is basically a contrast of two men and two women.

➤ The wise man and the foolish man

- We have in the book of Proverbs a wise man. The wise man will be anybody who does what God wants him to do with his life. He follows God's instructions. He does everything that God tells him to do, and we see the end result of his life.
- The other man is a foolish man. This will be a man who doesn't do anything that God tells him to do. He does his own thing. He follows his own set of rules, and we see what happens in his life.

At the same time, it's about two women.

➤ The strange woman and the virtuous woman

- It's about a strange woman who represents for us any strange, unsaved woman in life who wants to destroy you, but also organized religion. It's a picture of Baal worship in the Old

Testament and the false religions of today that will entrap somebody, enslave somebody, and destroy their life.

- Then you have the virtuous woman. The virtuous woman in the book of Proverbs is a picture of the end result, what you ought to be as the bride of Christ to your husband. When we get to Proverbs 31, it's going to be an incredible chapter for you to understand and get an insight into what your relationship should be to God. It's an incredible, incredible chapter.

So you have these contrasts working back and forth through the book of Proverbs. In the book of Proverbs, you'll also remember, you'll find it breaks down in three different ways.

- 1.) It breaks down as all your Bible does in a doctrinal application. That has to do with prophecy in the future.
- 2.) It has to do with a historical application. That is what actually took place in history.
- 3.) And then an inspirational application, how it will apply to your life and my life.

The instructions of a father to his son. Doctrinally, we know that it's the instructions of God to His son, the nation of Israel. Exodus 4 tells us that in a corporate sense, the nation of Israel as a nation is God's son. Inspirationally, it's you and me. We're born into God's family. You become a child of God, a son of God. It's God's instructions in a practical way on the issues of life for you and for me. Historically, it's Solomon's own son, Rehoboam, who we know from reading our Bible and history of his life, he didn't follow the advice and became pretty much a mess in his life and throughout the Bible.

Proverbs basically will lay out for us what a life of walking and obeying God's Word will do for us. I guess in its fundamental understanding of the book, that's what it does. It simply shows you the cause and the effect of following God's instructions and then the cause and the effect of our lives of not following God's instruction. The end result of life. The principles on the issues of life that we all face.

Now let's read our text today, Proverbs 16:23-25. Here's what it says:

Proverbs 16:23-25

The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

II. The Heart of the Wise Teaches His Mouth

In Proverbs 16, we saw a couple of months ago, we were told that it was better to get wisdom than to get gold. It was better to get understanding than choice silver. Without a doubt, wisdom and understanding is the byproduct of the book of Proverbs. These two key elements that the book of Proverbs will bring into our lives if we allow it to. In Proverbs 16:23, we see what a man who does these things will become in his life when he gets wisdom and understanding.

Proverbs 16:23 says:

The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

Now there are two simple, profound concepts here. When you get your heart aligned with God's heart, it will, through wisdom and understanding, teach you to have a better control of what you say. We all need to stop and think before we speak. The thing that usually gets us in trouble in any situation is when we open our mouths and insert our foot in it before we stop and think.

The greatest example of this today, and you know me, I am not political one way or the other. I couldn't give a flip who wins the election. I don't care. Everybody wants Trump to get it because you think the world will be better. Everybody is afraid Hillary will get it, and the world is going to be a lot worse. Let me tell you something. We are on the brink of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It does not matter who gets in. We are in trouble in America, not because of the Democrats or because of the Republicans, but because God's man standing at the pulpit dumped the book about 100 years ago. You can put in whoever you want. Put in Mickey Mouse. I don't care. Put in Pluto.

When you get your heart aligned with God's heart and you get wisdom and understanding, it will have a profound effect that comes out of your mouth. My example will be Donald Trump. He's a guy that every time he opens his mouth, he says something he shouldn't say. He's so provocative in what he says. He just gets up there. He shoots from the hip. He's never been in politics before, and he doesn't understand what a steel trap politics is. So he gets up there, says what he says, and then everybody takes it and clobbers him. He does not think. Here again, he's got all this ammunition against his opponent that he could be using. But he spends all of his time defending himself in the dumb things that he says.

As he, as all of us, need to think before we speak, we need to realize that before we say something, we need to understand what we're saying. What you and I say needs to be filtered through the principles of the Word of God. I talk a lot about biblical principles, and many of you are beginning to understand why, how important they are. When you apply them to your heart, it will come out of your mouth in what you say.

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Whatever you put in your heart is going to come out of your mouth. When you put the biblical principles in, it acts like a filter. You think before you speak. The heart of the wise teaches his mouth and adds learning to his lips. This man of Proverbs 16 is wise, and through his wisdom he understands all things around him.

Proverbs 14:6

A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

You and I need to come to the place in our lives, through the wisdom of Proverbs and the understanding we get through the Word of God, that we have the ability to figure things out. See

them as they really are. It's so important in light of what we'll look at today, because a lot of things that you look at and you see one way are not really the way they really are. This is where understanding and wisdom comes in.

III. Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding

I've told you many times, Proverbs defines three things for you. It defines knowledge. It defines wisdom. And it defines understanding. Those are three words that we hear all the time. Most people never come to an understanding of what they mean from the Bible.

- 1.) Knowledge is facts. Facts about something. When you have the facts, you have knowledge.
- 2.) Wisdom is a next step up. Wisdom is taking those same facts and now applying them to your life through something that you do. It's like going to driver's ed. You can go to driver's ed class all you want and you get a lot of knowledge about driving. You don't get wisdom in driving until you get behind the wheel. It's just that simple.
- 3.) But then we have understanding. In a sense, understanding will be how God fits into it. I've given you many, many illustrations of that, and I'm not going to do that again this morning. I'm just trying to bring you up to speed here. Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Understanding will be God's part in anything. Anything with your ability to look at any circumstance in life, any situation in life. Anything you come up against, and you'll have the knowledge, you'll have the wisdom, but when you have the understanding, you'll see how God is in it or how He is not in it.

Man's ability to see life and through God's wisdom and understanding, not only see it, but then be able to speak about it to others intelligently. That's the key. I watched some of you grow. I watched when you came in here. You didn't know a lot about the Bible, but you knew less about talking about it.

One of the tragic things that people, well, it's not tragic, it's kind of funny, but one of the things that people do all the time, young Christians, they'll come to a Thursday night Bible study. They'll hear this great thing laid out that they've never heard before, and it's absolutely something that they think is the greatest thing. Then they'll try to go to somebody else and explain it to them, and it falls flat on its face because what you're doing, you're out of your excitement. You're trying to convey what God gave you, but when you don't understand it, it's hard to convey it. It's hard to convey it.

I tell people all the time, people go around and tell people what Christ will do for them, what God will do for them. That's okay. But what it really ought to be is you going out and telling people what God has done for you. I mean, who cares what He can do for them? Show them by your own life example what He's done for you. Then they can better understand it. You put it into a context, you see, but that's where we're at today. That's where we're at today. Man's ability to speak intelligently. That's the key. Knowing what you're talking about.

I put so much emphasis here on giving you so much information that you take and your ability to digest it, learn it, but then to speak to it. I want intelligent people in my church who understand

intelligent things about the Bible, who can converse with anybody on any subject. If you get set on a plane and you're flying somewhere, you're reading your Bible, somebody's going to ask you a question. Or maybe just talk to you in general about something. You need to be able to... Most Christians in the eyes of the world are dumb and stupid. They have a mental picture that people have of what Christianity is, and it doesn't have... It's not very favorable. You need to turn the tables and let them know that when they talk to you about anything, you're up on the matter. You know what you're talking about. When it comes to the Bible, you really know what you're talking about.

IV. Adding Learning to Your Lips

Then the second part of this verse, it adds learning to his lips. How important that is. As a child of God, you never stop learning and you never stop growing. In Christianity today, there's the illusion of being a Bible scholar. People look at men who are learned men, who have spent years and years and years and got the title, "Well, they're a Bible scholar," or "They know this and they know that." We stand in awe of that. We think, "Wow, that is something really special." Let me tell you something. That's an illusion. When it comes to the Bible, there are no scholars. When it comes to the Word of God, there are no experts. People put that out so they can control you. You look at them, reverence them, and think that, "Wow, they know a lot more about it than I do. They're the ones that I need to look to."

What happens is exactly what happened back in Isaiah 14. Exactly what happened in Isaiah 14:14 when Lucifer rose up and he said, "I will be like the Most High God." Human nature likes that. Human nature likes to have some control over other human beings. It's a thing where men or women will try to have control over you. One of the ways they do it... Have you ever been in a situation where you're in a foreign country, maybe they speak Spanish, you don't, and the person you're with does? How left out you feel in their conversations? The next thing is, you know they're talking about you, especially when they look at you and laugh. Now they're not, but you're left out and you feel inadequate. You feel like they have a superiority over you because you don't know what they're talking about.

Bible scholars do the same thing. They'll talk about great words like eschatology, hermeneutics. They'll talk about all these great terms that everybody throws out that the common man sits there and says, "Oh boy, what are they talking about?" They do that to control you. They do that to make you feel inferior to them. The truth of the matter is they may know more Bible than you, but that's your fault. Because when it comes to the Word of God, there's nothing that holds you back. You ought to know that Bible inside and out. Here you learn the Bible inside and out. Here you get it inside and out. What you do with it is on you. But you get it.

My goal is to turn out every man and woman that I can that loves that book, that believes that book, that takes a stand on that book. For these last days, we can speak intelligently to a world that has lost its intelligence. There are no scholars in truth. We're just all students on different levels. We're all students trying to study. You may be on a higher level than a person next to you. You may be on a lower level than a person behind you, but we're all just students. After salvation, you begin to grow and you begin to learn and you begin to mature. It never ends. The

Bible lays out the seven stages of spiritual growth, where you start out as a baby when you get saved, watch you up those seven steps, and then it talks about the aged. Everyone who has really understands and has the ability to speak to people about God.

Hebrews 5:14 talks about the fact that we ought to exercise our senses, that we don't want to be somebody who has to go through the basic fundamentals time after time over and over again. That you exercise your senses by reason of use, using the Bible. This is why I try to get you involved in things that we do. This is why I try to get you to the point where you get into a ministry, you get into this or you do that, because those things exercise your senses and in time gives you the ability to discern between good and evil. Hebrews 5:14, and you'll be able to talk about any subjects at all from God's standpoint. I don't care what it is. I don't care what it is at all.

You got on a plane someplace and you talk to a lawyer, you can take him back and show him how the Ten Commandments were the foundation of every law that we have today. You want to talk to somebody about military history, you can go back and show them the great concept of Christianity, being a militant concept that we're going to be a good soldier. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We want to talk about science, go back to Job 26, Job 38, go back to Genesis 1. Wherever you go, wherever you go, Proverbs 16:23 says, as you grow, you need to add learning to your lips. You want to know more about the Bible this year than you did last year. You want to be able to speak to it better this year than you did last year. Your ability to speak to issues on a higher degree, a level of spirituality.

I watch this take place in your lives. I watch this actually happen with so many of you. You come in here, you're so stupid, you don't even know anything, you don't even suspect anything. Anytime you grow, you mature, you learn, you apply, and then brother, you go out of here and you can be turned loose on anybody, anytime, anywhere. You now have the ability to speak to issues on a spiritual level.

V. Practical Ministry Examples

My two, and I always, the ministry for me is a fun thing. I never looked at it as work. I just enjoy it. I enjoy it every way. I enjoy the good and the bad. I enjoy the good people and the goofy people. I mean, we're all goofy. I enjoy it all. But I got to tell you, two of my favorite things that I do, and I enjoy it all, and tomorrow it'll probably be something else, but right now this morning, because I need it for this message. I'll change it next time I preach something else. My two favorite things that I do right now, more than I have, I just enjoy. I mean, some things you really like to do, I enjoy Thursday night Bible study, I do. I like doing that. But some things you just enjoy. Some things that just, I can't wait for to get there. And for me, it's two basic areas, and it deals with you.

1. First of all is my singles. We started a couple of years ago, a singles ministry where I took all of the singles that were single, and I put them into a group. We meet once a month, and I brought them right in with me to help me do the ministry. Now you guys are going to see how it's paying off, because all this thing was moving in a direction. Now God has given us the greatest camp we ever had. We have all these kids, and it's now you young men, you

singles and you single young ladies that can take these young girls and young men and really mentor them, be there for them, be the encouragement for them, help support the parents with them. I'm excited about that. I enjoy our time together. I have every one of them, a different guy or a gal will do a devotion. Blows me away what they do. I have never had a bad one. They always are good. They're prepared, and they're ready to do the job. When I listen to somebody preach that's a younger guy, I always have four or five things that I look for just to see how they're doing. These guys knock them off every day. And the girls too. I mean, they just do an incredible, incredible job.

2. My other thing is I enjoy is our people ministry. We're off for the summer. We start again here in a month or so, but I just, I love the people ministry. What we did was three or four years ago now, I can't even keep track of it. I asked for volunteers who really wanted to work with me on a high level of understanding why people have problems. I made it for volunteers. I didn't pick or choose anybody. I let you decide. We meet once a month on a Saturday morning, and I basically did this. I just started to bring everybody through from Genesis all the way through the end of the Bible. I think we're in 2 Chronicles now. What I started to do was just bring them through and show them every example in the Bible of why a person has problems. I showed them the good, the bad, and yes, the ugly. I showed everything in it. We just started in Genesis, and it's taken us four years to get where we're at. It's been a great thing where I just show them the basic fundamental.

I remember starting out before we ever got into the Bible, I showed them the two reasons why any man, any woman on planet earth will have problems. Because before you can deal with them, you have to understand why. I laid that out very clearly to them. They're getting it all down in little notebooks.

The next thing I talked about was a principle that I use all the time out of 1 Kings 3. It was a Solomon principle. How you look at situations that you don't know who's telling you the truth. Hey, when you get into marital problems, it's a he said, she said. I found out that both of them lie. I don't mean they lie on purpose. I mean, it's human nature. You want to present yourself in the best light. I get it. And the other person in the bad light. I get it. I understand that. But what I've learned over the years is the great principle that Solomon did.

Years ago, when Solomon was king, two women came to him. Those two women had a baby. He doesn't know these women. He knew nothing about them. They come into his throne there and they say, "Hey, look, this is my baby." She says, "No, it's my baby." She said, "No, it's my baby." Solomon said, "What's going on here?" She says, "We both had babies. Last night, she rolled over on her baby and smothered it. While I was sleeping, she took my baby." The other woman said, "Nah, that's not how it went. You're lying. That's not how it went down. You rolled over on your baby. And while I was sleeping, you took my baby."

Now Solomon, this is our problem. You know, that's a problem. Solomon doesn't know these women, and both of them are of dubious character. The Bible says they're both harlots. How did he solve it? There are going to be times when you're faced with a situation just like this. This is what I taught them. These are the kind of things I gave them. There's going to be times when somebody comes in, two Christians come in, and they got issues with each other. One's going to

say he did it. The other one's going to say, "No, he did it," or "She did it," or "They did it." And you got your stand here. You're like Solomon. You don't know who to believe.

So Solomon's answer was classic. He calls for a sword. He cuts the baby and one says, "I'll just cut the baby in half. You take half, you go, you're half." He's happy. Well, the moment he said that and this guy came in with a sword, the real mother said, "Oh, no, no, don't kill my baby. Give it to her. I'd rather have her have it alive than me take it home dead." The woman who it wasn't said, "Go ahead and cut it in half."

Now, you see the wisdom in that? You say, "Well, I don't see the wisdom in that." Well, the wisdom is this. He took a sword. Hebrews 4:12-13 says that the Word of God is a sharp two-edged sword. When I have two people come in and one says one, you know what I do? I just pull out the sword. I just give them both something to do in the Word of God that has nothing to do with the other, that has to do with them. It'll only take you three or four days to find out under the auspice of a sword who wants to do right and who doesn't. That's an incredible book. He put them under a sword. I taught them that. I showed them how that when you put people under the Word of God, it always produces who wants to do right, who doesn't. It's just the way it works.

You remember, I took them to Genesis 3 and I showed them the devil's plan for the next 6,000 years. How it fits into what we do. I took them into Genesis 3 and I showed them how people will use the Bible, will use God to cover their sin, but just because somebody, the standard thing. "I swear to God, I didn't do that." Well, if God killed everybody who swore to God they didn't do it when they did do it, there wouldn't be anybody left on planet earth. You know, that's what Eve did. Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." You know, that wasn't the man from the Lord. I showed them how people will cover up the things that they do that are wrong by bringing God into it. You don't get fooled by that. There are things you follow. These are the things I taught them.

I showed them in Genesis 4, where after Cain was going to kill his brother. I showed you how there's a pathway, there's a point in every man and woman's life before they sin that they look at it and they have two options, clearly in Genesis 4. Oh, it's incredible stuff. This is what I taught them. This is what I taught them.

I took them to Genesis 19, Lot, remember Lot? Down there in Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah is what it was. Sodom and Gomorrah. He's down there in that terrible, wicked place. He gets out. God gets him out. I showed him by that one of the great fallacies that people get into that changing geographical locations does not solve your problems. The problem wasn't getting Lot out of Sodom. The problem was getting Sodom out of Lot. I told him those things. I showed him things like that.

I took him over to Genesis 27, the story of Jacob stealing the blessing and the birthright from Esau. Boy, that's a great one. Remember guys, I showed you that one. Many of you use these things. I gave them to you. So you would use them as you would grow and learn and add things to your life. He goes in there to Isaac. Isaac is old. Jacob is putting on a deception. He's deceiving his father. But the old man, he's not quite sure here. He says one of the greatest, greatest lines that I've used over and over again when somebody tells me a story and they're not

telling me the truth. You know what he said? He says, "Hmm, hmm, boy, I don't know. Yeah, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm. You know what? It smells like Esau, but it sounds like Jacob."

Somebody says, "Well, I heard that." You know what? Come here. You know, Anna, we were talking to this person over here. You know what? I don't know what you, it just doesn't smell right to me. You know what I mean? We say something rotten in Denmark. I've never been to Denmark. I don't know how it smells. You guys would hunt. But you're out there, you know, in a deer stand and you watch this deer come into a clearing and she looks around. Next thing she does, it smells out of air. You know what she's smelling for? You. I always ask people, "Are you smelling what you're selling?" It's how you spot something phony. It doesn't add up. It smells like Esau, but it sounds like Jacob. Remember, I gave you those things.

I took you in 1 Kings 18 and showed you when you deal with people with depression, why they get depressed, how to get them out of depression. I took you to 2 Kings 6 and showed you spiritual warfare. I took you over to 2 Samuel 5-6 and I showed you how to break satanic strongholds in somebody's life. I did all of that, every piece of that, and a lot more of these. But I did all of that, you know why? Because I want to add learning to your lips. I want to give you the ability to be able to speak to the issues that people struggle with, be able to look at their situations and understand it, not get caught into the deception, not get fooled.

Coming out of my car this morning, my phone rang. A woman on the phone on the other end, she says, "I speak to Pastor Alexander," and I said, "This is he." She says, "Pastor Alexander, I have a dire circumstance and situation." I said, "Well, what is it, ma'am?" She says, "I have seven kids. I have no job. My husband won't support us. And I don't have any food. We don't have any gas. We can't pay the rent. I just need some assistance."

Now, I get ten calls like this a week. You know me, you know I'm the most sympathetic guy in the world. I help anybody. But I'm not an idiot either. I know that we went for like three or four years without a sign up front. The first time, the first week we put a sign up, we had nine people show up. They're just going down 40 Highway. "Here's a place we can go. Here's a place we can go." I told her, I said, "You know what? I said, ma'am? I said, I'd be glad to. I said, our church, we have, we have, we have, we'll help you any way we can. I said, we love the Lord. We're a church that loves people who love the Lord. You love the Lord, ma'am?" "Oh, yeah," everybody loves the Lord when they need something. Did you ever notice that? I said, "Well, ma'am, I'd be glad to help you. I'll tell you what, I just need a little verification. I said, give me the name of your pastor and the church. I'm going to call him. And if he said that you're a good member and standing there, you can have whatever you need." It got just that quiet. Ever been to a turkey farm right the day after Thanksgiving? It was just like that. Nothing. And I said, "What is your pastor's name?" She said, "Well, I don't know." I said, "You go to a church, but you don't know who the pastor is." I said, "What church do you go to?" She didn't know that either.

In other words, it was a sham. She was down the phone book or whatever she went through. We're not in the phone book, but she went down wherever, found our number, called it in and wanted and probably checked me off the list and went right on down the line. You see, you can get fooled in anything. Now, I'm all for helping people. But if you got a problem, look this way.

If you want to live with the world and the devil and you want to run with that crowd and you don't have enough food, you don't have enough money to pay your bills, get it from the devil. I'm not going to take what God gives to God's people and give it to people who run with the devil. If serving the devil is so great, let him take care of you. Is there anything wrong with that? Now, if she would have been in a church and the pastor would have said, "Yes," I shouldn't be putting this out, they're all going to be finding somebody else out there who can be their pastor the next time they call. I'd have gave her whatever she needed. But people will deceive you. You've got to be smarter than that. You've got to be smarter than that. And we've learned things like that, adding learning to your lips. Your ability to use the Bible right. Teaching your mouth, adding learning to your lips. What and when to speak. And when you do speak, speak intelligently about what you're talking about.

VI. Adding to Your Faith

2 Peter 1:5. We see this proverb again come into play in a New Testament application, don't we? He says there in that verse in verse 5, he says:

2 Peter 1:5

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

You know, when you get saved and you begin to grow through that maturity process, there are things that you add to your faith. As you add them to your faith, they get into your heart, they come out of your mouth and you learn. He says seven things.

3. The first thing he says is virtue. Virtue is the good quality you have in you, the Holy Spirit of God, that you give to somebody else when they have a need. Some of your times when you go out and you disciple, or a Bible study, you feel drained afterwards. That's virtue. That's what it is. The definitive passage on it is in Luke 6:19. Jesus would know when somebody touched him because virtue went out of him. It's why that when you preach or you do something for the Lord, you're drained when you're done because of the fact, the goodness that you had in you that God stored up, you transferred that virtue and gave it to somebody else who needed it.
4. He says virtue, knowledge is the second thing. Knowledge is who God is and what He's done for you, and who you are in Christ.
5. He says temperance, that's balance. Proverbs 11:1 says that a false balance is abomination in the sight of the Lord.
6. He says the next thing is patience. That's long suffering. Let me tell you something. If you're going to get into the ministry and you're going to work with people and you're going to involve your lives into their lives and struggle through their problems, you better have patience and be long suffering. Long suffering means exactly what the word says. Sometimes you have to suffer for a long time with them. I'd like everybody to get over your problems by tomorrow, but I know you're not, and I'm okay with that. I don't ask somebody to turn their life around in a week. I know that that's impossible in many cases, but what I do ask is you stop making the dumb choices and decisions that got you in the mess you're in and then start

a pathway out of it by start making the right choices and putting the right things in your life. That's what you do.

7. Godliness. Growing up to be like the Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 4:15.
8. Brotherly kindness. Love God and you love each other. Christianity, and it's so true in this church, is a family. Everybody helps everybody. Everybody loves everybody. Everybody understands that we're all in the same lifeboat and we're all got an oar and we're all trying to paddle to get to heaven together. It's brotherly kindness. Oh, I understand that every family, you got little squabbles and issues that come up, but there should be nothing when you have the Bible and you have the love of God in your heart that you cannot solve between two of God's people unless you just don't want to.
9. Then the last thing he says is charity. He says charity last that we need to add because charity over there in 1 Timothy 1:5, he says charity is the end of the commandment. It's the end of the commandment. Charity with a pure heart. Charity with a good conscience toward God. Charity with faith unfeigned. Over there in 1 Corinthians 13, it talks about the greatest of all the elements that God gives to us, the greatest of charity. You know why? Because charity is the apex of your spiritual maturity. Charity is the place that you always want to get to in life. Charity is a process of adding things to your life but into your heart to come out of your lips, adding knowledge to your lips, learning and growing in maturity.

When you get charity, true, Biblical charity in your life, it's not given to some charity out there that is trying to raise money. Charity is that you look at everybody and everything and love them unconditionally. No conditions to it. Some of you got some problems here today. I don't like your problem, but I love you. Your problems wouldn't stop me from helping you. There's a lot of God's people that look at some people and they don't meet their standard, they don't meet their criteria, they don't like something about them. You just write them completely off. You can't do that in the ministry. Unconditional love, unconditional charity.

You know how you get unconditional charity and love in your life? It's a process of growing in a relationship to the Lord and it simply comes down to one thing, the day in your life. You know, when you'll love people unconditionally and you will look at them in a class system or a sin category, that you'll just look at them and love them no matter what they're in, do you know when that will come into your life at that point of maturity? It'll come when you understand and grasp the concept that the first time God looked at you and me, we didn't look too hot. We look at others and say, with disdain, "Well, I don't like the way they are, I don't like what they did." Do you realize what God could have said about you and me the first time He looked at us? What did He do? He loved us unconditionally. He didn't love what I was, He didn't love what I do. In fact, He would have sent me to hell for it, but He loved me enough to come down and die for me unconditionally. He didn't say, "Well, you know, you do this, and I'll die for that when you do this, but I'm not going to die for that one." He loved us unconditionally. When you get to the point in your life that you're in a state of maturity in your life, you'll get to the point where you'll love people around you unconditionally. You know why? Because you realize how you looked the first time He saw you. Seven things you add to your faith, your whole Christian life, and your growth of where you're at today will depend on, since the day you got saved, what you've added, added into your faith, into your heart, and then how it affects what you say and do.

VII. Pleasant Words and Spiritual Health

Now look at Proverbs 16:24. He says:

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Now the pleasant words of a honeycomb will be, obviously, we know the Word of God. When a man or a woman loves the Word of God, I mean, truly loves it. You've got to watch what I'm about to say now. When a man and woman loves the Word of God, and I know, I know, everybody says it. I know, "Oh, if I would ask, you love the Word of God." "Yeah, I love the Word of God." "You love God." "Oh, I love God."

Isaiah 29:13

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

That's lip service to God. We all like to do it. "Oh, I love God. Oh, I love God's Word." Really? Well, when a man or woman loves the Word of God, I mean, truly loves it. They'll take all the Bible and apply it to themselves, not just the parts they like or the parts that works for them and what they want to do. We as God's people are famous, talking about loving the Bible, but then we just take the parts that we want to take. When we want to do what we want to do, we leave those parts out and reject it, but we build our world about the Bible that we like that fits what we want to do. No, no. When you love the Bible, when the Bible is the number one thing in your life, you'll take all of the Bible, and a lot of God's people will pick and choose what they want out of the Bible. That's not loving it. That's just using it in life. Like we use everybody else in life. That's why the Bible is of none effect in our lives. Hey, when you really love it, then you'll submit yourself to it, all of it.

Proverbs 27:7

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

You know what? There are some things in that Bible I don't like. There are some things in that Bible that hit me the wrong way sometimes, but you know what? I love it all, and I'll submit myself to it all. It doesn't matter. It doesn't have to be what I want to hear. I know it's because it's God's Word, it's truth, and it's good for me. If you really love it, then you're going to submit yourself to all of it, not just what works for you. Don't be fooled, man. The mark of a man or woman who loves God and loves that book is submitting themselves to all of it.

Proverbs 16:24 says, "sweet to the soul and health to the bones." We have talked about spiritual healthy bones before. We saw it in Proverbs 3, and we saw it again in Proverbs 12 and again in Proverbs 15, and we've made comments on it, what it means in the book of Proverbs. We know that in a physical sense, the skeleton of a man or a woman is the structure of that person that will give them stability. When you have some disease in your bones that softens your bones, they're very brittle, and you have some real problems. Your skeleton, when it's a healthy skeleton, bones

in your body will keep you upright. It makes you solid, sound in your bones. In a spiritual sense, it's your spiritual body. It's the Word of God. This is what it's saying. When you love it all, when you obey it all, it shall stabilize you and establish you. You don't grow and mature in a Bible by just loving the things in it that you want. Listen to me. You grow and mature in that Bible by accepting the things that you don't want. All things work together for good, not just the things that we want.

Sound doctrine builds a sound mind, builds a sound faith, builds a sound words that we speak, sound speech, and then Bible gives us sound wisdom and understanding and makes your structure of your life rock solid, unmovable. When a Christian is not solid in their life, it has no strong established structure. They're all over the place. Another great verse is Proverbs 25:28, not there yet, but we'll have some time when we get there, where it says there's no rule over his own spirit like a city broken down without walls. You don't have any control over your emotions. I'm telling you, the Word of God will establish you. You know, in ministry, there's a difference between God establishing you in ministry and you establish yourself in ministry. A lot of people want to establish themselves in ministry. The reason why they do is because God's not establishing them in it. That's why. So they pick the Bible that they want.

Ephesians 4:14

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

VIII. The Way That Seemeth Right

Look at Proverbs 16:25.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Now, this is one of the single greatest verses, instructional verses in all of the Bible. This verse carries more impact and more weight with it, and probably would do more to keep people from getting their lives messed up than any other single verse in the Bible as far as a directional verse, telling you a standard fact that is true that will point you to other verses that will help you figure it out. Now, this is one of the single greatest verses that you're going to find. It's saying a great truth. It's saying a great truth. It's simply saying sometimes what seems right is not always right. Boy, you better learn that truth.

We're in the Laodicean Church Age today, and the mindset of the Laodicean Church Age is what we want. It's a church that cares nothing about God's rights. It's a church where God's people do whatever they want to do and live their lives any way they want to live it. I'm talking about in a worldly sense, in a ministerial sense. Men and women will do whatever they want to do without the Bible. They'll bring enough Bible in to make it palatable to people that they think, "Wow, they're really of God. Look at what they're doing." What seems right, my friend, is not always right.

You know how many dogs die every year by drinking antifreeze? Have you ever seen antifreeze? It's red, it's sticky, and it's sweet to taste. I'm always watching when I have my dogs out because

somebody will be doing something up there, and the water will be running down the gutter, you know. You never know what they're doing. They could be flushing the radiator or dumping the night out, and I never let my dog drink it. But I don't know how many hundreds and hundreds of dogs die every year because they drink antifreeze. Somebody will drain their antifreeze or pour some out, leave a little pan. That dog will come in, looks good, looks red. Smells sweet, and it tastes sweet. It'll kill them in about 15 minutes.

Gary was telling me he grows tomatoes, and they were having a problem with raccoons. They were just coming up, and raccoons are the most pesty things they ever saw in their life. They were selling these tomatoes, and tomatoes are a bumper crop this year because you get a lot of money for them because they weren't. A raccoon will go up and chew, take one bite out of the tomato. You can't sell it. Well, I could, but you couldn't. I'd put them in a bookstore and sell them. You'd buy them. They didn't know how to deal with it. His neighbor said, "I talked to an old Amish guy, and he said this, go down to the feed store and get some," I forget what it was, "but some grainy stuff that you feed, whatever. And he says, mix it with root beer. Mix it up with root beer. Put three or four of them out." He says, "This old Amish guy said that they'll die eaten in a pan." "Well, come on, die eaten in a pan." He says, "They won't get forced out before they die." Come on. Where's my boy? Is that? You still got the pictures on your phone? Show anybody that. The next morning he put those pan out. Next morning there's one big old raccoon, dead his head in the pan. There's another one four feet away, dead. Those raccoons, root beer smells good. He went over there and he looked down at that pan and he said, "Wow, this looks good. Man, I'm hungry." Way to see what's right under a raccoon. He never got his head out of the pan.

In life, my friend, there are some things out there that look good in the world and in Christianity that will kill you quicker than an Al-Qaeda sniper at 100 yards. There are some things that will physically kill you and there are some things that will spiritually kill you. Now within the context of this chapter, what he's saying here to put it all together, that it's getting God's wisdom and understanding that will keep you from getting deceived when something seems right when it's really not right. The problem is we won't use them. The problem is that sometimes we don't want to use them.

My Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:15:

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things; yet he himself is judged of no man.

People say all the time, "Well, you shouldn't judge me. You shouldn't judge me." I'm not judging you. That Bible says judge things. That Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:21:

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

I don't care what you do. I love you unconditionally. But the things that you have in your life, I'll make a judgment against if I want them in my life. It's just that simple. You know why? Because what seems right is not always right.

Now, there's only one way to tell if something is really of God or not. I'm giving you some secrets today. I mean, there are some things in Christianity you just can't fake. A lot of

Christianity is fake. A lot of preachers are fake. A lot of churches are fake. A lot of Christians are fake. But in Christianity, there are some things that you cannot fake. The problem is, you don't know what to look for. So people get fooled.

Now, there's a test. It's not what it looks like. It's not how grandiose it is. It's not how great the choir is. It's not any of those things. But there is a test. What you test is the fruit of the thing. You look at the fruit. When a Christian is not solid in their life and has no strong established structure, they'll be all over the place and there'll be no fruit.

Matthew 7:16

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Luke 6:44

For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

People like in the trees in the Bible. So in Christianity, your fruit of something will show two things. It will show you, first of all, is God really in it? It'll show what you've learned because you're bearing fruit based on what you've learned. There are two kinds of fruit, two ways you look at it.

10. First of all, you look at the kind of fruit because you can bear fruit. A church can bear fruit, but it can be bad fruit. You take Jehovah Witnesses, they bear fruit. Man, they're out there knocking on their doors all the time. They don't come to my house no more. You take the Mormons, they bear fruit. You take the Church of Christ, they bear fruit. But it's the wrong fruit. They get converts. They baptize people all over the time. They become in their cults, but it's bad fruit.

11. Then you got the whacked out Christians who are saved. But they have no Bible. And they bear no fruit. My church back home that I came out of, that at one time ran about 6,000, 7,000 people. Now it's down to about, oh, I don't know, 1,200, maybe 900 people in an auditorium that's built up to sit probably 6,000 or 7,000 people. They're now in a panic. They're in a panic now because they got a thing where they want to reach people. They want to have more people. They want to reach people. So now they're coming up with all these programs, all these things, to reach people. You don't reach people with programs. The reason why that they're not growing, and the reason why there's no real fruit, it's a bunch of old people who've been around for 40, 50 years. It's about young couples that grew up in that church. They're not reaching anybody. It's simple. Because there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. There's no Bible there. There's no preaching there. There's no teaching there. It's all big screens. The Bible requires great shows of dazzling light. You get about 20 minutes of a message and 40 minutes of give more money. So you look at the kind of fruit.

Then the second thing is you see some have no fruit at all. You know, the number one characteristic of God is bearing fruit. The number one characteristic of a child of God is bearing fruit. In the Bible you find that there are trees that are barren. In America you see ministries

without any growth, without any kind of movement of people getting saved. You know, and I know the answer. Everybody says, "Boy, we live in a time where it's really hard to build a church." I take exception to that. I think it's probably the easiest time to build a church. Because if you understand it, you say, "Well, the world is so wicked. Oh, the world is so bleak. The world is so black." Yeah, but the Bible is light. Don't you know how many of you are in the Navy? How many would like to be in the Navy? One in your raise your hand then, Lieutenant. You know what they teach you? You ever been out on the ocean on a destroyer or an aircraft carrier or a cruiser? It's the darkest you've ever seen in your life. You know why they won't allow anybody in wartime to smoke a cigarette on deck? Because in the pitch black of that ocean, a man smoking a cigarette, somebody can see it 20 miles away. You know how you can see a 20 mile away cigarette, 20 miles away, a man smoking a cigarette in pitch black darkness? Just a little cigarette. I'll tell you why. Get this down. It's worth something because the darkness illuminates that little light. We live in a world of total darkness. So if you've got a little light, the total darkness will illuminate whatever little light you got. Don't tell me it's a tough time. You just don't know what you're doing. The greatest time to build a church. I think it's the easiest time to build a church if you know what you're doing. So you find you got to look at the kinds of fruit, then you got to look at no fruit at all.

Now this verse will work in any and all scenarios. I mean, no matter what people say or claim what God is doing, some things you look for when God's doing it. You knew years ago, some of you older people remember this, Wendy's hamburgers. They made a big deal years ago about the fact that their hamburgers were bigger than anybody else's. They actually showed McDonald's, which is a pretty scrawny hamburger. I like them, but I mean, come on. You could put 40 of them in cargo pocket pants. I've done it. I know it's true. They were talking about how big their quarter pounders were to McDonald's hamburgers. They hired this little lady. She's about 75 or 80, had a real gravelly voice. It was a great commercial. She'd walk into McDonald's and it was a beautiful commercial. She'd walk in, you know, typical hat, long dress, you know, grandma type. She'd walk in and she'd order a hamburger and the camera would pan down. She'd open up and she'd look up and say, "Where's the beef?" That commercial went around the world. "Where's the beef?" Every time they played it, "Where's the beef?" She went into the restaurant, opened up the bun off the hamburger and had a question. "Where's the beef?"

For you and for me, when you look at something that claims to be of God, where's the fruit? Where's the fruit of your life? Directly or indirectly? I'm not one of these guys that thinks you've got to win everybody to Christ. I'm not one of these guys that thinks you've got to be an avid soul. I think you've got to be used to God whenever. But you know what? The fruit of your life doesn't come just because of the fact you set out to win somebody to Christ. If somebody raises their hand like they did a couple of weeks ago and wants to get saved, and we've got their heads bowed, and I'm asking you to pray for them, and you're sincerely asking God to open their heart and get them right with God and get them saved, and that man or woman gets up and goes to the back. If 200 of you were praying, you all got the fruit of that one. It's directly or indirectly. That's why you want to pray for everything and everybody, honestly, because you get the fruit of it.

Where's the fruit of our families? We want to make sure that no child is ever left behind again. You have right now in your hands, moms and dads, the ability to control that your child, the fruit of your womb, which is God's reward, to do something for God. Where's the fruit of your church? You know, churches are a garden of fruit-bearing trees that are planted in a field. Proverbs 31, the whole chapter, but in Proverbs 31:16 is a great, a great concept. Mel Sabaka, he taught me years ago. He said, "You know what? There's two kinds of churches. There's two kinds of works for God." I said, "Really?" He says, "Yes, that's correct. You want to remember it, son." He says, "There are those that are a work for God, and then there's ministries that are a work of God. You never want to have a work that is for God. You always want to have a work that's of God."

Proverbs 31:16

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

This virtuous woman, she considered a field. Field's a type of the world, and she bought it. He did on Calvary's Cross. I look at the world. My little field is Kansas City. When I came to Kansas City in 1975, 1976, this was my field. God never asked me to die for the whole world. He died for the whole world. But He asked me to consider a field, and I considered Kansas City. But I bought the field with the same intensity that He bought the whole world with. I realized that this is where God wanted me to be. She considered a field, and with the fruit of her hands, she planted the vineyard.

You know, when you go into a field, you just can't plant. You got to really get the rocks out. You got to get the weeds out. There's a lot of work you got to do in preparing that field before you ever plant the first tree. But when you get that field cleared, you get the rocks out. And yeah, you got to stay out some snakes and some scorpions. But when you get the field fertile and you plant your first tree, you know what those trees are? They're fruit-bearing trees. They have the seeds in themselves. So you plant one tree. That tree grows up, the seeds spread out. You get another tree out of it. That grows up, you get another tree out of it. You get him planted, and then he grows up, and then somebody else gets planted by his seed. It's you growing up, and the seeds you put out, that's how you build it. But you got to start with building the field, clearing the field.

I'd never make it as a farmer. You ever notice that there's no real classes in school on how to be a farmer? I mean, they may teach some classes on, you know, agriculture, but there's no farmer 101. I never could be a farmer because I know nothing about farming. You realize that most farms, where they plant soybeans, corn, wheat, raise cattle, whatever they do, you realize that those farmers stay in business because they turn it over to their sons. Some of those farms have been in their family for ten generations. They'll raise up their kids. Their kids will get into farming. The dad will get old. He'll turn it over to the kid. He'll raise it up. Turn it over to him. He'll raise it up. That's why there's no need for a class in school on farming. It's all family owned. It's all family generated.

You know, it's the same way with the ministry. You don't learn the ministry by going to school, just like you don't learn farming by going to school. You learn to be a farmer, a good farmer, by growing up in a family that farms. You learn to be a good Christian and a soul winner and plant

seeds by growing up in a church that's good at it. That's how you learn. See, there's some keys to ministry. Listen, people will tell you anything to get you to believe they're doing what God wants them to do. Where's the fruit? And your life, 5, 10, 15, 20 years? Come on. You kidding yourself? I've known a young man or young pastors over the years that went out to start churches. One guy in particular I'm thinking of, he's been now there probably for 30 years. He's running the same nine people he ran 30 years ago. This is a great verse. You know why? Because some things that seem right are not always right.

This year this church celebrates its 13th anniversary. Our sending church that started this was New Hope, Pastor Waylon. He preached the first sermon in our kitchen, and there were 15 people there that day. Last week I was here, we had something like 265 people here. You know what that is, brother? That's fruit. Good, solid fruit. I was gone. Oh, Bryce and DeJohn. Boy, you'll hold the mail, kids, I'll tell you. You don't mind if I call you DeJohn, do you? My sandwiches, that's my favorite mustard. I have pet names for everybody. Bryce did a great job. Bryce did a great job. I'll tell you, it was incredible. You know what the great thing about it is for me? I'm sitting there watching it, and I'm enjoying those guys, but you know what really is a blessing to me? I've got 50 other guys in here who do the same thing. You know why? Fruit. Good fruit, solid fruit. I've got some of you in here that I would turn on against anybody out there, whatever they want to stand on the Bible. You know why? It's strong fruit. That didn't cause a me. Why? When they sent the first guy, astronaut up, it was a chimpanzee. Any monkey could do what I do. What makes the difference here is a book we have. What makes the difference here is a book you love. What makes the difference here is a book that you fell in love with. What makes the difference here is you're willing to submit yourself to all of it, not just some of it. Change your life. Change your life. Establish you. Make you strong. Make you solid. And make me proud.

You know there's two types of trees in the Bible, and they're likened to us. Proverbs 11:30 says there's a tree of life that bears fruit. That's what a Christian ought to be. But in Mark 11:14, Jesus one time came out and saw a fig tree that was barren, had no fruit. One got the blessings of God, the other one got the curse of God. One represents a work of God, the other one represents a work for God.

You know I've learned some lessons in life. Got a lot more to learn I'm sure. But I've learned as try as you will you cannot make somebody do right that doesn't want to do right. Along with that you want to write this down. You can't make God be in something when he's not in it. So you go around and tell everybody, "Oh how sweet it is. Oh God is so good. Oh we're so blessed. Oh we're just loving God. God, oh God's in it." But the truth is it's just good looking sweet tasting antifreeze. And it will kill you. Test the fruit of the thing.

IX. Keys to Ministry and Life

1975, as I said, we give you a personal aspect to this verse. December 1975, I came to Kansas City. I'd been with Mel Sabaka there at Canton Baptist Temple for almost six years. I never left his side. God put me right next to him and allowed me to be part of his work there in Canton. I wasn't paid on staff. I did like most of you do. I worked a 40 hour week but my life was the

ministry. I worked with him in that church. He had the single Young Singles ministry. Ran about three, four hundred people. I led the singing for him. Preached for him when he wasn't there. This is the story of the other day when I called you. I said, "John," I said, "Are you feeling spiritual today?" Remember. And you said, "Yes." Didn't you. And I said, "Good. You're teaching Bible study tonight. I got to be out of town." First time I ever stepped in a pulpit in a Bible study to teach you any question you want to ask in Mel Sabaka's church. So you got it honestly. What's good for me is good for you, son. It's just that simple.

I used to go on a revival trail with him. I used to play the trumpet. He'd take me along and he always likened to me and him as Billy Sunday and Roody Rover Hoover who was a big trombone player. Billy Sunday would get up there and preach and Roody Hoover would get up with his trombone and he'd lead the singing, you know. He said, he said, "You know that's what we are. That's what you got to do." He said, and he taught me. He says, "Man, don't just stay." I'd get up there, boy, and he'd be a man in the back and people be saying, I'd be blasting out "Onward Christian Soldiers" or "How Great Thou Art." "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood," you know, and then he'd get up and preach. We went all over the state of Ohio with Virginia, Pennsylvania. Man, I'll tell you they were the greatest times in my life. That's where I learned. That's where I learned. I watched everything that he did. I wasn't one of these guys who got to a point in my Christian life where I thought I knew more about it than he did. I watched everything that he did. I learned by every way he did. I watched how he used people in a service. I watched how he built people around what he did. I watched how he brought them along with what he was saying. I watched how he could get up there and say something that most people would be offended to but these people would thank him for it afterwards. See I was dumb back then but I was still smart enough to know who God put in my life and why. He knew what I needed to learn.

You know years ago families are different now. Before they were 50 years ago it used to be, it's not anymore. Not today. A young man would come up to be 12, 13, 14 years old and the father would now take that time and pull him aside and tell him the facts of life. They used to call it the birds and the bees. I can never figure out why they call it the birds and the bees. I put a bird and a bee together one time to kill each other. But he'd get him aside, you know, and he'd go out someplace and he'd say, "Now son I want to tell you about the facts of life." You know male, female and all that stuff go along with it. You know the real things of life. You don't do it anymore because now kids know by the time they're in the third grade. But he'd say, "Okay son, you're going to become a man now so here's the real truth and the scoop on life in the real world. And I want to give you the intimate facts of life because it's time for you to know them."

Well you know what my father in the Lord did the same thing for me in the ministry. I'll never forget it. He got me one afternoon probably late November. We drove out to Camp Choff. That's where the camp was that the church had and where really God implanted himself in my heart and my mind. We went out to that camp and we walked all through it. We laughed at the places and the things that we did. Both of us knowing that we would never do them again because he was already in New York and I was coming to Kansas City. We sat down on that big old rock overlooking that lake and he looked at me and he said, "Bob I love you very much." He says,

"God's done some great things in your life and you know what son don't ever forget it started right here at this camp." And I said, "I know it did. I know it did." He says, "You know God wants to continue to do some things in your life. Now son, here's the keys to ministry. Here's some things that you have got to remember and follow if you're going to build a sure work in Kansas City that's of God." He said, "Bob there's all kinds of works around this country that are works for God. These things that I'm going to give you are the keys to guaranteeing you build a work that is of God." He put his arm around me and he said, "Now listen son, I'm telling you these things for this because there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." He says, "Bob many times what seems right will not always be right. So I'm going to give you now give to you something that Tommy Thomas gave to me and Pete Ruckman gave to me. And Phil Ward gave him to Tommy Thomas and you, Powell gave him to Pete Ruckman. And I'm turning them over to you now son because as Paul said, the same things I've committed unto you, you commit to faithful men. Bob, there's an unbroken chain of men in a biblical ministry who understand the keys of really building a work for God or of God, not for God that you need to know."

For the next two hours, he walked and talked me through the facts of life of the ministry and building a work that is of God, not a work for God. I've never forgotten them and I use them to this day. What I've done is I do so many things in my life, I've solidified them into now about eight or nine, ten, maybe absolute concrete principles. I've never taught them to anybody as a collective group. But over the years, every time a young man and his wife, a couple that got sent out under my ministry over the last 40 years, I had the same talk with. Because you can go, when you go out, man, you're stepping into something that you better know what you're doing. And you better have the understanding that everything out there that looks right is not always right. Let me tell you something. The ministry to most young men is an illusion. It's not real. They never see the real reality of it. To them, it's what they piped up in their mind. To them, it's about, "Oh, I want to stand in front of people. Oh, I want to teach the Bible." That's all good stuff. That's not the ministry, and that is an illusion of the ministry. Because when you get into the ministry, you're stepping into something that you better know what you are doing. It's like combat. The guys that got killed in combat were the guys that were new recruits that came in, were replacements. You had all these old veterans over here that had been through campaign after campaign and learned how to survive. But you couldn't teach these young kids anything. They're the ones that got killed because they wouldn't listen to somebody who learned how to survive. Old Sal Baca, he learned how to survive in the ministry. Brother, I learned from him how to survive. I sit down with these couples, and I walk them through when I talk about, "You want a successful ministry? You want to build a work that is of God instead of a work for God? Here's what you do." Basic, simple, 8 or 9, 10, 12 things that if you remember them and you do them, it will work. Today, your life, your family, your ministry is based on this passage right here. A work of God or a work for God. And by your fruits, you shall know them. Don't get caught drinking the antifreeze.

X. Four Principles from Proverbs 16

Learn the four things of Proverbs 16.

12. Learn, number one, take and apply everything in the Bible to yourself, not just the things that you want. Don't get caught in the trap of being selective when it comes to the Bible. It's all written to you. It's all written for you in one way or the other. It isn't written so you can pick and choose what you want to use because of what you want to do. Adapt what you want to do around the one book that God gave you that is the precedent that you have to follow.
13. Let the wisdom of God and understanding teach your mouth what to say. Learn to talk intelligently. Know what you're talking about before you open your mouth. If you're asking a question, to learn, that's one thing. The thing that drives me crazy is somebody getting up and shooting off their mouth when it's all clear they have no clue. They've never been through that in the Bible to know what they're talking about.
14. The third thing, add learning to your lips. Let this church, let everybody that teaches you, no matter what, we've got so many people now that are so dialed in on levels that can just do everything that needs to be done. Learn from others. Learn from what they teach you. Learn from me. Learn from what we do. Learn from everything we can. Add that to your lips.
15. And the fourth thing, remember this. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Because many times in the world and in Christianity, what seems right is not always right.

Follow those four things out of Proverbs 16. Proverbs is the greatest practical book in the Bible. It'll give you everything you need on the issues of life. My goal for you is for every one of you to be everything that God wants you to be. But the determining factor of that is you, not me. I'm fully committed. I'll do whatever needs to be done. The problem is never me. The problem will be you. What are you willing to do with a book that God gave you? What are you willing to submit yourself to in that book? All of it? Because then that forces you to change some things in our lives or just what you want to get by. Well, doing what you want to get by will never produce the fruit. The only fruit will come because you surrender yourself to everything and let that book be in your life everything God intended for it to be.