

# Proverbs 17

Sunday 9/11/2016

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn over to Proverbs chapter 17. We are going to start Proverbs 17 today. You will remember last week we finished up and finished out Proverbs chapter 16, which was an incredible chapter. Every chapter in Proverbs, once we got past the first seven or eight chapters where he is giving us the things that we want to learn from it, once we have gotten into the Proverbs themselves, it has just been an incredible chapter after chapter.

Proverbs 16 was a great chapter on everyday principles of living and the life that we have to go through here on planet Earth. Just to recap, remember some of the things that we saw, just kind of like the highlights. The whole of Proverbs 16 was blanketed under the concept of getting God's wisdom and understanding. Then we talked about going our way or going God's way in life. Life is just that simple, not complicated. As a Christian, you are either going to go God's way or you are going to go your own way. There is no halfway; it is either one or the other. Of course, we know that.

We looked at teaching our mouths and adding learning to our lips, how important it is to learn how to be able to speak to things intelligently, biblically, that people can get from you what God wants them to have. We talked about a great verse there that talks about that there is a way that seemeth right unto men, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Not everything that looks like a good thing in life really is. This is where God's wisdom and understanding is able to show us what is and what is not, to keep us from making those tragic mistakes of life.

We talked about how so many people labor for the things that they want and do not ever waste the time laboring for things, or do the time to laboring for things, that God wants. How important it is to understand the great principle [Psalms 127:1] talked about it many, many times: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it." If God is not in what you are building, then you are wasting your time in doing it and building it for yourself.

Then we talked about getting older and the more God gets of us, the older we get, how that we are to look at what God gives us, the truth that we have. We are simply the custodians of that truth. It is our truth, but it is not our truth; it is God's truth. It may be mine that He gave it to me, and it may get me through life, but I am just a custodian of it. It does not end with me; it continues on. We talked about the older Christians, men and women, taking the younger ones in, which so many of you do here, and helping them come along and giving them the things of God.

Lastly, we talked about how God is in total charge of everything in our lives. We talked about the whole disposing of a matter is of the Lord. He takes care of it all; He is in complete charge of it. As I looked through this chapter last week, I was drawn to verse one because that is really where it all starts. That was an incredible verse in Proverbs 16:1, where it says, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." That is it. You do your work, putting the word of God in your life, giving the things that you need, putting them in there, studying, hiding the word of God in your heart. When you need those things, when you do your

preparation, the answer, the adding to the lips, and the answer that you give the people will come from the Lord.

Now today we are going to look at our opening verses in Proverbs chapter 17. Again, some great practical stuff here, some stuff that I think will open your eyes to maybe some things to help you understand better some things, and maybe just help you look at your own life and get it.

Let us read it here:

*Proverbs 17:1-3*

*Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.*

*A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.*

*The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.*

Three great verses, and I want to talk to you about that. Let us go to prayer this morning, and we will go to the word of God. Zach, would you stand up and ask God's blessing on the message today?

Heavenly Father, we come here today, needing some food, some spiritual food. We are in an age where we are at peace, with good, rich, and in need of nothing, Father, but we understand that we do need You, and that this is the time for us to get that. Amen. I pray that You would be with Dad today as he preaches to us, just working his heart and helping to deliver this the way You put it on his heart. Help us to receive it and do something with it. We pray and ask these things in Your Son, Jesus Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

## I. The Principle of Contentment (Proverbs 17:1)

Now verse one says, and we are just going to take these three verses today, and I want to just talk about them for a moment, each one. Verse one says, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

You may look at that verse in Proverbs, and most people, very honestly, when they read Proverbs, they do not know what they are reading. It is Greek to them. It is like it was something from another language. They do not really grasp it because Proverbs is written in a hand of wisdom, and people without wisdom can never attain anything that is wisdom when it is given to them. But I want to break it down for you today and show you how these verses are incredible verses.

This chapter begins with a principle we saw back in Proverbs 15, and it is a real key to everything in our lives: the aspect of being content in life with what we have. I think the problem that everybody gets into, no matter what it may be, I think the root problem of every issue we have is that we are simply not satisfied in its fundamental concept of what we have with God. We see something, we see this, we see a circumstance, we see what somebody has that we do not have. Once we want to have those things, it is easy for us just to lose our focus.

We talked about it many, many times in 1 Timothy 6, where it says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." That is such a powerful verse, and it is so true. Just being satisfied with what you have. But we are so focused all the time on focusing on the things that we do not have.

## II. The World's Influence on Contentment

I understand it; the world is geared that way. If a Christian should stay away from the world for any other reason—and I am going to tell you there are a lot of reasons to stay away from the world—but if a Christian, if I just had one reason why you, as a man or a woman, mom or dad, you kids, should stay away from the world, and it has nothing to do with alcohol or drugs or all of the stuff that goes on that wrecks so many people's lives, if there was just one reason why you, as a Christian, should stay away from the world, it would be simply this: The world all the time, 24/7, displays in front of you what you do not have.

It just displays in front of you what you do not have. You drive down the freeway and you see billboards geared to make you think, "I want one of those." You watch a football game and the commercials come on, and it is Ford Top Truck or it is this or it is Buick or it is Ram's Power or whatever. You sit there and they display everything, and you think, "I want one of those." Everything in life, everything the world does fundamentally, is aimed at what you do not have. When you are not content with God and what you do have, you fall into that trap.

You might as well just say, "Hey, when you go out to the mall, they call them just display windows." I call them "things that you do not have windows." Say to your spouse tonight, if you do not have anything to do, "Why do not we just get in the car and drive over to the mall and walk around and see what we do not have?" If there was one thing the world does for us, that if I had one thing that I just wanted nothing to do with the world—and there are plenty of things in the world we have nothing to do with—but I am telling you, that is a fundamental problem right there: not being content with what we have.

You remember back in Proverbs 15:16-17, it said, "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith." We talked about the fact that the more you have, the more trouble you have. The greatest life on the planet was designed by God in Genesis chapters 1, 2, and 3. It was life in a garden where everything was simple. He says in Proverbs 15:17, when we looked at it, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

Through the wisdom and understanding of God, we realize that circumstances and physical situations are simply where God wants us to be. When we are faced with something, it is exactly where God wants us to be, and He will be sufficient for us in everything that we do. We get our contentment from that. We realize that, hey, you know what? It is not wrong to want things. It is not wrong to want a better house or a better car or better clothes or better—I mean, there is nothing wrong with that. I do not want to stand up here and say that, you know, as a Christian, you just have to go through your life not wanting anything. That is not realistic either. But you have to have a contentment. You have to understand that you cannot go through life focusing on

the things that you do not have. You will never enjoy what you do have because your attention is always beyond what is not really there.

Simply, better is little with God than all the world without Him. It is just that simple. The older you get, the more complex your life becomes. I think about it all the time. When I was 20 years old, 30 years old, I did not take any medicine for anything. Most of you do not either. Now, maybe, unfortunately, in the world that we live in, some parents put their kids on Prozac when they are six months old, and they stay on those the rest of their lives. But I am not talking about that. You did not have any kidney problems if you are just a normal person. You did not have any heart issues. You did not have any high blood pressure. You did not have any cholesterol problems or you did not have any, you know, triglycerides, whatever they are. You did not have any of that. You were healthy. You were young. You were strong.

But you know what? When you hit 40 and 50, you go to the doctor, and one day he says, "You know, your blood pressure is a little high. I want to put you on this." "Well, your triglycerides are like 6,500. That is pretty high. Let me, you need to try to handle that with a diet." "Well, diet does not do it." "Well, your cholesterol is through the roof; diet does not do it." "Well, we have got to put you on this medicine." You know, by the time you are 60, 70 years old, you are a pharmacy or a walking pharmacy. You take something for everything. You have so many; it gets complicated. The problem is that is so much like life. The simpler your life is, the less complicated all of the things that you put in it become.

When you start taking all those medicines, trust me, I hated taking medicine. Now I have a whole line of them in the morning. I have got to take it in the evening. It is tough to remember everything that you take, but it is a thing where then you have to deal with the side effects of everything. You can take this and you feel better, but then you walk around with your nose stuffed up all the time, like you have got a cold. You take this and now you feel better with here, but your mouth feels like the Sahara desert all the time. They say, "Take this medicine and then suck on a hard piece of candy." Then your cholesterol goes up because the candy has got sugar in it. Now you are in trouble again. My point is this: the older you get and the more medicine you take, the more side effects you get, the more complicated everything becomes. In your life and my life, the more we let things in and the more complicated we put in, the more side effects and compounding effects we have in things in life, the more complicated it becomes. It is just the way it is. I do not have a good answer to it other than, "godliness with contentment is great gain."

I look at that verse, "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure," and "Better is a dry morsel with quietness therewith than a house full of sacrifices." I just look at things, and I love to contrast things in life. I really do. I think the older you get and the shorter your life is, and the more things you have to go through, I think you pay attention more. I got thinking about this verse all week long, and I thought, "You know, how rich some people think they are, and how rich some people who think they are really are not." Because it is never enough.

Pope Francis, the Pope now, he is kind of a unique guy. All the other popes that were there, they lived in a Basilica palace. They wore gold clothing, literal gold clothing. They had a thousand servants. They had this gigantic castle or whatever that they lived in. Everybody was hand and

foot for them. They never had anything they ever had to do ever again the rest of their life. He is not like that. He chose to live in an apartment. He chose to wear normal clothes, just like he did when he was out on the street. The old popes got in cars and drove wherever they went in their little Pope mobile or whatever it was, and they kept the people back. This guy will make them stop and get out. He will kiss lepers. He will kiss babies. He will kiss the foreign people. You see, he is content with what he has. He does not want all that pomp and circumstance because that is where he wants to stay. He did not want to get it complicated.

I look at a guy like Donald Trump. Donald Trump is probably one of the richest men in the world. He flies around in a 747 or whatever it is. I mean, how much does that cost to fly it for an hour, let alone buy it? He is probably the richest man, one of the richest men in the world. But you see, that is not enough. Now he wants to be the most powerful man in the world. When contentment is not there, then there is no end to where we want to go. The more we get and the more uncontent we are, the more strife that comes into our life.

I think about things. I thought about this this week. In the book of Philippians, the book of Philippians is a prison epistle. That is where Paul is in prison. He said in the book of Philippians, he says over there in Philippians 4:11, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Now he wrote that in Philippians. He is in jail. I thought to myself, what a contrast. A jail cell in Philippi was large enough and satisfying enough for Paul. But on the other hand, I think of Alexander the Great, who at 33 years old died a suicide, died in a terrible way because at 33 years of age, he had conquered the whole world, and there was nothing left to conquer.

There comes a time in your life that the things that are going to break our backs is when we want this, we want this, we are not realistic about it, and we are not content with God, we are not satisfied with what God gives us, and one day we hit the brick wall that there is nothing left for us. We have got it all. All the compounding effect. I want to tell you something. You have got to be real careful wanting a lot of the things that we want when they are not the things that God wants. It is an incredible thing.

Socrates, the great pagan philosopher, stated, "Contentment is natural wealth. Luxury is simply artificial poverty." Boy, that is so true. He died and went to hell. But even a broken clock is right twice a day. I would say the richest man or woman on Earth is one who simply desires nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has for him. The Apostle Paul said it again in Philippians 1:21. He said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He was content with what he had.

### III. Contentment and Family Dynamics

Now the principal application to this is to our own house, our families. Parents today are caught in a real trap, and I see it. There is nothing we are going to do about it, nothing anybody is going to do about it other than try to balance it. But you know, when you look at history, the history of America, you begin to see what the problems are. Our youth today, and I speak with our kids being an exception to this, and many other kids that are good kids, but our youth today is

absolutely worthless. I mean, they are absolutely, totally lost. They have no relevance of anything in life. Absolutely.

It is because that in America, you watch through the time of America, you watched America go through different ages. Back in the 1800s, farmland was mostly farming and crops and people on farms. They look at that as the agricultural age. You are going to find that the family unit back then was really strong. The family unit back then was really good. Those families were solid. Those families, even the unsaved families, they were solid with principles and conviction. The families were much tighter and closer and got through things together. You did not have the divorce rate. When I was a kid growing up in the fifties and the sixties, divorce was unheard of. Back then in the 1800s, and you know why? Because in the agricultural age, life was real simple. You went out and worked hard on the farm. Your kids went to school, and you came back, and you sat around as a family. You did not have television. You did not have this. You did not have that. You did not have the video games. You sat around as a family and you built your family. In most cases, it was around the word of God.

About 1900, America moved into what has been called the industrial age. This is where women started. We had two world wars during this, 1917, World War I and World War II, and then Korea and Vietnam. But in that early first two wars, this is where the women started to go to work. Great industrial things were done. This is where they built ships like the Titanic, you know, that were unheard of. This is where things where they did everything, great marvels. This is where the skyscrapers are built in New York, like the Empire State Building and some of the great stuff. It is incredible.

In about the 1950s, we moved into the technology age. We got the atom bomb. We got into the space race with the Russians. Technology began to take hold. We went to some great strides in levels of learning. We come in our military and all the stuff, you know, in our technology of the aircraft and stealth technology and all that. It was an incredible time.

Today we live in a cyber age. Now your kids come home from school. They open up a little black box and step into a world that is not real. Kill people, cut their heads off, shoot them. Get into situations where they chase monsters down the road, or in some cases the monster chasing you down the road. They go into a cyber world that is not real. It does not exist. They step out of the family. They step out of life. They step out of everything that is real into a world that is not even there. They communicate with people who are not even alive. They communicate and get into circumstances and situations that they never should be involved in. Then we wonder why our kids are so disjointed today. We wonder why we have the problems we have instead of keeping the family simple and based and centered around God and the Bible and forming a good balance.

Now parents today find a thousand things to get their kids involved in. They find themselves running and meeting himself, coming and going to get everything that they need to be. I mean, they get them to, there is no time for anything spiritual. The verse says, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

House full of sacrifices. I am telling you, parents today make some incredible sacrifices for their kids, and I get it. I get it. They will sacrifice, parents will sacrifice everything they have to get their kids to a sporting event, to get their kids to here, get them to camp, get them to this, get them to that, get them to something at school, get them involved in this. Dad will want to go do this. Mom will say, "Well, I really like to do this," but they will make the sacrifice to get their kid there. I get it. Part of being a good parent is certainly making good sacrifices for our children, but those sacrifices have to be based on you understanding the definition of a real sacrifice in the Bible. Many times, most of the time, they will alter their whole life to get those kids where they need to be and everything for those kids. It is a house. Their house is full of sacrifices, but they are the wrong sacrifices. Those wrong sacrifices will only bring strife.

This is why parents have trouble with their kids. I do not know how many times I have sat down with a parent that said to me, "I do not understand why my kid cannot understand where they are at." I think to myself, "How could they?" Every day of their life, they step out of this world into a world that does not exist, and that is where they spend most of their time. Then when they step back out of that world and you try to get back to them on a real plane, they are not in that world. They just spend most of their time in the other world. I guess it is just easier to keep them busy that way so parents do not have to get into the Bible with them and teach them about a real sacrifice. I will tell you what, understanding sacrifice for your children is based on you understanding the sacrifice that God made for His children. You want to keep your sacrifices in line with that.

A man said one time, "Love and the fear of God are the two most important ingredients and furnishings in any home that completes it." You know, I was reading a story back in 1969, I think it was, maybe 1968. It was a great flood in Mississippi. Thousands of people lost their homes. Thousands of people, tens of thousands, had to stay in shelters. A man wrote this story that he was walking through one of the shelters, and over here he saw about eight to ten kids in the same family, and they were all sitting on cots, but he did not see the parents. The oldest was about, oh, I do not know, the oldest was probably about 18, and then on down, about five to 18 years old. So he goes over to them and he says, "Hey kids, how are you doing?" They said, "We are doing fine." He says, "Where are your parents?" I was a little concerned. "I see you guys all over here." The oldest said, "Oh, my mom and dad are out looking for us for a new house." He said, "Well, that is really good. I hope you find one." He began to walk away, and the next youngest said, "Oh yeah, mister, we are already a home. We are just looking for a house." You know, there is a difference between having a home and having a house. Do you understand that? There is a difference between just having a home and having a house. You can call a realtor and get a house. You can go to the bank, get a loan, get a GI loan, and buy a house. It does not make it a home. It does not make it a home.

#### IV. The Wise Servant and the Shameful Son (Proverbs 17:2)

Look at verse two. Now boy, here is a great one. "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren." That was an incredible verse. Now this is one of these verses that only come after you really, honestly, really

learn your Bible. The average Christian could read that verse 30,000 times and never get anything out of it. It is one of the most powerful verses stuck back there in Proverbs that impacts you and me. It is unbelievable.

Some things in the Bible just pop up. I told you this Thursday night. You get into the Bible, some things just pop up. There they are, right there, grab them. You get them. Obviously, the Bible says you have got to search the scriptures. For some things, you have got to get into the Word of God and search it out and pray it out, and God will give you those things. But there are some things in the Bible that just come with you paying your dues over the years with the Word of God. Some things in the Bible that God gives you, you can look at it a thousand times. But until you get to that point in your life with God and your relationship with God and the Word of God, and you have spent your time paying your dues into the Bible, that is where you really get some great stuff. Like a verse like this.

This verse here, where it says, "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren." That verse is aimed right at you and me at the judgment seat of Christ. You know what it says? It says, if you do not get Proverbs 16 down, if you do not get the understanding and the wisdom of God, if you do not get the things in your life that God wants you to have, He says, read it, "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren."

A wise servant, that servant being based on Proverbs, Matthew 24, 25, well all of Matthew and Revelation, that servant is a Jew in the tribulation period. It is a Jew going through the tribulation. Look at the book of Proverbs in a doctrinal sense. It is all about the Jews in the tribulation period. It is about a wise man and a foolish man in Proverbs. That servant here, "a wise servant shall have rule over a son." That is a man in the tribulation or an Old Testament saint that has rule over a son. Now the son will be a New Testament Christian that causes shame.

Look at Revelation 3:18, when it talks about the church at Laodicea.

*Revelation 3:18*

*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

Over there in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, it talks about the contest of the judgment seat of Christ, and it says that we want to be clothed that we shall not be found naked. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." When you find three little words in your Bible: shame, naked, and appear, you want to stop and look at it because those three words, if they are used together, look out. You are talking about the judgment seat of Christ.

What he is saying here through that one verse that is stuck way back in the Old Testament in the book of Proverbs that most people read and never understand because they do not spend any time in the Bible, is that there is coming a day when a son, a New Testament child of God, who now is ashamed and loses his reward at the judgment seat of Christ and his inheritance, will lose his

inheritance that God had for him and gets denied that reign with Christ, where tribulation Jews who endure to the end get through it will reign with Christ, and we will not.

*2 Timothy 2:12-13*

*If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*

*If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

That is one of those verses that many, many people try to use to show you can lose your salvation. He is not telling you can lose your salvation. What he is telling here is that you can lose your inheritance. You will never lose your salvation, but what God has for you in the millennium you can lose. The verse is saying that a servant who endures to the end, who is wise and does what God said, is going to reign when a son who brings shame to himself and is naked at the judgment seat of Christ loses it. That is pretty powerful stuff.

## V. The Refining of God's Word (Proverbs 17:3)

Look at verse 3. "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts." What a great verse. You know, in history, we talk about the King James Bible being the word of God. Most people look at us today like we are idiots because nobody today believed that God had the ability or the power to write a book that could last and be perfect. Everybody thinks today that God needs their help to write a perfect book. I have always thought that, you know, the scholars will always talk about God will inspire the word of God, but you do not have a perfect word of God today. I always thought a God like that was pretty worthless. What good does it do me if God inspired a book if He was not God enough to preserve that book so I could have it? Of course, He did.

In history, and most people do not even have a clue of this, in history there is a real great study on the refining process of the word of God. You know the English language began around 900 AD in its most infant form, and it began to go through a process of development. If you ever looked at a Wycliffe's Bible or even a very early King James Bible, you are going to find that you cannot even read it. The English language is so different from then to now. It went through a process of time.

You know, when God spoke to man, God only put His word into three languages. People get hung up on the King James Bible being English when there are so many other languages in the world, and that is because, other than they are stupid, it is because of the fact that they live in a world that is so far removed. I guarantee you back in the Old Testament times there probably were Hittites, there probably were Amalekites, there probably were Philistines that had a hard time believing that God just wrote His book in Hebrew, but He did. If you are a Malekite, if you are a Hittite back in the Old Testament, whatever nation you come from, if you wanted to get God's word, you had to go to one language to get it. It was Hebrew.

When the world became a Greek-speaking world through the Greeks and the Roman Empire, and the whole world as far as God was concerned was speaking Greek, then He put the New Testament in its early form into Greek. As the languages developed and God was moving down

through history, and He knew where He was going, He finally put the word of God in an English form because He knew that the English language was going to become, at the time of the second coming of Christ, the time they were living in, would be the universal language of the world, and it is. I have had guys dispute that all my life, and they will say, "Well, how can you say that there are more people that speak this language than English?" I say to them, "You know what, pal, it is not English is not the language of the universal language because I chose it; it is the universal language of the world because that is what God chose." Back in the Old Testament, when all the Hittites and the Amorites, as I said, did not have the word of God in their language, you see God running around to get it to them? God chooses what language He is going to use. Now if you have a problem with that, that is your deal. He chooses how He is going to do things, and you do not like that because that cuts you out of it, that you cannot correct Him. See, I know where you are coming from.

I look at that English language as it developed, and I see that fining pot and that furnace for the word of God as it developed itself. Look over Psalms chapter 12. It is an incredible passage. Psalms chapter 12:6-7. Many of you probably have this in your Bible. If you do not, you are certainly out of market today, and put what I am about to give you in here. Our verse says, "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts."

*Psalms 12:6-7*

*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

*Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

You know, down through history, you have seven—I told you English was going to be the universal language by which God was going to put the final form of the word of God in, in the King James 1611. That verse says that they are pure words, purified seven times in a furnace of earth. You know that your King James Bible went through seven English translations to get to the one that you have today.

1. Wycliffe in 1392 was the first one, first English translation.
2. Tyndale 1532 was the second one, second English translation.
3. Miles Coverdale was the third one, 1535.