

Proverbs 22:2-3

Sunday 11/19/2017

Today we are going to get into our next couple of verses found in Proverbs chapter 22. I am excited about chapter 22 for a number of reasons. I think it is a really great practical chapter. You are going to remember that I told you last week that in a couple of weeks, probably not next week but the week after, we are going to slam into the single most important verse in the Bible to see and understand how to train up your children.

I told you last week that we have a lot of new parents. Babies are being born everywhere, every day here. When we started our church, most of the teenagers now, my one granddaughter is driving. She drives me nuts, she drives the parents nuts, she is the goodest girl there is. You just turned 13, didn't you? You are 15? Yeah, you cannot drive when you are 13. You are 15. Steve's kids and Bubba's kids, they are all growing up. Not only do we have a lot of parents that are having kids that need to understand this, but for our kids that are entering into that time period, we need to understand that our kids that are in their teens are moving into the most challenging time of their life. We really need to try to help them every way that we can. I know it is on my heart all the time. I appreciate all that they do here at the church and for all that Zach and Jenny do, and all the counselors, and everybody who just really helps and unselfishly gives their time to make it all happen for them. It is something that we need to be diligent about.

Even in our verse today, we are going to begin to see some really good principles that will help you as parents, and we are not even into the verse yet. But today, let us look at Proverbs chapter 22, and we are going to read verse 2 and 3 and then come from here.

Proverbs 22:2-3

The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Let us go to the Lord in prayer. Alex, would you stand up and ask God's blessing on the service this morning? Thank you, Alex.

I. The Context of Proverbs 22:2

Now verse 2 says, "The rich and the poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all." When you read that verse, you probably would ask yourself, "How in the world are you going to get an hour sermon out of that?" Of course, every Monday when I start putting it together for the week, I read Proverbs, I read the next thing Sunday night and just look at it. I have always asked myself, "Man, I do not know, what am I going to get out of that?" But then when you get into it and you start following the procedure of unlocking the scriptures, you will see today as we get through it, because there is a lot here to see.

As always, the first thing we want to do is set the context. We do that in everything that we do here, a context of Proverbs chapter 22. Context, as I said Thursday night, will always be based on the definitive passages or verses in the Bible. You have to establish a context. Every heresy in the

world today, Christian and non-Christian, and there are heresies in both, starts with somebody not establishing a context and getting an understanding of what it is saying.

As you find it here, this again will be dealing with the nation of Israel among all the other nations of God dealing with them. The verse will go along with last week in verse 1. We talked about Israel getting a good name at the second coming of Christ. Right now she has a bad name. The Bible makes it very clear, and you can find it many places in the Bible, but I guess the definitive passage on it would be Matthew chapter 5 through chapter 10, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. He preaches that on the mountain there, and that is why it is called that.

You will find it right there in that passage in those five chapters how that Israel, from the world's standpoint, and we know that the world makes false witness against them, the world attacks them, and the Bible makes it clear in that passage that Israel from a world standpoint is very poor. You are going to find where it talks about poor in spirit. You are going to find it talks about how that they mourn. You are going to talk about how that they are meek and they are hungry, they are persecuted, they are reviled by men, and it is all a manner of evil comes their way. She is listed that way as you see how that in the time that we live in right now that she is very poor as far as the world is concerned. She is the last on anybody's scale.

You have Russia, you have the Middle East nations, you have Europe, the European nation, you have America, you have England. We know from Luke chapter 21 that this is called the times of the Gentile and the Gentile rule. Because the devil uses those nations, as we have talked about the last couple of weeks, he paints Israel as a persecuted Israel from the world's standard that the whole world is all against her, and they are portrayed as very rich, and she is portrayed as very poor. But the verse is saying that God has made both of them for His purpose.

When you go through the Bible, you will find that God has a purpose for the nation of Israel. You will find that God has a purpose for the Gentile nations and the times of the Gentiles. There is a time coming when they will all meet together, and God will straighten it all out and put everything in its right priorities.

In the Bible, next year in Bible Institute, maybe this year, I do not know, we will see, but the next thing we are going to start going through is the seven series in the Bible. We have gone through the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. We established a baseline. Right now we are giving the Bible, breaking it down into those components so you can get it all together. Once we accomplish that, then we are going to go back in and we are going to start to really, really, really put the icing on the cake, so to speak. I am going to show you God's systematic theology.

Within that systematic theology, which is a number of sevens, everything is broken down that way, you are going to find that there are seven judgments in the Bible. Those seven judgments are found throughout the Word of God, and one of them will be God dealing with the nation of Israel and bringing them to the end of their sinful self in their tribulation period. That is where He judges them. You will find that in Psalms 48:11 and Jeremiah 1:16 and I think Ezekiel 5 probably down through there, 6 through 15 somewhere, it talks about God judging them, and that is their judgment.

But then within that seven judgment, there is another one which is called the judgment of the nations, and this will be found in Matthew 25:32. That will be the definitive on it. You are going to find that when the Lord comes back, He judges the nation of Israel in the tribulation period to get them to the end of self, and then at the second coming of Christ when He establishes in the millennial reign of Christ, now He judges the nations. Proverbs here today is talking about how that they both come before the Lord, the rich and the poor. The poor being the nation of Israel, the rich being the Gentile nations that think that they have it all and are all powerful and all of that. Of course, in Matthew 25:32, He brings them together. It is commonly called sometimes the dividing of the sheep and the goats when you read it.

You see, it does not matter how the world views things. It really does not. I have talked about and taught all my ministry how that English language is the universal language of today. I have had people argue with me about that all down through there. There are people who do not necessarily believe that English language is a universal language, and they will give you all kinds of statistics and this and that. I have learned through the years in the Bible it does not matter what the world thinks, it only matters what God thinks. When God portrays the English language as a universal language, it does not matter what statistics you have. Your Bible was only written in three languages, and they were all three universal languages: Hebrew in the Old Testament, Greek at the beginning of the New Testament, and today in English as the universal language in the last days before the second coming of Christ. Of course, if you know anything about Daniel chapter 2 and Daniel chapter 7 and 9, you probably have a better understanding of that.

It does not matter how the world views Israel. It does not matter how America thinks that she is so powerful. It does not matter how Russia and Putin think that they are so powerful. They want to get back to the glory days, Russia under Stalin and all those things. None of that really matters. All that really matters is that God made them both for His honor and glory, and God is going to use them for His honor and glory. How the world views themselves, many times we get caught up in that. We actually think that the world's view of something is important to us. Let me tell you something. The Bible says that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. If the world thinks it is great, God probably thinks it stinks.

I have learned through my time in the Bible and my life walking with God that it does not matter what the world thinks. It does not matter how they look at Israel. It does not matter how they look at Christianity. It does not matter even what God's people think about the Word of God in the King James Bible. It only matters what God thinks about it. So many times we get caught up in the world, Christian world, and the world of what their viewpoint is, and we lose the most essential viewpoint in anything in our lives, which will be God's viewpoint on it. This is what I try to get you to see and understand here. The nations will be brought together, and God will establish the system of priority and the new world order, which is the new covenant that He makes with Israel in Hebrews chapter 9, and God is going to bring it all together. That is as you find it in the Bible. That is what He is talking about there in the context of everything we are looking at.

II. Practical Application of Proverbs 22:2

Now let us look at it from a practical side here for a moment. Let us kind of get it all together here. From a practical standpoint, you will find some really good guidelines and principles on how you view and how you deal with people. Most pastors and churches, they will make a real division between the rich people and the poor people. It is just the way that it has always been. I have been in the ministry almost 50 years, and I am telling you, I have seen it all my life.

You are going to find that growing down through churches in the 20th century, the big churches anyhow, and the little churches too, you are going to find that pastors are forever famous for catering to the rich people that will show up at your church. To me, it has always been a joke. In my day, way back 20, 30 years ago when I was pastoring but I was working in churches, the pastor's dream was to get a rich family, someone with status. He actually thought that getting a judge in your church made your church a better church. I remember one time we got a judge that came into the church and joined the church way back in the day. All the guys were just ecstatic. "Oh, he joined the church!" He was worthless. He may have been good in the courtroom, but he was terrible as a Christian doing things with the Lord.

Sometimes you get some brain surgeon. Every Baptist church needs a brain surgeon, I tell you right now. But you get some famous doctor, somebody that was really some heart specialist or this or that. It was like the status of the church just went up because so and so is now a member of our church. I remember one time years ago that the mayor of Raytown was looking at a church that I was associated with back then. "Oh, if we could just..." I remember the staff meeting, "If we could just land... You guys do everything you can to be nice to that family to have the mayor of Raytown in our church would be unprecedented." He was an idiot too. He never joined the church.

They are looking for a really good deal. You have got to find yourself catering to them, making sure that they are happy. Businessmen, big time. I remember we had big time businessmen, guys that were worthless but they had big businesses. They had a lot of money. Of course, they immediately become the elite status of the church. Rob, I see you are here. I am certainly not talking about doctors. I am not talking about you. You are a good doctor, and I appreciate you being here. I have to clarify some things. He loves the Lord and loves the book. He is a good guy.

The truth of the matter is, and I am embarrassed to say this, I really am, but it is true: most churches are all about money. It just is. I am so conscious of it and feel the weight of it so much that this is why before we take the offering, I explain to you if you are not a member of this church, we do not ask you to put anything in. Most pastors, they would die. I remember when we used to have these Christmas cantatas, and we would give away tickets, and we packed the place out, and the pastor would just, they would always have a goal or a theme, and the pastor would just be slobbering with the fact that, "Here are three thousand people here. We are going to take up a love offering at the end." You got twenty-eight dollars and thirty-nine cents. But that is the way they think. Most churches are unfortunately that way.

Last week, verse 1, we talked about a good name. I will be honest with you, when the world looks at churches today, Baptist churches, but any church really, they have a terrible reputation.

They do not have a good name, and that is because the goal that they have is so apparent that all they want is money, and they make a distinction between the rich and the poor. When you fall into that trap, and when you get into a multi-million or billion-million dollar building, you have to build, I mean, thirty million, sixty million, seventy, I mean, it is unbelievable.

A couple of years ago, there was a church here in Kansas City, still here, a church here in Kansas City, and they had a great building. It was absolutely, most pastors would die for that building. I would not. I love this place. But the building they had was absolutely incredible. The pastor decided that they needed to build another big building, better than this one. A guy told me that in the staff meeting that they had about it, the pastor's reasoning was this: "We have a bigger building, we will get more people, and if we get more people, we will bring in more money." That was the goal. It is like that, I never saw the movie, that Field of Dreams movie, that "if you build it, they will come." That is not how you build a church.

I learned that the hard way. I lost about 30 years ago, I lost my favorite dog. He ran away, and I could not find him. I got the idea that if I hired a contractor and built the most elaborate dog house that the world has ever seen, that that dog would come back because of that dog house. So I hired a contractor, cost me eleven hundred dollars. Is that a lot of money for a dog house, Bubba? I know you live in it most of the time. I did good on that one, did I not? I built this elaborate dog house, put it right in the eye with a sign on it for my dog to come home. First day, nothing. Second day, nothing. He did not come back at all. But I found my dog, and how I found him, I scrubbed the dog thing idea. I went up and down the streets in the backyard calling for my dog, looking for him. "Where are you? I am here. I love you. Get back home. Where are you at?" I looked into the bushes, I looked into the porches, I looked everywhere, and I finally found him. Nobody is going to come that is worth any money, worth any salt, to come to a big grand. You have got to go find them. You bring them in. But that is so foreign today.

This guy, they built this church, and the church was like, I do not know, I forget, it was like thirty million dollars. That is a lot of money. I was at a wedding, and one of the deacons who I had known for quite a while came up to me, and he says, "Have you heard about our building program?" I said, "Yeah, I have. I heard about it." That is all I said. I did not say, "I think it is stupid." I did not say, "You know." I just said, "Yeah, I heard about it. That is great." He says, "Yeah, you are not going to believe. He says, 'Last Sunday we took up a special offering to build that building, and we put out to the people in our church service, and in our church service, we raised five hundred thousand dollars in one offering! Praise God!'" He said he was excited about, "Praise God, praise the Lord! Five hundred, half a million dollars in one offer! Isn't that great?" I said, "Wow, that is great. I said, 'Not only that, you have got to do that 60 more times.'"

In life, this is free today, but you can have this. Life is about two concepts: it is about long term and short term. Many times we only look at the short term. Most Christians never even look at the short term. You are going to find out that putting that kind of burden on your people, they did not care. "Pay up." You are not a family in that church. You are just a unit, a giving unit that is on somebody's financial chart in somebody's office. Many times we sacrifice the long term on the altar of the immediate.

So you have to cater to them. You have to make them feel special. You have to make them deacons. Oh, I have seen it. You put them in some position of importance. You put them on a finance committee. So when you have issues of money, you can just kind of have them see because they have a lot of money at what you need. You have to take them out to dinner. You will never get an appointment with that pastor, but if you have a lot of money, just make the call, you are in. I have seen it. "Come on in. Sit down. What is that jingling in your pockets?" That is the way it works today. I have seen it all my ministry.

When you are in that kind of a situation in your preaching, it affects everything you do. So you cannot preach hard anymore. You cannot preach the truth anymore because you might offend them. In the back of your mind, you are weighing everything that you say because you have what, 40 guys out there, 40 families that are rich, and you have to cater to them, and you may know that they are not doing exactly right in some areas, but you are going to make sure you stay out of those areas. I know how it works. You get obligated to them. There will be times in your own preaching you hold yourself hostage because you cannot. I want to tell you something, there is only one thing I am obligated to, and that is the truth of the Word of God. I do not care about the rest of it.

Somebody came to me a while back, not here, but years ago, and said, "Well, you know what, I am leaving the church and taking my tithe with me." Well, we have two doors back here, help yourself. You never get yourself in that position. If God is in this and this is God's work, then God pays for what He orders. Do not ever think that one person in any church, one family, is the backbone that is going to hold it all together financially. But they do. The reason why they do is because they sold their soul to the building.

Now you have to baby them, you have to cater to them, you have to make sure that they feel special, and they will never figure it out that at the judgment seat of Christ, the rich and the poor are going to come together, and they are going to stand together before God. In Luke chapter 16, you have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man fared sumptuously every day, he had all kinds of great things. Lazarus laid at his gate full of sores. But you know what? There came a time when both of those came before the Lord together, and God determined who was rich and who was poor. The world looked at the rich man, "Wow!" He looked at Lazarus and said, "Uh." But when God brought them together, his money did not help him.

Rich people are hilarious. They always brag about how much they have and how much they make. In most cases, I know this is not true 100% across the board, but in most cases, if you spend any time in the ministry, you are going to find that they just tip God. "Good job, Lord." A guy said one time, and he was joking but he was serious, the pastor asked him, he had all kinds of money, he just won some, and the pastor said, "Are you going to tithe off of that?" He says, "Here is what I am going to do, pastor. I am going to get it all out my hands, I am going to throw it up in the air. What falls down is mine, what stays up is His." He was kidding, but he was serious. But God has their number.

I had a guy one time that years ago in a staff meeting, it was announced to us that so and so that was worth, I do not know how much, it was worth a lot of money, that he had just left all of his

money to the church when he died. Everybody was ecstatic. Everybody was talking about what a good guy he was, how noble that was. I want to tell you something, I did not say anything then because I was a nobody. I am a nobody now, but at least I am the only buddy. God has a wrench that will fit in a nut in this world, you know that. That sounds so noble, that sounds so wonderful. Yeah, I get it, keep it all for yourself right now, and then when you are dead and you cannot use it anymore, then give it to the Lord's work. That is the reasoning and how spiritual that is, when you cannot use it anymore, then give it to God.

Now let me give you a lesson in sixth grade reading. Turn over to 2 Corinthians chapter 5:10. This is how God fixes people like that. I knew this verse back then. I did not say anything because everybody was so happy, I did not want to ruin their day.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

You do not get any credit for what you leave behind. God understands the mindset. You only get credit for what you did while you were in this body. If I had brought that verse up in that staff meeting many years ago, I would have been out of a job so fast I would not know what hit it. You see that? You do not get anything for leaving it behind after you are dead, cannot use it anymore. "So I will just leave it all to God, have it all now, do what I want to do, and then when I am dead, I will give it to Him." It says, "according to what you did with what you had while you were in your body."

I am not saying this is 100% true, and I know I have known exceptions to it, I have, but most rich people who come into the ministry are worthless. I know there are exceptions to that, please do not take that across the board. But I am telling you something, they just have too many possessions, they have too many toys, they have too many things that keep them busy, and they can never identify with the people who have less than they have. When a pastor starts living in a four or five hundred thousand dollar home, when he starts to drive cars that cost much more than the people that he has in his church, and he starts, you cannot help, when you start living on a level where your people do not live, you cannot help losing touch with them. You just cannot.

Yet the great joke is in Proverbs 22:2, people who are rich are really spiritually poor, that the people in most cases, and the people who are poor in many cases, are really spiritually rich. Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man was the beggar, he just did not know it. In this life, he did not need to beg for anything, but in the afterlife, when he is in Abraham's bosom in hell, he had to beg for water. He was the real beggar, he just did not know it. He was financially, physically rich, but he was superior to the beggar, and when God got them two together, we saw how it worked out. Lazarus, he is on the other side having a great time in his life in Abraham's bosom.

III. The Prudent Man and Foreseeing Evil

Now let us look at the next verse, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." This is a great verse, and I am telling you, this is a great verse that we need to talk about some things in here and see several things.

First of all, the Bible says this guy is prudent. What does that mean? That means he has discernment. That means he has and operates with discretion. Prudence means you are cautiously wise. Prudence means that you are careful of the consequences of whatever you are doing. Prudence means you are careful not to act too quickly when the end of a situation has a doubtful outcome or is unsure. It talks about in the Bible in Ephesians 5:15 to walk circumspectly. That means be careful. Walk carefully. Be wise in what you do.

The second thing that it says about him that we want to look at is it says that he foresees the evil. It did not say, and you have got to see this here again, you have got to pay attention to the word, it did not say he foresees all the evil things, all the evil ways. No, it says that he foresees the evil. That is a personification. That is the devil at work. Job chapter 40 through 41, Revelation 12 and 13. He sees evil in its personified form, and he understands where it comes from. The evil, understanding completely what he is up against with the world, the flesh, and the devil as to the issues of life that are going to come his way. He knows now that when I struggle with the evil, here is the source of it.

You will never fix a problem in your life until you define where the source of it comes from. I have people who have all kinds of problems, have for years and years and years, and they will come in to me, and some of them are minute problems, no big deal, some of them are strongholds, some of them are very, very powerful in their lives. I will tell them, I say, "You know, you have got an issue in your life. You have got an issue in your life. You have to do three things to really fix it."

1. First of all, you have got to identify it. You really have got to stop and understand what your problem really is. That sounds really simple, but we do not want to admit what our problems are. Now it is hard for me to identify because I do not have any, that is my point. See how that just rolled off the tip of my tongue. We do not want to admit we have problems, and I want to tell you something, we all have problems. They may be on different levels, but we all have problems, and there will never be a time in your life when you do not have problems. The key is, do you want to fix your problem? When you do, it starts by identifying, and we do not like to do that.
2. I will tell you the second thing we do not like to do: you have to isolate your problems. In other words, I have identified it, now I am going to lift this problem out, I am going to put it over here from everything else. We are famous, once we identify we have a problem, we are famous that we go to work on all the things we do not need to work on and ignore the one thing we need to work on. It makes us feel like we are doing something when we are not doing anything. If I am a serial killer and I am going to work on my prayer life, that is not what I need.
3. Once you identify it, once you isolate it, then you know what you have got to do? You have got to eradicate it. You have got to destroy it. You have got to take it to the place where you annihilate it. You have got to focus on it, and you have got to do whatever you have got to do.

How long it takes, how intense it has to be, but you will never get there before you first identify it, then you isolate it, then you have got to annihilate it.

This is one of the greatest verses, it really is. The Bible is many things to us, it really is, and it is a great, great book, and this is one of the great verses in the Bible that show you what learning and cataloging biblical principles will really do for you, and I know I harp on that all the time. I am constantly on your back about building a library of biblical principles that you can fall back on, that whatever issue in life, you do not have to wonder about what God says, that you automatically have it right there. It allows you to see what is coming your way long before it gets to you.

Now listen to me, every situation, every circumstance you allow into your life or I allow it in my life, will have, and I said this before, it will have a short-term effect and it will have a long-term effect. When you are prudent, when you are consciously wise, when you have understanding and discernment and discretion, you will look at both the long-term effect and the short-term effect. You will never do something in a short term without stopping and considering how it is going to pay off a year from now, two years from now, five years from now. As I said, most of God's people at best only see the short term of how and what they want to do, and most of the time they do not even see that.

I will tell you the worst two areas that I see all the time, the worst two areas of that long term and short term, will be in marriage and having children. I mean, I hear it all the time when you are getting married, you want to get married, you feel like you need to get married, "I am 22 and I am not married, I am ready for John Max Village and the old widow's place over there." So you find somebody that comes along, you do not prove all things, and you sacrifice the long term on the altar of the immediate. That is why there are divorces. Somebody asked me one time, "What do you think the main reason for divorces in America?" I said, "That is easy, marriage." Marriage in the aspect that people never look at the long term. "Oh, you are beautiful right now, but how are you going to look 40 years from now? Oh, you are a handsome dreamboat, but wait till your six-pack turns into a keg." Sometimes I just cry myself.

Then after you are married, "We want to have kids. Oh, we are going to wait a while, a couple years, then we are going to have kids." You know what? We never, we look only at the short term, and we never look at the long term. I have had, and the reason why parents lose their kids, if it goes, all they ever looked at is short term. I have had mom and dad say to me, when I was looking about their kid, "You know what, I get that, but I work all day, and when I come home, I just want to veg out. I just want to relax. I do not want to have to do this with the kids." Then you should have got a puppy. Because when you have kids, there is a short term, but there is a long term. Your responsibility does not end when they get out of diapers and they can walk and talk on their own. That is where it begins. You see, you did not look at the long term. You did not realize that when you have children, your life changes. Maybe at first it does not change because your wife is the one that gets up in the middle of the night. She does not, you do not have to change the diapers, and she does all that for you. I get it. Most guys, I am always appreciative of guys that get up in the middle of the night and change the diapers. I think that is wonderful. I did not ever do it. I was not. I just, I am sorry, I did not. I did not know anything about it. When the

diapers on there said 25 pounds or up, I thought that is how much it held. You figure that out later. I appreciate it.

But your life changes, and the older they get, I am going to tell you something, the more your life changes. People get into marriage, they get to having kids, they look at the short term. Everybody loves the baby. Everybody loves the little kids running around church, and many times you look at him, you say, "Well, I wish he was mine." But when they get older, when they really need you, when life challenges begin to come, you did not think the long term through. Now other things get in the way, and we know what we do, we try to supplement that with things for them to do, but it may be not bad things, but we think that by getting them here or putting them in this program or this sports thing or this thing here that relieves me of my responsibility. No, it does not.

The Bible says he foresees the evil. I tell you all the time that everybody, Christian, your head ought to be on a swivel. You want to look behind you, look around, you have got to look ahead. Through the principles of the Word of God in the Bible, you do not have to go down that road where problems come in because you should have the ability to foresee the evil before it gets here. That is what principles do. The Bible does many things for us, and one of the main things that it will accomplish, it will, when it comes to life, it will make you and me proactive.

Now I want to say this, most Christians, most parents, but most Christians are not proactive. Most Christians are reactive. They wait till sin hits them, and then they try to deal with it, and you go through your life with that kind of philosophy, you are going to be in trouble. God never intended for sin ever to get to your doorstep. You know why? He gave you the principles to make you proactive, that you could foresee and come. So the characters and the stories of the Bible, it will show you every scenario of life and how you see the cause and the effect of not only the short term but the long term. Let me illustrate it.

This is an example of how you use your Bible 101. I know I say it a lot and say it all the time, and most of you probably I do not get through because I do not explain it very well, but let me explain it to you. Before you can be used of God effectively, you must be an effective user of the Word of God. It is just that simple, and that is what we do here. "Show me you need to be disciplined." Discipleship one. "Show me you are in discipleship two." Show me you need to get some things worked out. Let me put a plan together for you. It is what I do. It helps you get everything that you want to be, everything God wants you to be.

IV. The Seven Men of the Old Testament

Let me illustrate this in the Old Testament. If you read your Bible, you study your Bible, in time God opens up the scriptures and shows you some things. Years ago, I was reading through my Bible, and I was diligent about it and trying to get into the Word of God and learn the Word of God. I came through the Old Testament, it was just like God correlated my thoughts and my views and everything I needed to show me this, and all of a sudden I began through a couple of passages of scripture, God began to connect the dots, and I found out that there were seven men in the Old Testament that God singled out. You have all kinds of characters, but God showed

seven guys that He wanted to single out and tell me about them. I began to look at that, and I thought to myself as I studied, when you take these seven men and study them individually, you know what it does? It shows you the seven roads of life that you are going to go down as a Christian. You look at their lives, you study their lives, and you learn to do through the things that they went through. What good is a King James Bible if you do not know how to use it?

I looked at these seven guys, and I cataloged them, and I got them in my Bible. It is a whole series I could teach, but it was impacting me. When the Bible says to study to show myself approved, what does that mean to you? Does it mean you get some tape, which there is nothing wrong with, or you get a book back there, and there is nothing wrong with it? It says a workman. How much work time do you spend in the Bible every week? This is a great example of Bible principles, and you looking and getting them and cataloging them by seven men that God put them over here and said, "If you are smart enough and you see, I have set them apart, study them because in life these seven men go down the seven pathways of life that you are going to have to go down." You know what they will teach you to do when you study them? They will teach you through the principles to foresee the evil that is coming your way. That is what it does.

Let me read them for you. First of all, let us go over to Ezekiel chapter 14:14. We will pick up our first three.

Ezekiel 14:14

Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

Now there are your first three. He gave special mention to Noah, Daniel, and Job. Then when you come over to Jeremiah chapter 15:1, He gives you two more honorable mention.

Jeremiah 15:1

Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

Now we have five. Then we come over to Isaiah chapter 41:8, we find the next honorable mention.

Isaiah 41:8

But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Wow. Then in Acts chapter 13, we find our seventh honorable mention.

Acts 13:22-23

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king: to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

Seven men. These men are set aside and mentioned by God, and when you study them and look at each one of them, you can see how God gave them to us, why, and the principles that they followed or in many cases did not follow, to give us the ability to foresee through what they went through what is coming your way, the evil that we will have to face. This is how you use your Bible. You think God just pulled those seven guys out of the air because He did not have nothing to do on that day? He did that by design. He knows, Proverbs says, you and I are going to have to face some things in life. He gave us the Bible that through the principles of the Word of God, if you learn these men's lives, here are seven men who are going to go down the seven roads of life that you and I are going to go down. Each one of them had evil come to them, and you find out how they dealt with it or did not deal with it.

- Abraham: The Wanderer
- Moses: The Minister
- Samuel: The Worker
- Noah: The Walker/Overcomer
- Daniel: The Stander/Overcomer
- Job: The Sufferer/Overcomer
- David: The Worshipper

V. Hiding Behind Biblical Principles

Now you see, when the Bible says, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself," we see what happens. We see what happens when you wander for God, you do the ministry for God, you do a work for God, you walk with God, you stand for God, you overcome the flesh for God, and you get into the Word of God. When you study those seven men that God pulled out and put particularly for you, and you look at the seven paths of life that you are going to go through as a Christian, you know what you learn from them? You learn to see what is coming your way before it gets there.

Now it sets down through there, "he hideth himself." Where do you hide yourself? You hide behind the principles of the Word of God. Amen. Matthew chapter 4, when the devil came to the Lord Jesus to try to tempt Him, He did not argue with him. He did not proclaim He was God. He did not kick the devil and talk about all that He did in Genesis 1:1. He just simply said three times, "It is written." He hid behind the principles. The devil had nowhere to go. That is why the Bible says over there in Ephesians 4:27 that you and I would give no place to the devil. Give him no place to go. You know why? Because you are hiding behind the principle. He cannot get you. You know why he cannot get you? Do you know why he cannot get to you? He cannot get through the principles. Although most of God's people put a big bull's-eye on their rear end saying, "Devil, take your best shot!" He will nail you every time. You have got to hide. You have

got to hide. You know where you hide? You hide behind the principles. He will never get to you through those principles.

VI. Proactive Parenting and Life

Now in a couple of weeks, I am going to begin to talk about training up your children, and I will be very honest with you, most parents do not have a clue even how to begin to do that. If there ever is a time that we need to be proactive, it is with our kids, long before the evil gets to them. I mean, getting these seven men in their life and showing them how to be prudent, how to hide from the evil, because believe me, brother, it is coming.

I mean, come on. I have watched parents all my life in our church, and there is nothing wrong with this, nothing wrong. I watch you take your kids to the batting cages so they would be a better ball player. Nothing wrong with that at all. I could use a little help myself. You sign them up, they want to play football, they are going to play soccer, they are going to do this or that. You sign them up for a soccer camp or a football camp or a baseball camp so they can be better at what they do. You would not miss, and you should not, it is valuable time. You would not miss the youth turkey shoot or the youth deer season or the fishing rodeos or all the neat things that you get to do to make them better and make them aware what is around them. Nothing wrong with it.

It is not free either. You will spend hundreds of dollars on camps and uniforms and fees and bats and balls and shoes. You just cannot have any kind of shoes if you are going to play ball. You would think if somebody would design a shoe that you could wear in all sports, that is not true. You are going to have one pair of shoes for soccer, one pair of shoes for football, one pair of shoes for this, a pair of boots for hunting. It is just endless. You have got to have shoes, you have got to have hats, you have got to have gloves. Yet I have seen parents not, when they would do all that, whatever their kid is trying to do to make them better, and I have never seen them spend one hour, one dollar, dads with sons, dads with daughters, moms and dads with the family and the kids trying to make them better as a Christian. Then we wonder why the world swallows them up. We wonder why you have issues with them. Why if we took these seven people of life illustrating by seven men and sat down and show them how God took them down these roads and to look out for this coming your way.

I mean, let me ask you a question: which would you rather have? You would rather have your child be a better ball player or a better Christian? It is just that simple. Most parents, like most kids, they wait to get blindsided before they begin to respond. They are not proactive, they are reactive. They should have foreseen and trained their child to foresee when you go to school and you hit that evil day, what is coming your way.

Years ago, when I was flying around preaching, I had a buddy of mine, he is a missionary now, his name was Bob Matthews. Bob Matthews was a great guy. He was a pilot. I do not like flying in small planes. I have seen too many guys killed in them. I have to say Bob was the only pilot that I ever felt safe with. I watched one time, and we were flying back from Illinois, our little church we had going up there, and we were flying back a little single engine plane, and we flew

out late that night when we flew up that day before, and it was about a, I do not know, two hour flight. We had a 90 mile an hour tailwind. We got there in no time, and I was thinking, "That is great," but I forgot the calculus. And flying back, we were going to hit it head on. We flew out of Illinois up there out of Quad Cities, and we flew out of that thing, and we started out about 10 o'clock that night, and by one o'clock in the morning, we had not gone very far at all, and we were pushing about a 90 mile headwind, and it was slow enough then, we were, I could have got out and walked faster.

Bob was a great pilot, and if Bob got nervous, I got nervous. Bob said, "You know what, why don't you get that map out there and you look for an airport? We are going to have to set this puppy down here if we do not find something pretty quick." Now that got my attention. Bob, he was the most cautious pilot I ever met in my life, but if Bob said we are going to crash, you are going to crash. When Bob said a 90 mile an hour headwind is holding you up and we are going to run out of gas, we better find a place to land. I said, "Bob, I do not, I do not see, oh, this really scared me." I said, "Bob, there are no airports on here." He says, "Then look for a wide road." Now that really bothered me. Lo and behold, just as we were about an hour out of gas, we broke out of that tailwind. You could feel that plane surge for us, and we got into Kansas City downtown airport, Wheeler down there, and I will tell you what, I mean, it is the one that we did not run out of gas, taxied into the runway.

Bob was a great pilot. He always wanted to try to get me to learn how to fly, and we would fly places, he let me take the plane, fly it. He is sitting next to me obviously, but he let me fly it. If I ever tried to fly an airplane, get my, I would be dead in a week. I am not that precise. If you are going to fly a plane, you have got to dot your T's, dot your I's, cross your T's. I just, I wanted to, you know, you cannot do that. I want to go around water towers. Cannot do that. I am up there, and I am saying, he says, "Keep it level, keep it level." And I am saying, "Your nose is up, your nose is down." I never find level. He was a great pilot.

He told me, I never forgot this, he says, "Really, flying is not hard." He said, "The toughest part in airplane flying is landing." You are coming in on a runway, and you are coming in what, 90 mile an hour, maybe 100 mile an hour coming into a runway, and you are going to have to set that baby down. He says, "The rule for landing a plane: always stay ahead of the plane. Know what you have got to do before you have got to do it." When you are landing the plane, he says, "Bob, if you do not do that, you are going to crash." He says, "When I land the plane, I do not want to talk to anybody. I do not want to think about anything. I am thinking one thing: I am staying ahead of what I have got to do to land that plane." I thought about that years later with all the families and kids. I will tell you something, when it comes to your kids, it is like flying a plane and trying to land it. You have got to stay ahead of your children, or you will crash. It is just that simple.

VII. The Punishment of the Simple

I mean, look at the last part of that verse, "but the simple pass on, and are punished." That is real simple. When you do not foresee what is coming ahead, when you do not look behind, look around, and look ahead, when you do not, we do not get proactive in your life or your lives of

your family, and we will get into all of this when we get into verse 6 here. We are going to take some time, we are going to camp, and I am going to help all you young parents get what you need to get. I will help anybody anytime, no matter where you are at. But I will tell you something, it starts with being proactive and seeing the evil coming your way, and then having them see it. It starts with hiding behind the biblical principles that will protect you. Nothing will get through. Nothing will get through. You hide behind the biblical principles and have a principle for what you are going to do, every decision you are going to make, every circumstance you are going to put yourself in. You get those principles involved in that, the devil will never get to you. Evil will never, you will see it coming long before, and when you see it coming, you will just step over behind the principles, and by it, it will go. Foresee the evil coming your way, hide behind those principles.

Then we will simply, if we do not do that, then we will simply, as the verse says, "pass on, and be punished." I look at that and I think to myself, how many Christians, when it came to the things of the Word of God, they passed on prudence. They passed on discretion. "Now never mind, I will pass on discernment. I will pass on it, Pastor Bob. I will pass on the Bible. I will pass on coming in and talk to you. I will pass on listening to the sermons. I will pass on cataloging the principles. I will pass on the teaching. I will pass on Bible study." All of that stuff, "I am just going to pass on." The Bible says the end result is they are punished. It is not pretty because then in their lives they have a catalog of broken relationships, broken marriages, unfulfilled life, years of compounding sin, and destroying everything in their life. Lose their marriage, lose their kids, lose their job, lose everything, and most important of all, lose their relationship with God, your relationship with the Bible.

The punishment comes in a form of judgment, either the world clobbering you or the judgment seat of Christ, you are getting clobbered, all because we looked at the Bible, we looked at the principles, we looked and saw what it said like I said today, and then you know what, we walk out of here and we just simply say, "Pass on, pass on."

Solomon, without a doubt, was the wisest man that ever lived, and when it came to the end of his life, and he is probably the most unique man in the Bible because God allowed him to see and experience and partake in everything in life. God held nothing back from him. I do not fully understand all of that, but I know it to be true. After he saw everything in life, experienced everything life, went through everything that God allowed him to do, touch, taste, and handle, at the end of his life in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, when he had written the greatest book on all the ologies of man under the sun and all that he likes to do, he simply said this:

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

At the end of it all, at the end of everything in your life and my life, when we come down, "The rich and the poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all. And a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and he hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." You know that is exactly the two choices we have as Christians. We can either get the Word of God and use it the way that it is supposed to be, or we can get the Word of God to do nothing with it, and then all of our lives we run behind the plane. All of our lives we do not become proactive, we become reactive. All of our lives we are getting blindsided by everything that hits us, and most of the time by the time it hits us, it can be very hard if not impossible to fix.

But I am telling you, what good is it to have a Bible if you are not going to use it? What good is it to have it if you are not going to take what it says and really do something with it? It is the difference between a Christian who just goes through life with a problematic lifestyle that has issues in everything versus somebody who lives above the circumstances, who hides behind the principles, and the Word of God does the work in our lives simply because you and I did the work in the book first. We will hold up there. You guys have a good Thanksgiving. I will close in prayer here. I will call you back up in about five minutes for our meeting.