

I. The Struggle of Human Nature

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn to Proverbs chapter 19. As I told you earlier, today we are going to close out this great chapter. It has been a great chapter. There has been so much in this, as in all the chapters we have come through so far. We have seen some really great principles coming through this chapter.

Last week, if you will remember, I told you about one of the greatest studies that I ever undertook that helped me probably more than anything else as far as the ministry is concerned. That was a study of human nature. Human nature is an incredible study in the Bible. It is what man and his old nature will try to do with what God gives him.

We also looked the week before at the great verse that talked about, "There are many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." The old nature, the old man, the human side of us, the human nature as the world likes to call it, will always be and stand against the things of God. That is our old nature, our flesh. That is what human nature is. It will always be against anything that God tries to do. When the Bible talks about the great battle between the new nature and the old nature, this is what we are talking about.

If you have your Bibles for a moment, before we go to Proverbs, come over to Romans chapter 7. I want to show you that great concept at work here and probably one of the greatest Christians that ever lived. We think many times that because we struggle with things, people in the Bible that God used greatly and mightily never struggled with the same things. That is simply not true. Paul is probably the greatest Christian that ever lived, and yet he struggled with many of the things that you and I struggle with, especially in his old nature and his human nature that he had to battle with.

He says in Romans chapter 7, and by the way, Romans chapter 7, if you do not have it marked in your Bible, Romans chapter 7 is the great definitive chapter on the old nature versus the new nature. It is where you always want to go first, and then you can move out from there. But this is the definitive passage on it.

He says this in verse 14. I will not read the whole chapter.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Boy, how many times have we all found ourselves in that situation? That shows you that Paul is no different than you and I are in anything that he does. So you begin to see that Paul struggles with the same thing that you and I do. I want you to understand going into this chapter that what I am going to preach on today, what I am going to talk about, everybody struggles with. Paul struggled with it. He asked down here, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Then he answers that question in verse 25 when he says this:

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

He says, “Who is going to deliver you from it?” The Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God. That is what we want to focus on today. Our human nature will be a direct result of our fallen image that we got from Adam. We know that the Bible says that when Adam sinned, sin passed upon all men, for all have sinned.

When it comes to your flesh, when it comes to your human nature, and it comes to your old nature, I want you to understand something: you cannot play with it. You cannot bargain with it. You cannot pacify it. You cannot cut a deal with it. You cannot give it an inch in your life. I told the kids in Bible People Ministry yesterday that the only thing that you can do with your flesh is what Galatians chapter 2 verse 20 says is crucify it.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Daily dying by crucifying yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. But I told them also yesterday, that is an interesting thing because everybody here can shoot yourself. Everybody here can stab yourself. Everybody here can go out and take an overdose of pills and kill yourself that way, or lock yourself in your garage and put a hose on your exhaust pipe and run it into your garage and kill yourself that way. But nobody ever in history was ever able to crucify themselves. You cannot do that to yourself. When it comes to you being crucified with Christ, you cannot do it. God has to do it for you. The only way He does it is through the Word of God and through the principles of the Word of God.

II. The Slothful Man and Half-Hearted Christianity

Now to lay along with that, let us look at our next set of verses, and we want to kind of match these together. Proverbs chapter 19 is picking up now in verse 24 through the end of the chapter.

A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.

Now here is a good one. Here is something that most people teach one way, and I am not saying that is wrong, but I see it just a little bit differently based on the wording structure of it. Where most guys would just read through it, take it at face value, I look at every word. When I see something that does not maybe exactly line up with the way it is taught most of the time, I may understand the general concept is true, but I also know there is going to be something else there.

He says this:

A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Now the verse that I have always heard and I have always seen it associated with it, and it is true, if you do not work, you do not eat. You work with your hands, and idle hands are the devil's workshop, I am sure your mother told you that. It is always associated with laziness, slothfulness, because in life, you do things with your hands. So hiding your hands will always be a reference, and many times, to somebody not working, being lazy.

But when I saw that verse years ago, I saw that it was not talking about hands. It was not talking about hands in a plural way. It was talking about hand in a singular way. I always thought and always saw that verse as that really talks about people who only do things halfway in their life. One-handed. Only get one hand involved. In most things in life, to do a good job, we have to use both hands and not just one. You drive well and you want to drive safe, you keep both hands on the wheel.

I always looked at the verses as I understand, and I would not argue with somebody who used that as laziness because it is. But I am more exact when it comes to things, and I look at things and take every word at face value. I know that in most things in life, we have to do with both hands.

The virtuous woman in Proverbs chapter 31, in 31:13, it says:

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

Both of them, see.

Proverbs chapter 3 verse 16 says:

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

I looked at that many, many years ago, and it says in your left hand is, right hand is one thing, and then left hand is the other. I always looked at that, that is how you hold your Bible. The Bible opens up holding both hands, reading your Bible is the Old Testament and the New Testament that contains those things. I always looked at that verse as something a little different.

The Bible says in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 15:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

I am telling you, if you are ever going to learn the Bible, you are going to have to use both hands. You are not going to be able to do it one-handed. If I do not usually title my sermons, if I was going to title my sermon, I would call it "A One-Handed Christianity Today," where people have one hand that they will do something for God, the other hand they keep for themselves. That is just exactly where it is.

In Exodus chapter 16, one of my favorite passages in the Bible that shows how the manna in the Old Testament, that was the spiritual food that God gave the nation of Israel, the supernatural food that He brought down to them in the wilderness of sin. I have always understood that as a picture of the fact that you and I in this world, we live in the wilderness of sin. When Israel left Egypt and they began that journey that took them for 40 years, they did not find anything to eat in the wilderness of sin. There was no water that was worth drinking. There was no food that was worth eating. So what God had to do to sustain them is to bring them supernatural food and supernatural water. He brought the manna down from heaven, and He brought the water out of the rock.

In this life for you and for me, in the world that we live in, this wilderness of sin that we are making our pilgrimage through, there is nothing here that is going to satisfy you. The water is bad, the food is bad, everything out there will be against you. Your human nature may like it, but your new nature will never care for it.

I remember reading back there how that while they slept at night, God brought down the manna, and it rained down like snow. When they woke up in the morning, it would lay all around the camp. I often looked at that as what a beautiful picture that is when God gave us the Word of God. God gave them the Word of God freely. It came down while they slept. But when they woke up in the morning and they pushed back the tent flap of their tent, they saw that manna, a type of the Word of God, all over the ground like snow. The Bible calls it hoarfrost, that is snow in the Bible.

When they opened up that tent door and they saw that around there, it brought upon them a decision that they had to decide what they were going to do. They either had to take the Word of God that God had provided them and become the nourishment, or they simply just walked out of that tent and trampled the Word of God under their feet. You have the same decision this

morning, every day of your life. God has given you the manna from heaven. He brought it to you. It is God's supernatural sustaining food and water for everything that we need. But the decision you have to decide every day of your life, are you going to do something with it, or are you just going to trample it under your feet? Many of God's people trample it under their feet.

My point is this: when they gathered that, the Bible said some gathered more and some gathered less. That is a great concept. In this church, really in any church I guess, but in this church, you are going to have as much of the Bible as you want. There is no limit on it. We do not allow you to get to a certain place and then send you home. You can have as much of the Bible as you want. You can have as much of me as you can stand. You can have whatever you need here because the Bible says back there some gathered more and some gathered less. They had to gather it. But when they gathered it, I guarantee you, they were hungry. They were starving to death. They did not have any food at all. I guarantee you, if you were a starving person and somebody put food in your life, you would not pick it up with your little pinky up like they do down at the Radisson Wheel Box. You would be scooping it up with both hands. They went out there with their dishes and their bowls and their baskets. They were scooping up the Word of God with both hands and getting as much of it as they can. When it comes to the book that God gave you, you cannot learn it one-handedly.

I thought about this as I was putting this sermon together. People when it comes to the Bible will do it one-handedly, and they will keep the other hand for themselves. You see this in the book of Judges. It makes perfect sense now in the book of Kings and Chronicles with the Kings of Israel. How many times have I been asked where the Bible talked about a king and it says he did right in all the days of his life, but his heart was not perfect with the Lord? People would scratch their head and say, "How can a guy do what is right but his heart not be perfect?" That is a verse that confuses people. It never really confused me. You know why you can? Because you only do it one-handedly. You are not all in. Oh, you love God, but you are not willing to go all the distance with God.

Somebody called me a couple of weeks ago, and he says, "You know, I want to get into ministry, and I, you know, I got a wife and I got a kid and I got a—" He says, "How much should I get in? How deep should I get into the ministry? How much should I do?" My answer to him was, "Do not do anything more or less than Jesus did." He had responsibility. He had family. He had 12 people he had to take care of. You realize that you have to balance your life out, but coming to Christianity with one hand in and one hand out will never be the way to do it.

I promise you, we walked out of church today, and some billionaire felt sorry for Kansas City, and he is flying around up here in an airplane, and he has got all of his associates, and they got big barrels of \$100 bills. \$60 million worth of \$100 bills. We are out walking out of church, and we look up, and just about that time, he dumps all those \$100 bills out over Kansas City. Those \$100 bills come floating down, and you are looking up, and you are saying what it is, and one of them hits the ground, and you see a \$100 bill, another one hits the ground, and you see a \$100 bill. Let me tell you something, you would not be picking them up with one hand. You would be scooping them suckers up with both hands, with your mouth, and with your toes. Do not kid me. But God will drop the manna from heaven that is worth millions of dollars per verse, put it right

in your lap, and give you the riches, the true riches of Christ Jesus, and you will pick it up with one hand if you pick it up at all. See, human nature, man. God's people, when it comes to God and the Word of God, it is one of the most fantastic studies you will ever find in your life.

The Bible is not a hard book to learn, it really is not. I hear it all the time. I hear pastors tell you all the time, "Oh, it is going to take you all your life to study it." Yeah, listening to you, it probably will. But the Bible is not a hard book to learn, it really is not. Do you realize what our hang-up is when it comes to the Bible? It is real simple. You are not going to like this, but it is okay, it is early in the day. You know what our hang-up is? Ours, yours, and mine. We had to overcome that. This is part of our old nature. When it comes to the Bible and how simple the Bible is to learn it, I am going to tell you something. You get right with God or saved, whatever the case may be, and jump in. If you do not have a working knowledge of the Word of God in five or six years, there is something wrong with either the guy that is teaching you or what you are doing with what he is giving you.

But you know what our hang-up is? It is so easy. It is so simple. Two basic things, that is all it is. Two basic things why you and I will not get the Word of God from it. Two simple things:

1. Our hard-headed approach to doing it our way. We do not want to do it God's way. We want to do it our way. You know what got each of us into trouble we have got in life? Doing things our way. You think at some point in life we would learn that? Our old nature knows that, but our old nature likes those things. So the first thing that we all struggle with and the first problem that keeps us is we are all hard-headed when it comes to the approach of getting the Word of God. We want it our way. We always want it on our terms. "Well, God, I am going to study the Bible, but I am going to do it on my terms. I am going to do everything else in my life, and I am going to give you what is left over. You be there when I am ready and give me what I need."
2. Our half-hearted attempt to learn it. We do it one-handed. We do not get into it all the way. We just take a little bit of it and keep everything else for ourselves, and we just approach it in life from a one-handed.

I have always looked at that verse. I have told you the story, and I will not go into it in great detail because I have told it so many times. I have got to tell you it is my favorite story to tell, but I will not do it. I will spare you. I told you about the kid that lived over there in the Middle East someplace, and in his village was the wisest man that ever lived, and he was the great guru. Everybody in the place went to see him, and he got all the answers. This kid watched this all of his life, and he wanted so much to be like that great wise guru that was in his village. So when he got to be about 18 or 19, he had decided that he was going to dedicate his life to truth, knowledge, and finding out all the secrets of the world. So he goes to see this old guy, and they have a conversation, and the old man says, "Okay, you want to be a guru? You want to learn all these things?" He says, "I will help you get there." He says, "Show back up about three o'clock this afternoon, and we will start the process."

Well, the kid is elated. He thinks now that he is going to go in there just like a lot of you do. You are going to show up at Bible study, walk out of here, and you are going to know all the Bible.

That is not going to happen that way. So he shows up at three o'clock, and the old man, he is standing out in the front yard, and there is a river or a stream there. It goes by the guy's house. So the young man says, "Here I am." So the old man takes him down to that water's edge, and the old man walks in and motions for him to come out. The old man gets about up to here and brings the kids out here, and the kid is looking around, and he said, "Oh, this is some kind of ceremonial service, man. I am really excited about that." About that time, the old man took his hand, put it on the guy's head, and pushed him out of the water and just held him there. Now the guy was speaking to himself and had his mouth open, so he did not get a big breath of air before he went under, and he is choking to death. He is drowning. The old man just holds him down there. The old man just holds him down there and will not let him up. After about 20, 30 seconds, when he thinks the kid just operated out of the body of the president of the Lord, he lets him come up, and the kid is choking and puking and everything else. The old man drags him over to the land shore and lays him down there, and the kid is spitting up water, coughing up, and he is mad. He regains his control, he gets up, and he just lights into this old guy, and he says, "What kind of training is this?" He said, "I thought you were going to give me the secret to the universe. I was sincere. It is obviously you think this is a joke. Why would you do that to me?" The old man just standing there just looking at him. When the kid got done, the old man looked at him and said this, "You know what, son? You want truth? You want knowledge? You want to learn the Word of God? You want the secret that God has for you? I will tell you the key. When you want that book, just like you wanted air when you thought you were going to drown, that is when you will get it."

You will never learn the Bible. You will never get into God the way He wants you to. You will never be what God wants you to be and get out of here what God has to you. Want this thing so bad. It is like the very air you breathe. Until that point, one-handed, it is just one-handed.

Back in the 1800s, they had a gold rush out in California. You should see thousands and thousands of people went out to find gold. I never saw a picture of one of them panning for gold with one hand. You want the book? Take both hands.

III. Learning from Others' Mistakes

Look at verse 25.

Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

Now let me explain here. The simple here will be a child of God who just stays with the book and keeps things simple in his life. He is not a simpleton. In the Bible, there are two kinds of simple people. Proverbs 7:7 talks about a man, a simple one of youth who is void of understanding. We are not talking about that here. Here it is a guy who just simply believes and follows what God says. So there are two kinds of simple people in the Bible. A simple person who just follows the Word of God can be taught by watching God not only deal with him, but what God deals with others around him.

I think that is one of the real things that we cannot do in most of our lives today. We do not see and understand what God is doing in somebody else's life, and we do not apply that. Yet 1

Corinthians chapter 10 verse 11 says that he talked about the things that happened to Israel in the Old Testament. They were for our examples and for our admonition. He says the things that they went through and the things that they did. He says, "I listed them there for you that you might see them so you do not fall into the same trap as they do, that you can learn by others' mistakes." Now I always teach you that you need to learn from your mistakes. But I want to tell you something else. You need to learn from others' mistakes too. Because verse 12 says:

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

I have seen parents lose their kids. I have seen marriages fall apart. I have seen God's people get with the wrong crowd and watch that wrong crowd just destroy their relationship with God, even their own church, sometimes even their own pastor. I have seen men and women that were saved make one bad choice with terrible consequences and lose the ability to ever do anything for God the rest of their lives. You know and I know what the answer is. I know everybody says, "Well, you know, God forgives and does that. God is the God of the second chance." Sure He is. It is not the fact that God will not give you a second chance. It is the fact that you put yourself so down the hole you cannot reach the second chance. Because sin never leaves it any better than it finds you.

In over 20, 30 years of multiple kids, multiple expenses, multiple problems, your own issues, the things that you have to deal with, all the connecting pieces that make it just unbearable and make it to the place where you want to learn the Bible, you want to get into the Word of God, you want to do this, you want to do that. You do not have any time now. You know why? Your problems sucked it all out of you. You have got nothing left to give. 24/7 of your life is trying to put the band-aids on the issues you have caused in your life. I get it. I have seen that. I watch some people die too young. I watch some of them grow old and get bitter. I watch some of them get away from God and leave Him and go right back to the world.

I wanted you to know, I do not ever judge people with what they do. I really do not. My life is when I see somebody do something terribly wrong, and I never judge them for it. I never necessarily think they are bad people. I understand that good people do stupid things sometimes. I get it. I never, in my own heart, in my own mind, I never pass judgment on them. You know why? I never get so far the fact that I know if it was not for the grace of God and the book that God gave me, I would be in the same mess. But I have got to be honest with you. My Bible says over there in 1 Corinthians 2:15:

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

Now, I do not judge people, but I will judge the things that they get involved in to my own life and say, "I do not want to be part of that. I do not need that. I do not need that in my life." I never would judge the person. So I will watch them make some terrible mistakes. Obviously, I try to help them. I really do. We all do. I learn from it just so I do not have to go through the same thing. I have seen guys, people go through situations in their life that have completely taken them out of the fellowship with God. They lost the joy of their life all because they allowed something to come into their life. I watch those things and I look at those things. I may never say a word, but I just watch the overall surroundings of how it all comes down. I walk away with it to my

own self, not making a judgment on that person. I love that person. I would do anything to help them. But when it comes to me, I saw what got them where they are at, even if they do not want to see it. I may not be able to make them see it, but I am going to see it because I do not want it to happen to me.

So you know what I will do? I will stay away from the places that they go. There are some places that you go are going to mess you up. I will tell you something else. I will stay away from the people that they hang out with because there are some people out there that will hurt you, saved people. If I have learned anything in life, I have learned that the devil will always meet you where you are not supposed to be. If I learned anything else in life, the devil will always form the threesome when the person you are with is not who you should be with. I guarantee you.

IV. Samson: A Cautionary Tale

The greatest example of this, if you ever want to study it in the Bible, is found in the book of Judges. It was Samson. Samson is a picture of so many of God's people today. Samson, bless his heart. I love him. Samson is found in God's Hall of Fame. You know why that? This is a guy that was messed up all his life. Samson is a picture of a Christian in a practical, inspirational application. He is a picture of a child of God who winds up in heaven, but in his physical life, because of his old nature and because of his flesh, he never one time in his life and all the account of his life in the book of Judges ever got the victory in anything. You know, there is a lot of God's people that way today. There is a lot of God's people that you just cannot get the victory in anything in your Christian life. You scratch your head and wonder why. He is a man who could never get the victory in his life.

I have seen people that today come in and talk to me, and they will say, "Well, I am struggling with this, and I am struggling with that." Or, "I had an attitude about this, I got an attitude about that, and I do not know why, and I do not know why." I just say, "Go back to Luke and Samson." Here is a guy who is a picture of a Christian that all his life he never got the victory. There are two reasons:

3. He kept going to the wrong places.
4. He kept hanging out with the wrong people.

Like in Judges 14:5. Now he is a Nazarite. In Numbers 6, a Nazarite, that is someone who separated himself from the world to do a special task for the Lord. The Nazarite vow is really a picture of what, in a spiritual sense, you and I are as Christians. We are to be separated from the world. The Nazarite by this vow, physical vow, is separating him from the world. I do not know if you know it or not, but there were a couple of things that he could not do.

The first thing he could not do is he could not have no part of a vine tree. So why are you drinking on the weekends? That is just a question. Because your buddies are doing it? Because you like it? Because you think it is okay? There is no funeral home that is ever quieter than it is in here right now. As a Nazarite, under the Nazarite vow, he was to be separated from three things. The first one was the vine tree. So how do you justify what you do on the weekends or maybe throughout the week?

The second thing, he was not allowed to touch a dead body. Pick up an unsaved people. What are you doing hanging out with unsaved people? You see where your problems begin to start?

The third thing is he was not allowed to cut his hair. Now that does not seem like much to you, but the nation of Israel was told to cut their hair a certain way. Where everybody else in the world had their hair one way, the nation of Israel was supposed to cut their hair universally another way. That showed that they were different from everybody else. Now in the Bible it says that long hair was given to a woman, not to a man. It says that if a man has long hair, it is a shame unto him in the book of 1 Corinthians. So we see that him not cutting his hair is a picture of also what we ought to be as a child of God. We are to bear a shame and a reproach for the Lord Jesus Christ. That Nazarite vow was something.

Old Samson could never get it. He could never quit going to the places that he should never go to, and he could not stay away from the people that he needed to stay away from. I have had people say, "Well, I go out with the world because I do not have any Christian friends." Oh, that is a great choice. Just like saying, "I drink strychnine because I cannot find a bottle of water."

Here is Samson. He is bee-bopping. He is going to see his woman. So he is walking down the road here, and he knows a shortcut. That shortcut is through the vineyard that belongs to somebody else. Now keep in mind, he is supposed to stay away from things on a vine tree. He thinks he knows more about it, and it is okay because he, like you and me, we think we are the exception to the rule, do not we? So he cuts through the vineyard, which he is supposed to stay away from. There in the vineyard, he meets the lion. He kills the lion, and then a little bit later on, he touches the lion, which is now dead, and he violates the Nazarite law in two places there. He refuses to get a haircut. He refuses to bring the sacrifices that he is supposed to bring. He is supposed to bring a female lamb. He is supposed to bring a male lamb, and then he is supposed to bring a ram. He will not do it. He is like so many of God's people. "I can do whatever I want."

Let me say this before I finish the story. The devil will always meet you where you are not supposed to be. So he is not going to do it. So you know what God did? He would not give a female lamb, so God killed his wife. He would not get a male lamb, so God took his father, and he would not get a ram, so God says, "You know what, Samson went to Philistines, took him, and Delilah made sure he got his haircut." They tied him between two big pillars. The only thing in his life that he ever did that was done for God was his own suicide. When he is down there, a trained child of God hooked to a grinding wheel naked while the world is laughing at him. A child of God. It reminds me of so many of God's people who you chain yourself to this old world, and the world laughs at you. A child of God naked grinding day after day. They made sport with him. They laughed at him, made fun of him. A child of God. All started by him going to the wrong place and hanging out with the wrong people.

Finally, he is down there, and he is between those pillars, and they have got him chained, and they are making fun of him, and they are doing everything the world does, and God finally now speaks to him again. He says, "I was not there, but I know what he would say because I know what I would say. Lord, I really screwed this up. Lord, I have made a mess out of this. Lord, I should have never went where I should not have went. I should have never done the things that I

did. But what am I going to do now? Lord, I did not give the female lamb because, you know, so you took her, and I did not give the male lamb, and you took him, and now here I am, and I know I have got to get a ram, and how am I going to get a ram?" The Lord looked down and said, "I will tell you what, Samson, you be the ram." The only thing he ever did in his life for God was bring down the house. Killed all of the Philistines that were there. But it cost him his life.

I tell you something, kids, and you are going to hear it again in a couple of weeks maybe. If God cannot get honor and glory out of your life, He will get it out of your death. I will preach a good funeral for you. Samson's problem. Just two things. He kept going to the wrong places, and he kept hanging out with the wrong people, and it destroyed him.

V. The Value of Reproof

Verse 25 says, "Through reproof will come understanding and knowledge." Samson would never take reproof from anybody. You know what? Some of you will not either. Samson would never listen to reproof. He would never, he would get his nose bent in a joint. He would get upset. He would leave the church. He would get mad about this. He would get mad about that. Samson would never take reproof. You know what the word reproof means? Reproof. It means reproof what you are doing if it is right.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, a famous verse. We all know it.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The value of reproof, the value of finding out in your life and my life what is right, and then finding out with us what is wrong, and then correction, the third thing, changing our lives, and then the fourth thing, instruction in righteousness, staying with it. Oh no, no, no, not us Samsons. We will be out there this weekend guzzling it down with our buddies, and we will justify it just like Samson, and when somebody preaches a message like this, you will get your nose bent in a joint because you, like Samson, will not take reproof. You will scratch your head 10, 20 years from now, wonder what happened. Other than the fact that you are an idiot, not much. There is value in reproof. The Bible says that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. There is value in reproof. Reproof will perfect you. Many of God's people, they have no care to be perfected. They have been hanging out with their own crowd, blood life.

VI. Honoring Parental and Spiritual Instruction

Verse 26, now here is a good one.

He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

A couple of weeks ago, I preached out of verse 20, and I said:

Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

Simply the verse is saying, and it is a good verse to preach on, which I am about to do. Simply do not waste what God will give you from the Bible. You kids here, you young kids, all of you, you older kids. You have some really good parents. We have a very good elementary division here that Barb and Phil head up, and all of you working at, and all of you do the best, very great job. But at the end of the day, it is not the elementary group that makes you what you are. It is your mom and dad at home. We just try to support what they do. But most of you kids have very good parents. My advice to you is do not waste the advice and the counsel and the instruction that they want to give you. When you get 14 or 15 or 16, do not cop an attitude about it.

I will say something else too. You hear in Old Path Baptist Church, you get a lot of good solid Bible. Now you may not agree with that, but that is okay. You are an idiot too. You get a lot of good solid Bible here. My advice to you is do not waste what God, your Heavenly Father, has provided for you here. It is no accident why you are here. If it is, then you are probably not saved. It is no accident that you are here this morning. So why do you have an attitude about it? If it is in the hand of God that He brought you here, what did He bring you here for? So you could have an attitude? No. He brought you here to get the instruction that you would need to get everything that He wanted you to have. He brought you here so you would not waste the instructions of your Heavenly Father.

Life, listen, all life as a Christian or even as a parent will break down into two simple concepts of truth. When we train your children as parents, when I train you as a pastor, you train your child to hear and receive good instruction. Then you train your child to do something with the instruction that they just heard and received. Do not waste what your Father has for you.

Our greatest example, listen to Bible, and this is why I am saying there are so many examples. There would be Samuel back there in 1 Samuel chapter 3 verses 19 through 20. Samuel was an incredible, he is a credible opening to the book of 1 Samuel and to what is commonly known as the books of the kings. It is a tremendous story. Samuel was a young man just like so many of you. I do not know how many times that a young man has come to me and wanted to start a church or wanted to go into the ministry, and I will take him to the definitive chapter on it out of there. You know what? After I take him through there and do that, half the time they just follow their own devices, their own heart, do their own thing. Then they scratch their head and wonder why it never goes anywhere.

Look, God has a way that He does things. I go back to what I said, the two issues that we have. The first one is our hardheadedness that we think we know more about it than God does. You better get past that as quickly as you can. The second thing is your half-hearted attempt of doing something for the Lord.

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

You know, that is what needs to happen here in your life. You need to let God establish you. Establish you in the Word of God first. Establish you in your relationship with Him second. Then establish you in the lives of other people that you may give them the instructions that God has given you. God's people will never do that today for the most part. We are a unique bunch here. God has put all His rotten apples in one bag here, so to speak. You are a unique group. You actually love the Bible, most of them, and you do something with it. Even the ones who do not, you are really nice people. But it is a thing where, you know what, the job of this church, my job is to establish you. That is my job, because God has got something for you to do. Being established in anything always gives you the edge. If you go get a job someplace and you have got somebody over here that is going in for the same job, and he has no experience, and you have done the experience for five or six years, you are probably going to get the job. You are established in what the guy is looking for. In this church, what makes any church great is the men and women who are established. God will do all kinds of things to establish you. He will want to get you to that point and get you to that place in your life where you simply get established, and then God can do something with you. My job is to establish you in the Word of God. Your job is to want to be what God wants you to be and then do it. It is just that simple.

VII. Avoiding Erroneous Instruction

Look at verse 27. Along with the other great advice I have given you so far, here is some more.

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

Wow. Instructions that somebody will give you that will cause you to err from the Word of God. Now you would think that would be the world. I will tell you what, it is not always the world. I have said this many times, and you know, I have told you over and over again, stay away from people, places, and instructions that will pull you away from the Word of God. Affect your attitude. I mean, I say it again, if you are here because you felt God has brought you here, then what is with the attitude? Find where God wants you to go. Get the right attitude. If you can learn the Bible someplace else better than you can here, why do you have an attitude about it? Go find it. That is what you are supposed to do. But you are going to find out that going someplace else is not going to solve your problem, because the problem is not the fact that you cannot get the Word of God here, the problem is you do not want it. There is the problem.

Any influence that will go against what God is trying to do in your life is a bad thing. I want to tell you something, that advice is not always in bars and in the worldly events. Some of it is right here at Old Path Baptist Church, as it is in any church. You will never escape it. We get the idea that when, you see, here is what the devil knows. You need to know this. The devil knows that in any church that is a good Bible-believing church, he is not going to get you to dump your Bible. He is not going to get you to go back to the world. He is not going to do that. He knows that all the tricks of the trade that he does with everybody else will not work for a Bible-believer. It will not. You are not going to go back to the world. We are not going to drive out to the airport to drop somebody off and see you in a robe as a hairy Christian with your little symbols waiting for money. We are not going to see that. No, no, he is smarter than that.

You know what he does? Here is what he does. He plays on your inability to look for the right things in the Word of God, so he will put some Christian in your life that has an attitude, and that attitude will affect your attitude. That is how he does it. He goes out the door laughing. What he does, what he always does. Going back to verse 21 a couple of weeks ago, there will be many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that will stand. Those things will, that counsel will cause you to cease to hear what I am saying or anybody else is saying. They are really listed throughout the Bible.

Read Mark chapter 7 verses 7 through 9 sometime. Read Colossians chapter 2 verse 8. Look up 1 Timothy 1 through 7. Look up 1 Corinthians 8:1. When you go through those passages, you will find seven things listed in the Bible that will cause you to err if you get those instructions from them.

- 1.) Science
- 2.) Philosophy
- 3.) The traditions of men
- 4.) The world's standards
- 5.) Religion
- 6.) The do-gooders who try to do things in life
- 7.) Higher education

I will add the eighth one, and some of God's people too. Some of God's people, when they get out of fellowship with God and they do not have the blessings of God in their life, misery loves company. So they will look for somebody weak who is struggling, and instead of building them up, they will tear them down. Happens all the time. The devil never misses it.

VIII. The Scornful and the Wicked

Verse 28 and 29:

An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.

You know, somebody that comes to the point in life as a child of God who scorns reproof and judgment, somebody you need to stay away from. You always want to stay away from God's people that never take any reproof from anybody about anything. The guy that is always right and never wrong is somebody you do not want to hang out with. You just do not. Verse 29 says, "Judgments are prepared for the scorner and stripes for the back of fools." That is why you want to stay away from him. When God swings at him, He takes a wide swing, and if you are in the way, you will get hit too.

Now verse 28 and 29 is real simple. When any man or any woman continues in the instruction that causes to error, it will affect everything in that person's attitude of what is going on in his own personal life, what is going on within his church or his ministry, or what is going on whatever God is doing in his life. That is why Proverbs is so clear about these things. Some people just devour iniquity. They just drink it down. There are some people who only see the

negative in everything that is out there. Their lives get filled up with their own negativity, and that is all they can see. They can never see the positive. They can never see what God is doing. They never see the lives that God is changing right around them. They never see the people that were saved.

I remember a couple of years ago, we had a group of people, about every six or seven years, you go through this, we had a group of people that were just out there in left field someplace, and I preached a message, and I asked them the message. I said, "Let me ask you a question. You are so negative on things, and you think you have got the handle on things. Just name the last five people that were saved in our church." They could not do it. They did not have a clue. In fact, one of the guys came up, and he said, "Man, that was pretty powerful. I do not know who the five are," and I said, "Yeah, I know you do not, and I know why you do not." I mean, if you are into something, and God is changing people's lives, and people are getting saved, and you are unaware of it, what is wrong with you? I mean, you cannot see the individual victories in people's lives that changes them forever. You cannot see people come in who were once part of the world, and now they have got a Bible, they are sitting right around you today. Is that not positive? Is that not something that is real? Why do you not see that? You see the process of God taking a young man or a young gal and transforming them into a new creature in Christ Jesus and giving them.

I will tell you, the joy of my life is on the last Saturday of the month. When I see our singles come in there, now we are up to about 30 or 40 of them, and those kids just give it. When they do their devotions, I mean to tell you, they are on top of it. Now, you know what? I cannot speak for you. I understand there is a lot of negativity and everything, but I want to tell you something. I just have a hard time seeing the negative when God is doing so much positive. Now, maybe that is just me. When I come out of there on Saturday morning, I am about as high as a kite. I do not know how a kite gets, but I am high. I listen to those kids get up there and preach, and I listen to them laying out. I listen to every one of them. The guys and the gals. I mean, they just, it is meticulous. If it is anything that is obvious to me, is that somebody is paying attention, and they are just taking everything, and they are laying the Bible out. They do not make one mistake. They do not make one bad word. Everything is absolutely down the line. I am sitting there listening to that. You know what? It is not just the joy of that. It is not just the thrill of that. You know what the real joy is? That two years ago, a year ago, they were in the world. They were drinking on Saturday night. They were partying and doing all those things. They were doing all the things that the world does. In a year or two years' time, God has taken them, transformed them, given them a Bible, given them a church. Now instead of drinking on Saturday night, they are sitting down there, laying out and teaching and preaching the Word of God. Glory to God. And you are focused on what? I will tell you what. It just dries my heart. Right under our noses. With all of that, we are focused on what?

IX. God's Work and Our Role

If I have got anything firm in my mind about the ministry, and I am screwed up in a lot of things. If I have got anything in my mind or my ministry, I clearly understand. I learned it the hard way.

I did. I do not mind telling you that. But at least I learned it. I learned it by watching other guys make the mistakes that they made. But is there anything I come out of the ministry with of understanding it? Because I understand my job and I understand God's job. I do everything in my power not to get into God's business. I totally want Him in mine. But I do not want to get in His. There are things that He wants me to do that if I get sidetracked, and there are things that He is going to do. If I get sidetracked, I am going to preach to you now. If I get sidetracked on doing His things, then I am never going to do my things. That is right.

You know, one of the things that I understand, my job is to teach you the Bible. Most pastors do the first thing they get a church, they get into a building program. They want to get a building. What they will do is they will sink their people into a five, 10, \$15 million building project, and that is where they will go. They are under the idea that if you build a big, beautiful church, good people will come to it. Now, I learned a lesson about that years ago when my dog ran away. No, I did. I had just listened to a sermon by a preacher who said, "If you want to build a big church, build a big, beautiful church, the people will come." So my dog ran away, and I wanted him back. So when it got there, got some friends of mine, we built the most elaborate doghouse you ever saw in your life. We had it upstairs and downstairs, had running water, had food dispensers, all you had to do was hit with your paw, and it fed you. I thought for sure, if I built the best doghouse in the world, my dog would come back. He never came back. You know how I found my dog? I went up and down the street yelling for him. I went looking for him. I said, "Buddy, buddy, where are you? Come over here, you stupid mutt. Get over here. Where are you? Where are you at?" And long behold, about an hour later, I had a flashlight. It was dark, and I saw these two glowing eyes. Well, that is the neighbor lady. No, there is the other one back here. I saw these two glowing eyes, and sure enough, tail between his big old brown lab, tail between his leg, ears down. He knew he was wrong. He knew he was wrong. He came down there, and he laid down up on his belly, and I reached down and got him by the collar. I was not mad at him. I was just glad to have him back. But the point is this. You do not build a church by building a big building. You build a church by going out and getting them. You go find them. You create scenarios that they need, and you find them.

I am telling you. I tell you, one-handed ministry. I mean, it is crazy. I mean, I never worried about a church building. Never have. When we started our church, we started in our kitchen. Chris Fender was with us then, and just saw him the last couple of weeks, him and his lovely wife, and we got back together and talked for a while. We were laughing about some things that happened. I remember when we wanted to find a church place for us to meet because we were getting too big for the deal. He made one phone call, and it was down here at the Pavilion, right down the road, who Larry owns that too. The lady was so excited that a church was going to come in there. We just went over to look at it. She already had the contract set up. So we signed the contract. We were down there. Now down there, we only had it. We did not have the whole thing. We only rented it for a couple of hours on Saturday, Sunday morning, and a couple of hours on Thursday night. We did not have access to it. We were there for about three or four years.

I will never forget it. It was on an anniversary Sunday. We were getting ready to go over to your mom and dad's for the thing over there. They were always so gracious to let us have our anniversary Sunday over there, tear his mom and dad's. I was walking out. Larry Lester, the guy that owns the place, he says, "Bob," he says, "come and see me this week." I said, "Okay, Larry, I will." I called him on Monday, went over, and he says, "Hey, look," he says, "I own this other building up here, which is this one." He said, "Downstairs, it is just sitting empty." He said, "It was about six, seven thousand square feet down there." He said, "You know what, you guys are doing really good down here." He said, "I feel bad that you own it." I said, "I will tell you what, go up and look at it. It is all, well, I will have it all cleaned out for you. I will not charge you any more rent than you are paying down here. You can have it 24/7, do whatever you want to do with it. It is yours." I said, "Well, thank you, Larry." I said, "Really appreciate it." When I looked at it, here we are today. I never was looking for a building. I was never asking for it. God just, I feel that if I do my job, God will do His. I am not going to get out of doing my job and start doing His because He does a lot better than I do it anyhow. So I just let Him do it.

So here we are. We have fixed the place up, got it, got it all spruced up. All you guys did it, and everybody did a great job. Everybody just did a wonderful thing. It looked beautiful, and it is everything we could ever want. So a couple of weeks ago, Larry called me in the afternoon. He says, "Can I visit with you a little bit?" I said, "Sure." I said, "Everything okay?" He said, "Oh yeah, everything is fine." I said, "Good." So I come up there, meet him upstairs, and he says, "Let me ask you a question." He says, "This big hall over here upstairs where they have all the weddings and everything," he says, "they are going to get out of there, and they are not going to use it anymore." He says, "Do you want that?" I said, "Nah." I said, "Yeah, yeah." He said, "You can have it." He says, "That is all yours." He says, "I appreciate what you guys do down here." He says, "We will work something out on it." He says, "But," he says, "I want you to have it." He says, "You guys do so much down here." He says, "I watch your church." He says, "Your church has done so much across the city." He says, "Your people in your congregation are the friendliest, sweetest people I have ever met in my life." He says, "I am a Catholic, but," he says, "I feel like I am a part of your church, and I want to do something for your church to help you." He says, "It is all yours." It is all yours. I thought to myself, here are guys who were putting their churches into magic debt, and God just keeps giving me things. He just says, "Here it is." You know what that does for me? Some of you may not like what goes on here, but God does. That is good. That is good because I do not really care about you. Do not mean that in a bad way. I care about Him.

Now, here is what we are going to do with that. We are not going to change anything down here. We are going to stay down here. We are going to have services and Bibles out here. But here is what we are going to do. We are going to develop that on Sunday morning. That is where all the prayer groups are going to go. You will have your own table, your own space, your own two tables if you need them. You will have all the space in the world to move out, and that will be your space up there for your prayer groups, men and women. It is everything you could ever want. We will let go. We are going to have our banquets up there. We are going to have our camp thing up there. We will have everything that we want to do. When we have the dinner for the Hills for their family, we will have that up there. It will be something that will always be there. It is what I want you to do. When we are done here today, I want you to walk up and look at it.

Most have never even seen it because they used to have the great over there. The lady up there did not want anybody coming in, so she put bars on it that she could not get in. We have set it free. Bars are gone. I want you to see it.

But my point is this. God just keeps blessing us. I was not looking for that. I will never come to the place where I worry about where we are going to meet. You know why? That is God's business. You know what I worry about? When I step behind this pulpit, do I have what you need this morning? That is all I care about. The rest of it is okay. The rest of it God takes care of. I am telling you, I look at that. God is moving through this place and changing lives. And you are focused on what?

I do not know if you know it or not. Some of you probably do. God is developing the most biblical missions program that I have ever seen a church develop. Right in our nose. I got a letter today, a card I want to read to you here. This is from Stephen and Sandra Byrd who live in East Aurora, New York, who probably are on this morning. "Dear Brother Bob, love your stuff." Thank you so much for your faithful study of the Word. "Big capital of the underline. It opened up a whole new level. All my friends are hooked. Thank you again. P.S. If at all possible, could you send me, could I get a handful of those bookmarks I hear you mention all the time." Now, we have got them all over the country and all over the world like that. Yes, she will get the bookmarks. We just sent two loads out to South Africa here a couple of weeks ago. We have got a group in England. We have got a group in Holland. We have got them all across the United States. We have got Larry out there in Washington. People out there who do not have churches. You know what? They cannot find a church, so this is their church. We have got our people up in Lincoln. They cannot find a church up there. This is their church. They are all over the place. God is developing an outreach out of this church that has taken the King James Bible and the Word of God to places all over this world. And you are focused on what?

God has allowed us to penetrate our culture and impact people's lives on every level. They have taken the instructions that we have given them, and they have done something with it. God has provided us with the people that have taken the instructions from people who err. And they get an attitude about it. God has provided for you an incredible place for you to learn the greatest book the world has ever seen. I do not say that because of me. I say that because of the book that stands in this church. Some of you have potential to rock the world for God. You really do. One of the most important things in the history of the church is to see what God is doing and what God is giving us. It really is.

I never care what people think, and I never care what people say. Hey, I understand. This church is not for everybody. You never heard me say, I know there are a lot of pastors that think that their church is, I told you from day one, this church will not be. I am looking for a certain cut of people. I realize that some people cannot keep up with where I am at with it. That is fine. It does not make them bad people. It makes them the fact that this is not what they are looking for. I get it. I understand. But I will tell you what, when God gives me what is left, you are incredible. That is the upside of the ministry. You know what the downside of it is? I see the potential in so many of you, and you are wasting it. You are wasting it. You are wasting it.

I love when God brings old people back that were with me for years ago. Who knew where I am at and know what I am all about? Who were forward with me through the tough times of everything that we have done. God gave me a bunch of new folks and a bunch of great people, and I love all those people too. But it is always a blessing to me because I always look at it as where I am at right now and where our church is at right now. You ought to feel this way, guys. You really do. You ought to feel this way. God knew that where we were at, we just needed a little, solid, more rock of somebody who had been down a row before. So He brought you back to me. To me, that is everything. That is everything. Meredith, I look at you. I knew Meredith when she was just a little baby. I am so happy where you are at today with the Lord. God gave you William. Boy, I love you, buddy. I know you do. Now, in your life, you are finally with the Word of God, and boy, it has changed everything about you. You know what? I always said that out of your family, your dad and I would talk about this. We would talk about the fact that you were going to pass everybody else off and be out in the front lead. Boy, you sure did. He is happy up in heaven today. I am happy down here today because I love you. I am just saying, things like this is what makes my world. It is what makes it all.

I watch you young guys come in, all of you. I watch all of you. I watch what God does. Watch how God puts you together. Watch you guys grow up. I remember when you were just, now you are taller than me. I do not appreciate that, but I understand it. I love you. I look at God bringing you back to us. You know what? I have known your family for 30, 40 years. Good people. I have known your mom. You know, for God to do that and bring you to me, that is the greatest blessing on the planet. It really is. It really is. I look at all of you. I look at everything that you have done. I have seen some of you have to get your feet in the ground, like Sean and his wife back there. They had to find themselves. But boy, they are tearing the Bible up now. I love it. You are posting on Facebook. You know, I am against Facebook. I hate Facebook. But in your case, posting pictures of you and your wife doing the Bible study together, wow. That is a lot better than hill climbing on a motorcycle, is not it? Or going to Worlds of Fun and picking up on a big rollercoaster. Man. This is what it is about, kids. This is the victories. This is what it is about. Look at the Henleys back there. They were with me a long time ago. Had to get the book, did not you, buddy? Just had to get back in that book, did not you, buddy? You did. Yeah, amen. Yeah, you did. Now look at you go, and your wife too, and your boys. Just think, you can retire. They are going to be NBA ballplayers. You will not have to worry about a thing the rest of your life. See, that is the upside. I look at those kids up in Lincoln. Cannot wait for him to get down here. Somebody says, "Well, you know what? What about taking the kids out of Lincoln? What are they going to do?" You know what is going to happen? Well, that is what God does. Somebody up in Lincoln needs to stand up and take the place. That is how it works. You think, when I die, that you are just going to play tapes of me every week after you are gone? Somebody has to step up, take the job. That is what it is all about. That is the plus side. That is the beauty of it all.

But here is the downside. Some of you have so much potential. I know. I get it. I am the most patient guy on the planet waiting for people to come around. I am. Hey, I get it. I understand. It took me 19 years to figure the thing out. I get it. I get it. But I want to tell you something. It is a shame. It is a shame that some of you are wasting the instructions of your father. It is a shame that you have so much potential. You could do so much for the Lord. Your personality is just

incredible. Your intellect is right where it needs to be. You are a class act in all areas of your life. You could be such a tool for the Lord. You could do so much for Him. But you will never do it just one-handedly. You have got to get in there with both hands. You have got to get all the things, the people, the things out of your life that is going to cause you to err. You have got to quit focusing on the negative things. There are always negative things to focus on. If I went through my life and just focused on the negative things, I would not even get out of bed in the morning. There is so much negativity that I have got to deal with all day long. I just focus on that. I never do. You know why? Because I see what God is doing. What a waste.

Now, this is why people do not like the Book of Proverbs. Just too plain, is not it? Leave no rock to hide under, and I say that in reference to Revelation 6:16. But I love it. I love it because it keeps me between the white lines of life. I love it because it hits me as much as it does you. See, some of you do not like it because you have got to listen to it. Shoot, I have got to put it together five days before you ever hear it. I have got to look at it a lot longer than you do. I do not like it either sometimes. But he done love with the honeycomb, even the bitter things are sweet, are not they? I love it. It keeps me right where I need to be, and it clobbers me when I need it, which is about every 20, 30 seconds. It is the mind of God.

Last Thursday night, somebody asked a question, I think it was Charles over here, about the books of the Bible, and how they line up and show the pre-millennial return of Christ. Tremendous insight into each book and what it contains. I told you how the Jews go back two times, once in 606 B.C., and then after that. Then again, they go out and tie the 70 A.D., and then they come back in 1948. I showed you how the books show you that. Second Chronicles chapter 36 is when they go in 606 B.C. The book of Ezra is when they go back, and they go back like they did in the 1880s, 1900. Nehemiah is where they rebuild, like they did in 1948. Esther is a picture of the Laodicean church period, like we are going through right now today. Then we went into the Book of Job, and I showed you how the Book of Job is a picture of the tribulation period. Then I took into Psalms, and I showed you how Psalms is the Millennium Reign of Christ. Then I took into Proverbs, and I showed you how the Proverbs represent eternity for us. Proverbs is the book that shows us the eternal mind of God, where everything that is God's mind is laid out. That is what eternity will be. See, there is no more preaching in the Bible in eternity, nor in the Millennium. There are no more Bible studies. There is no more any of that kind of stuff. That is for now because we have the mind of God in the book, and that is how you have got to get it. So when the Lord comes back, we get into eternity, that mind is opened up to everybody. Right now, God wants to open up that mind in a book to you. "Let this mind be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus."

Like Samuel, God wants to establish you in three things in your life.

5. He wants to establish you in the Word of God.
6. He wants to establish you in a relationship with Him.
7. He wants to establish you in a ministry through the Body of Christ, through this New Testament local church that He has put you in.

He could have put you anywhere. If you think it is an accident that you are here this morning, you do not know very much about God. That is what blows my mind. If you believe that, why do you have an attitude about things? If you really believe that God is in this, and God has put you where He wants you to be, what is your deal? The deal is you are one-handed. You are like a person who is right-handed, and you cannot do very much with your left. So you hide your right hand and just give God your left hand, which is not very good to start with. One-handed paper hanger. How many of you have said it? "What do you feel?" "I feel like a one-handed paper, one-armed paper hanger, one-armed Christianity." Just enough to put a little in, but never do much with it. You know, the devil does not need to take all three of those away from you to have you fall. He only has to take one, because they are all connected. If he takes one away, the other two will collapse on itself. Life is two simple concepts. You will either take the instruction of your Father that will establish you through the church that God puts you in, or you will take the instruction of a scorner that causes you to err. It will be one or the other. Proverbs chapter 19 has been a great chapter.

We will hold up there. Now, here is what we want to do. We are going to pray, and we will be dismissed here. Take time to sign up back there for food, if you are going to help us with Rachelle's funeral, and we will let you know when that is. Danny is going to have the draft, so you are going to get a chance to go out and get something to eat. But I would like for you to go upstairs and just look at what God gave us. Let us look at it. Just savor the blessings of God that God has poured out on us. I was talking to Bob Gregg about it, and I told him about it last week. We were up there laughing and talking about it, and I said to him, "You know what? It only goes to prove me that somebody is doing what is right around here. Not necessarily me, but somebody is, and God is blessing us on top of it." It is you. It is every one of you who have got both hands in the ministry, and you are doing the work of the Lord. God says, "You know what? It is the lay of D.C. and church-aid. I cannot get anybody to believe my Bible. Here is a bunch of idiots down here who are just simple enough, stupid enough to believe what I said. I have got to take care of them." All my life I heard the old saying that God takes care of the fools and drunkards, and none of us drink. Well, most of us do not. We are just fools for Christ, are not we? I am just glad I am dumb enough to believe the book that God gave me. I am just dumb enough that I believe that whatever it is, you know, it is good enough for all of us. My job is to establish you. My job is to take every one of you who wants to be established and help you get to where God wants you to be. We do the work of the ministry together.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus, and I love you so much. I thank you, Father, for all the good things that you do for us, and thank you for this church. I thank you, Father, for Lord, I think of how that 20-some years or 13, 14 years ago, how it was in my heart that I dreamed of this very moment with these very people here. Yet, all that time when it was in my heart, a lot longer than that, it was in your heart. I am glad that there are many issues that I have, and as stupid as I am, I am glad that your heart and my heart could get together on at least this church. I thank you for it. Help me to always be a good pastor to them. Help me to always teach them the truth, even when they do not want to hear it. Help me to love them, and maybe they do not love me. Help me to care for them, and maybe they do not care for the things that we do here. Never let me get to the place where I am like them. Always keep me

in a place where I can be like you. Help us all to keep both hands in the work. Never let us just get one-handed in the ministry. Let us look at it as something that is so vital and so crucial. Let us bring our kids into it. Let us, through all the examples that we learned today with Samuel and Samson, let us understand that the two things are going to mess us up, where the places we go and the people we hang out with. We can pretend all we want that that is not true, but it is so true. I thank you again for the people here, their love for you, their love for me, their love for this church, and their love, Father, that how that they have gotten the heartbeat of what we are doing. They want to take this thing all the way to the end until the Lord comes back. Thank you, Father. Give us a good day down at Restart. Give us a good day in all that we do. We pray for the Hills. We pray, Father, that we will be sensitive to that and that we will do a good job. Lord, I pray that when I have to stand and preach and the things that I have to say and the things I have to talk about, that it will be received, Father, with the Spirit by which it was given. Lord, we will just thank you now and praise you for all you do. In Jesus' name and sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you. I will meet you upstairs here in just a memento. That is Spanish, by the way, for in a minute.