

# Proverbs 20

Sunday 6/18/2017

Last week, we examined some of the most practical material found in the Bible on the key components of training up your children. Proverbs is a great book on that because it views us as God's children. A lot of the principles, or all of the principles, that God gives us for our relationship with Him are the ones we use. We talked about preserving the simplicity, not only in your Christian life and your relationship with God, but with your children, the innocence of your children, a process of knowing where they are. The Bible talked about a child is known by his doing, how transparent they are, how a parent that is in touch and in tune can really focus and understand where the child is at and better have an ability to guide them and to give them what they need.

We talked about using the key time in their lives before that evil day. We talked about a book out of Ecclesiastes and a book of Ephesians, how that for each kid that you have coming up, growing up—it was true of all of our lives too—there's an evil day coming when they have to be faced with all of the things of the world without the protection of their parents. The things that we have built in their lives at that point in time are going to be very key to whether they make it or not.

Today, we are going to move into yet another section found in the book of Proverbs. I have been kind of taking it in sections and gleaning out of it so we have what we need and we can get the most out of it. I want to look at Proverbs 20:13-16.

## I. The Principle of Work and Its Spiritual Application

Proverbs 20:13

Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

As the verse stands, it is talking about our work ethic. It is talking about that if you do not work, you do not eat. That is the standard concept of it, and it is a true standard. That is a great message for America today because America does not want to work.

I remember Nikki Brown, alias Nikki Halliburton. Remember the gal that you were working with years ago? She was having kids left and right, and she was not paying; she did not have anything for any of them, and society was paying for them all. She talked to Nikki, who was the wrong person to talk to about this. She talked to Nikki about how easy it was to have kids and have the government pay for it, that it was free. Nikki, in no uncertain terms, told her, "It ain't free. We're paying for it." But that is the mindset in America.

I know that many of you who run businesses, it is hard to find people who really want to work. They want a job; they do not want to work. It is a thing where it is really hard to find in the last two or three generations of people who really understand the concept of work. Going to work, believe it or not, is a principle in the Bible that goes all the way back to Genesis 3. It is in Genesis 3:19 that when Adam fell and God is laying out now what the consequences of that are going to be, He says back there in verse 19:

*Genesis 3:19*

*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Work is an aspect of the fall. We saw it back in Proverbs 6:9-11. We saw somebody lazy and asleep had talked about, and you cannot wake them up. They will not work. The Bible called them a slugger. There is nothing worse than coming out in the morning to pick up the newspaper and there is a big slug on your driveway. You know the big old slimy things? You do not want to step on them because they stay on your shoe for the rest of your life. Put salt on them, they shrivel up and dry, and then your dog eats them and then he gets sick.

It is a thing where a slugger is not very good. A slugger is very slow. A slugger is something that will take maybe a week to get across your driveway. It is very slow. He says that a person who will not work, who is lazy, is a slugger. He says the folding of the hands, fast asleep, and then it says that poverty comes to them like a thief. In other words, the poverty in our lives because we will not work steals everything from us. That is what it is saying: somebody who is lazy and will not work will live in poverty because of it.

That is in a physical sense, but there is also a practical side to this that fills with the spiritual aspect of the Bible. I want to talk about that for a moment. We know what the other one is. We know that bread in the Bible is a type of the Bible. In John 6, Jesus Christ gives the great discourse of the Word of God being the bread of life. In Exodus 16, He brings the manna down from heaven to the nation of Israel. That is a picture of God supernaturally giving the Word of God to us. The only thing that will really satisfy us in life will be the bread of life.

So there are two applications in this passage of this verse:

1. It is simply somebody who is lazy, who will not work in a physical sense, and is in poverty because of it.
2. Somebody who, when it comes to the bread of life, the Bible, will be lazy and will never do the work that is in his fast asleep when it comes to anything pertaining to God or the Word of God.

## II. The Church's Spiritual Slumber

One time the Lord was at one of the most crucial times of His ministry. It was back in Matthew 26:40. He is in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He is going through that great hour of temptation. He tells the disciples to wait here for Him and pray. He is going to go on into the garden. It is the pinnacle part of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is where we see the God-man and the Son of Man struggle back and forth with what God wants them to do, much like the struggles that you and I have. It is an incredible passage. He wanted the disciples to pray for Him. He wanted them to watch with Him through this time. He comes back there, and they have fallen asleep.

I will never forget, He looks at them, and they are out through His darkest time. He was counting on them, and He comes back and He looks at them and He says to them, "Could you not watch

with me one hour?" I have often thought about that. Today, Christianity is fast asleep. When I study the Bible, I realize over there in Matthew 20, it has the church age broken down into hours. Each hour is a couple of hundred years. You can actually walk through church history. The last hour before the Lord comes back is the eleventh hour. If you put the time element to it and figure it out, it started around 1840, 1847. It runs up to the time period that we are in right now.

I want to tell you something, just as the crucial time in the Lord's ministry in Matthew 26:40, where the apostles could not watch with Him, you and I today in the church age are probably in the most crucial time before the Lord comes back. He needs us to be on our watch. This is our hour to watch with Him. Unfortunately, God's people have fallen asleep today. They have done the same thing. Because of it, there is a great famine that hit American Christianity in the 20th and 21st century. Amos 8:11 talked about there was a coming famine, that it would not be a famine of food or water or drink, but a famine of the hearing of the words of the Lord. The reason why there is a famine today is because God's people have fallen asleep. They are not on their watch.

I have to say in comparison to that, I feel very blessed here in our church. The very things that we have here and the very focus of so many of you who really know the Word of God, being part of my ministry and part of my life, it is a real blessing to me. I mean those who really know the Bible. I have men and women that are incredible when it comes to the Word of God. I look at the things that we have done by design, the people ministry, and of course the Institute that we did a long time ago, now we are doing it again. I look at all the young men and women in the singles that God brings into our world. I look at you young couples that are just spread out through this church. Men and women, the older folks in this church who really love the Bible. I would put you up against anybody in this country when it comes to knowing the Word of God.

You have a depth to you. You have an insight to you. You have a discernment about you. It keeps me honest. I know on Thursday night, I am not going to get away with it when you ask the question. I know I am not going to get away with just saying something that does not go down the line of the Bible. There are too many people in here who know their Bible. The flip side of that is that when I do get in a jam, there is always somebody out there that helps me out. That is a blessing to me. Your knowledge and depth of the Bible is on par with your knowing and understanding of the book that God gave you. You definitely have got some bread in your life. Yet it is that bread that the Bible says is the only thing that will satisfy us.

It did not just happen, did it? I think God's people think that you get saved, and when you get saved, God puts your name on a big clipboard up there in heaven. You are on there for three or four or five years until they get around to you because there are a lot of people. Then one night, after you went to church and after you have done good and done all that stuff, the Bible angel comes down to your house and rolls back the roof, and a big dump truck of biblical knowledge tilts up its bed and sprinkles down, and you wake up the next morning and you finally got the Bible. Do not you wish it was that simple? It did not happen to you that way. It did not happen to anybody that way. You had to do the work. You had to labor to get it. As 2 Timothy 2:15 says, you became a workman. A workman that needs not to be ashamed. That was approved of God,

not your preacher, not your wife, not your husband. The fundamental approval is that of God. It is His book.

I talked about Exodus 16, which is, I have a great sermon on it. It is one of my favorite places in the Bible where they are out there in the wilderness of sin. They have nothing to eat, and God supernaturally brings down manna, which is the bread from heaven, and feeds them. The Bible says that when he went to bed at night, the manna came down from God, and when he woke up in the morning, it was all over around the camp. They are in their tents. It is a great analogy because in the morning when they put that tent flap and they looked out there, they saw all the manna, the Word of God that God has supernaturally brought to them.

Now, the availability by God supernaturally to bring the manna to them put the decision in their life. God bringing you the Word of God the way that He did and laying it out in front of you puts the same decision in your life. They had to look at that all around them and decide they were going to pick it up and take it, or they were going to trample it under their feet. Today, God has brought the Word of God to you. You have to decide if you are going to pick it up and do something with it, or you are just going to trample it under your feet and go your own way in life.

I want you to know that nobody in that camp, the Bible does not say, I do not think anybody did, nobody in that camp slept outside that night with their mouth open waiting for a couple of pieces of bread to hit that hole, which in some cases would make a caveman homesick. But anyway, you will use that out of there. That is a good one. You will use it at work tomorrow. But it is a thing, nobody did that. The Bible says that they had to go out during the day and they had to labor to pick it up. They had to bend over to pick it up. That is very hard on your back, and the Bible says they could have as much as they want. When it comes to this church and it comes to the Bible, that is my motto: you can have as much as you want. I alter that a little bit and say you can have as much as you can stand. But you can have as much as you want. It is here, but you have got to do the work. It is not going to fall in your mouth.

I can put all the classes together, and I can have all of the things cut right for you, hand-tailored to your life. But there is labor involved. You walked long and hard, and you worked long and hard and spent the last four or five of your years learning the Word of God, learning the Bible. It is a thing where I watch people on Thursday night, and I watch all of you because I am in a position where I walk up and down, and sometimes I just do that. I know I pretend like I cannot hear. I can hear everything. Thursday night, you can either be busy putting notes in your Bible, or you can be busy figuring out your bills. I have actually seen some people doing their bills on Thursday nights. I have seen some of them on their phone all night long that I know they are not texting me. It is your choice. All I can do for you in the best way I know how is present to you the greatest book that I ever met in my life, the greatest truth of everything I ever found. That is all I can do. My whole life is spent honestly, honestly, and I know some of you do not like me, but that is okay. I like you.

Here is the bottom line: all of my life doing one thing, that is finding out the easiest way to get you the Bible, the truth. But you have got to do the work. I mean, I have not found anybody yet

that underneath your hairline is a cap that I can screw off and dump everything in the Bible. Some of you, it would be empty anyhow. There would be a lot of room there, but I am just saying you have to do the work. I do the work getting it to you in the easiest format, and you do the work getting it into your life from the Word of God.

I talked about our kids earlier today. I had a guy tell me one time that he was leaving the church because of the fact that he did not think that the youth, the way that we were structuring the youth thing, was working, and he did not want his kids being brought up and out, which is fine. He did not like the idea that on Thursday or Sunday, we change people in the elementary every week, that you go in and teach, and somebody else goes to teach. There is a method to my madness. You realize that Crazy Horse, now he was an Indian, he was not a preacher. Crazy Horse was one of the greatest chiefs of the Indian nations that they ever had. You realize that he was born, every mother in that camp took him and nursed him and raised him for a month and then passed him on. They wanted to make sure that when he became a tribal chief, that every woman in there was his mother because he was going to have to be the chief that took care of everybody. They did not want him to be partial to one person.

When I have people swapped out back there, I want your kid to grow up knowing who the men and women are of this church that teaches them the Bible. I want them to grow up understanding that this church does not just throw four or five people back there, that everybody in this church cares about them. That is my method to my madness. You saw the kids up here today, and I could go through here and look at all the other ones that I did not have stand up or on the other teams, the Bravo teams or the Charlie teams or the Delta teams. It works. It builds young kids. You kids that are taking those younger kids and work with them and doing with the guys and you with the girls, I am telling you, making the investment. It is more than just what you see back there on Sunday and Thursday. It is understanding the whole philosophy of what we want to do with our kids. How do we want to infuse truth into them?

I will be very honest with you, it is not the job of the elementary people to teach your kids the Bible. That is your job. Our job is to take what you are doing and build on it and support you in it. That is what we do, and it pays off. It pays off. I could pick any one of these kids. I have heard them. I have seen them. They have their own little prayer groups, and they do their devotion. They have their missionary teams that they go to Lincoln. The Lincoln kids have their own missionary team. It is incredible. It is incredible. A lady said one time, she says, "Well, you know, I am not, my kid is not getting anything out of Sunday school class." You kidding me? I will tell you why they are not getting out of it: because they are not getting it at home.

Insight into understanding how the whole system works. It is not the family. It is not the church. It is not the pastor. It is not the deacons. It is not the teachers. It is not anything in one single thing. It is the composite of it all working together and working well. That is the key.

Now, in verse 13, there is a phrase that I want to draw your attention to that I think is very important here. I am going to talk about it for a moment. It simply says this: "Open thine eyes." In both cases, whether you do not want to work for a living physically or you do not want to grow spiritually, open your eyes. In both cases, do you not see what is happening around you and

where you are at in life? I know Sunday morning and Thursday night are a lot of things. We cover a lot of questions. We teach a lot of Bible. But you know what fundamentally Thursday night and Sunday morning is for you besides the time to get the Bible? It is a reality check. It is a time for you to look inwardly and ask yourself, open your eyes and say, "Hey, where am I?" That is not a long trip from Sunday morning to Thursday night. It is Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. You know you can get pretty lost in those three days. It does not take more than one day to lose reality sometimes. Watching reality shows on TV will not fix your problems.

Ask yourself, "So and so came into the church the same time that I did. Look where they are at, and how come I am nowhere yet? How come they are moving on and really know the Bible, and I am struggling with where I am at? How come they are moving along, and I am in discipleship one now for the fourth time?" That is okay. But I am telling you, the reason for that is not because you are stupid. I am not going to let you claim stupidity. That is not because you do not have the ability to learn. The reason that is, is because you have chosen not to apply yourself and take what God has for you and take the bread that will fill you up. It is just that simple. It is just that simple.

I have seen some of you work with people where you have somebody that just takes forever. They never want to do anything. They have always got an excuse. You know as well as I do, people like that, when you want to take time from your family and do your things and give them the Word of God, and they just do not put back into it, it gets very frustrating. Everybody that has disciplined everybody understands that. You have all had people like that. Then you know what? You will have four or five like that, and then God will just give you one person that will gobble up everything that you want to give them. They will devour. They cannot get enough. It is like having a baby. There is a lot of pain and a lot of labor. But after you have the baby, you forget the pain. There are a lot of people in ministry that will waste your time and do not want to do what is right. But all God is going to do is give you that one person. You forget all the rest. That is the blessing of the ministry.

I told you before that people in the ministry are like prospecting for gold. You go out there in the river, and you take that pan that you shimmy back and forth. You put dirt in it. You put water in it. You shake it back and forth. All the dirt falls through, and maybe the first time nothing, second time nothing, but the fourth or fifth time there is a gold nugget. In the ministry, you have got to sift through a lot of dirt to find one gold nugget. But when you find that nugget, when a guy just found a nugget that he now is worth \$20,000, do you think he goes in there and complains about how much dirt he had to sift? He got the nugget. You know why I do not care in the ministry about all the people that do not make it? I got the nuggets. Some of you are chicken McNuggets, but I got them. I am just kidding. I am just kidding.

Open your eyes. Some of God's people, throughout their life, they collect things, material possessions. There is nothing wrong with that as long as your collection does not get outside of what you collect. Then you have some of God's people who will collect promises. They will collect principles. They will collect the books of the Bible. They will collect the chapters of the Bible. They will collect the verses of the Bible. They will collect the promises of the Bible.

All families have one thing in common. I have never seen it fail. You go to their house. If you stay long enough, the photo albums come out. Or sometimes they are laying right there on a coffee table, and you cannot get away from it. What they will do is they will say, every time I go, and I do not appreciate some of you that I married 40 to 45 years ago, pulling out your wedding pictures. Then your wife said, or somebody said, "Who is that married you?" It was me. You have got to look at vacation pictures. You have got to look at wedding pictures. You have got to look at family pictures. You have got to look at all those things. Families are hung up on pictures.

In my life, I do not have one photo album that I can show you of anything. I have a few pictures of my dad laying around someplace. There was not a lot of pictures taken of him. I have one of him standing by his old white 1960 Pontiac that I cherish. I have one of him when he was a young guy. He was really a good-looking guy, much like myself. I cherish those couple of pictures that I have. I do not have a lot left from him. But I have found over the years that my greatest photo album is the pictures that are in this book. This book is a photo album. God puts picture after picture after picture. We call them types. Where a lot of families collect photographs and put them in an album, I collect the pictures in this book and put them in my Bible. This is my photo album. When I walk through the Bible like an institute, you know what I am doing? I am just showing you pictures. I am showing you the picture of Cain and Abel. I am showing you the picture of Adam and Eve. I am showing you the picture of the fall of Genesis 1:1-2. I am showing you the pictures of everything through the Bible because this is God's photo album. It is the greatest photo album in the world. You have got to work to get it. You have got to do the work. You have got to open your eyes. You have got to see what God is doing. You have got to look in your eyes and look at, in a physical sense, the poverty that so many did. Really, not too many people are in poverty. But there is a lot of spiritual poverty that goes on. That would be most of God's people. You just go to sleep spiritually, slumber away, and never do the work.

Jesus said to His apostles, "Cannot you watch with me one hour?" We are in the last hour of Christianity. You know what God has called us to do? Watch with Him. In the most crucial part of His ministry, the first coming of Christ, the apostles fell asleep. His disciples fell asleep. In the most crucial aspect of His ministry after the second coming of Christ, His disciples are asleep. Incredible.

Last week, we talked about the simplicity of God and all that He is and what He does. There is no simpler or easier book in all the world to learn than the Bible. The number one issue with God's people about the Bible is not that it is so hard; it is just that God's people are so lazy. They will not study it. They will not labor in it. They will work harder at playing ball. They will work harder at doing this. They will work hard at doing something that they like to do than they ever will when it comes to the Bible. Open your eyes to the Word of God, falling asleep on your watch.

Mark 13:34-37 is a familiar passage. The church age is broken down into four watches. It talks about the even. It talks about the midnight. It talks about the cockcrow. It talks about the morning watch. We are in the morning watch. The last thing He says, He says:

*Mark 13:34-37*

*For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

*Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:*

*Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.*

*And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*

Our job is to watch. We are on a watch.

### III. The Nature of Human Competition

Proverbs 20:14

It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

That is a great verse commentary on human nature. Let me explain it to you. Human nature, in case you have never investigated down as far as you should have, human nature is nothing more than getting ahead of the other guy in everything that we do. We call it competition. In our world today, we have a word called racism. We call it race. You have black power. You have white supremacy. You have the conspiracies that people think that the Jews are running the world. I have talked to some of these guys that they think that the Jews, everybody who has ever been a president, ever been in charge of anything, is Jewish. It all goes back to that conspiracy. All history is nothing more than a race. We call it the human race. That concept is as old as Genesis 3, where the first race began with Cain and Abel in a race to get God's approval for their sacrifice.

We call ourselves the human race. All history is a race from Genesis 4 right up to 2017. All history is a race of one of three races. Noah's boys, when they come out that ark, were Ham, Shem, and Japheth, and all the races of this world come from those three boys. From Genesis 10 at the Tower of Babel, where the nations are now formed, it is nothing more than one nation trying to get ahead of the other. All the wars: European war, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea, go over to Europe, the Hundred Years' War, the Thirty Years' War, the War of the Roses, the Napoleonic Wars, all of those wars are nothing more than one nation in a race against another nation to take over them. In our society, everything that we do through history, it is about who is going to run who.

In our own society, it is built on sports. The national pastime is baseball. That is a sport. We love football and the Super Bowl. It is a sport. We love basketball. It is a sport. But it is about who is in a race to win. How fast can you run with a ball? How far can you hit it? I am not saying there is anything wrong with it, but I am saying it goes all the way back to the Incas and the Mayans. They had their temples, and they had courts there where they played one team against the other, and they had to put a little round ball up in a hole. I have been there. I have seen it. The only downside is if your team got killed, so you give a little motivation to win.

I think of the Olympics, you know, and the gold medal, the silver medal, and the bronze. The Olympics go back to the Greeks and the Romans. In our own softball, in our volleyball league, and again, there is nothing wrong with it, but you have competition. Competition is good. You have first place, and everybody wants to be in first place, so you get geared up, and before the championship, you go to the batting cages, and you will get all psyched up, and you will get yourself going. Volleyball, you are out there ready to go. You want to win. You are in a race against the other team.

One of my greatest down things of life in this part is I cannot play softball anymore because of my back and my surgery. I have got to tell you, I came up to that first game, walked up to that hill, watched those things play. It was a hard night for me. The only thing I ever did good in athletics was halfway decent, and I really enjoyed it. But I did not enjoy it because, see, I am weird. I know you know that. I did not enjoy pitching because I was a good pitcher. I did not enjoy pitching because I wanted to win the game. I enjoyed pitching because it gave me the ability to play with human nature. It gave me the ability to test a lot of theses as I have on the race of who is going to win.

I learned that you do not have to be a real good pitcher if you learn to pitch to a guy's ego because you see them. They think they are playing for the Royals. We are playing on a sandlot. They have \$90 pants, \$600 cleats. They have a shirt that says somebody is a professional ball player. They actually, to them, it is a big deal. Everybody is watching, the girls are watching, the boys, they do not want to screw up. They want everybody to know. I love it. I always know I got a fish on the hook when they swagger up to the plate. Dead giveaway, they tap their cleats. Then they do this. I have learned that if I get, they want to do well. Everybody, everybody wants to hit it over the fence for whatever reason. I cannot get it past first base when I hit it. I would love to crack that ball and stand there and watch it go over that fence. Never going to happen. But some of them can do it, and that is what they want. Whether they can do it or not, that is what men want to do.

So I am on the mound. I know that. I do not pitch to your ability. I pitch to your ego. I have a few little secret things that I pull out of there. If I can get the guy to strike one time and miss and get it in, sometimes I will put, I will get enough arch on it, but it will come in faster than it is supposed to. He will not judge it that way, and he will swing and he will miss. Once he misses, I can see it in his face: panic. Because we already start with a one and one. So we only got one more chance. So then I got him. I got two on him, no walk, so I have some time to play now. So now I will bring out some of my specialty pitches. I will bring some of the ones that are just on the edge of the corner. My ability to depth perception on that plate, when I am on, I am on. I can put that thing right over the corner. Besides that, Chris Shelton has been with me for 50, 60 years, and he will always give me the benefit of the doubt on a close call.

By the way, let me stop and tell you this. Chris Shelton and I have been together for probably 40 years. Wouldn't you say? 40 years? Long time. All the way back in the day. I have loved Chris. I have prayed for Chris. I have never gotten to the place where I could ever really witness to him. I buried his mom. He has been a friend to me. I have been a friend to him. He came to me yesterday at the ball game, pulled me aside. He says, "Bobby, I want to talk to you." He says, "I

need to talk to you." He says, "First of all, when I die, could we have my funeral in your church?" I said, "Absolutely. I said, I would be a privilege for me." He said, "I want to sit down and talk with you." He said, "I want to talk about my life, and I want to talk to you about God and my life." So pray for Chris. But he always gave me the benefit of the doubt. I know I could slip by on a close one. He has called it. So once I get the second one on him and I strike him out, oh, I got him for the rest of the game because their ego is crushed. They were looking at being on the front cover of Softball Today. See, I do not care who wins as long as we go eat afterwards. So I got no dog in the fight. I do not care. We got beat 68 to nothing. Do they have those double-decker sandwiches over there? That is all I care about.

But that is the way people are. Churches are always in competition with other churches. I remember back in the 70s and the 80s, First Baptist Church of Raytown was not where it is at now. It was over there in the middle of Raytown. Remember that? They had a really nice facility, and they had a really big church. I remember the churches that I were at and the other churches, they hated First Baptist of Raytown, not because of anything they did wrong. They envied what they had that the other one did not have. It was a competition there. It was a competition. We would have Sunday school campaigns where the pastor would pick a church way out in some place in the other part of the country. We would have a 10-week Sunday school campaign that you had a goal you had to set. Whatever one won, the pastor had to fly out and present a trophy to the winning pastor. We did things like that in competition. We had a Sunday school campaign for everything. We had, some of you remember this, remember the Heaven Sundays we used to have? Where they preached on heaven, and you bring all your friends and talk about heaven. I always said, "Just have a Hell Sunday." Nobody wanted to do a Hell Sunday. I think that would be a lot better than a Heaven Sunday. We had a Sunday school campaign one time that said, "10 weeks, God versus the Devil." We set a goal of 2,000 people every week. When we hit 2,000, God won. When we did not hit 2,000, the Devil won. You know the Devil beat us seven out of 10 weeks? Competition. That is the way we are.

Now, verse 14, let me explain it to you in its simplest form. You are going to love this. Allow me to illustrate human nature of what is going on. It says here:

*Proverbs 20:14*

*It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.*

Here is the way we are, guys. You see in the paper, the guy has a boat for sale. He wants \$1,000 for the boat. So you drive over and look at the boat. It is a nice boat. But you start walking around and saying, "\$1,000? There is a lot of work here. I would have to put a couple hundred dollars in it just to get it ready to go. I like it. Wouldn't mind having it, but I would have to put a couple hundred dollars in it, three, four hundred dollars in it before, and then I got too much money in it. I will tell you what I will do. I will give you \$700 for it, because I do not have to put some work in it." Guy says, "Mm. How about \$750?" You say, "Okay, \$750, good deal." So you bought the boat that he was asking \$1,000 for. You paid \$750 because you told him the boat was not worth it. Then you go to all your friends and say, "I got a \$1,000 boat for \$750." Okay? "It is naught, it is naught." Then you go your way, and he boasts it. That is human nature.

I will be honest with you. I never pay anything anybody is asking. You want to get a good deal on a car? Take me with you. I will work them. I will kick the tires. I walk around there and I will say, "I will get it for you." I never pay anything. Somebody says, "I want \$500 for this." I will say, "I will give you \$350." I mean, never pay what they are asking. You just never do. A lot of people cannot, women cannot do that. Women will pay whatever they are asking. You know why that is, do not you? Because it is your money. I do not care. I do not think. Now women have their competition, but they are in competition with other women. "I cannot believe she has got the same dress I have got on her." How their hair looks. I am in agreement with all of this. This is not a criticism. I have seen some of you at camp when you get up in the morning, I think you need, oh, I praise the Lord for what God has done. I get it. Women compete with other women. "I would not be caught dead in that dress." If you could get in the dress, yes, maybe you would be. I get it. I get it.

Then guys, I am just going to throw this out because we have got a lot of young married couples here. Do not fall for this: "Does this dress make me look fat?" Never. Never. Lying is an abomination in the sight of God. With a very present help in a time of trouble. You want to remember that. That is just human nature. That is human nature at its best or at its worst, however you want to take it. People will always try to get ahead of the other person.

You know the ministry is a race. Paul said over there in 1 Corinthians 9:24, he talked about that we go after an incorruptible crown. We go after a prize. A prize is an incorruptible crown. He said over in Hebrews 12:1, he says, "Run the race that is set before you. Run it with patience." You see, in Christianity, our race is against time. Because time is running out. We are in a race. So Paul says, "Run the race." He says, "He that runneth in a race runneth for a corruptible crown. Do it for an incorruptible crown." Open your eyes.

## IV. The Precious Jewel of Knowledge

Proverbs 20:15

There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

What he is saying here is so true, and it is easy to see and understand. In life, there will be things that are of great value. Society will be built on this value system, and many times so is Christianity, or at least Christians. Many people will hold these things as dear and precious. I think gold right now is \$1,200 an ounce. Diamonds and rubies and precious stones. As valuable as they are, you can find them everywhere. You can watch television, and a commercial will come on for you to buy gold. You can just call them up and say, "Send me some gold," and you will have it in the mail. The mailman does not steal it. You can go down to Zales. You can go over to Helzberg's, or you can go anywhere. Whatever it is. You want diamonds, you can go there. Go to Walmart. No, not Walmart. You can go to Costco.

Now the verse says above all these things that we hold precious, the greatest value that you can have, that is a precious jewel above all those things, are the lips of knowledge. Your ability to speak the things of God. You see, diamonds and rubies, gold, they are all temporary things. People had gold back in the early 1900s. You know what? FDR came in and passed a law that

you had to turn in all your gold. They took it from you. They paid you for it. They took it from you because America wanted the gold. You have a diamond, somebody will steal it. You have rubies, somebody will break into your house. But when you have the wisdom of God on your lips and the truth of God, nobody can ever take that from you. More precious than anything the world has to offer.

Proverbs 31:10 says:

*Proverbs 31:10*

*Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.*

Proverbs 8:11 says:

*Proverbs 8:11*

*For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.*

You know, in Matthew 13, the church, and that is why a virtuous woman's price is far above rubies. Far above rubies. A pearl is one of the most unique things that you could ever have. Over there in Matthew 13, the church, this virtuous woman whose price is far above rubies, is called a pearl of great price. Matthew 13:46.

A pearl is unique because you can take a diamond, you can cut it in half, and you can have two diamonds. You can take a ruby and cut it in half and have two rubies. But if you take a pearl and cut it in half, both halves die because a pearl is alive. That is why you will never see them separated or cut because they are alive, they are living. Solomon, over there, the Bible talks about the fact that he had a thousand wives, and he picked, found one that was a virtuous woman whose price was far above rubies. As you read Song of Solomon 1, he had a thousand, and he found one that was the virtue out of a thousand. The Bible says in Song of Solomon 1 that she was black, probably most likely the Queen of Sheba. You do not know that for sure, but she was certainly black and says so. I looked at that one time, and I asked a jeweler, I said, "You know what? How rare are black pearls?" I mean, you see white ones all the time in the caves, you see black. You know what he told me? He said, "They find white ones all the time, and a black pearl, probably one in a thousand." I said, "Amen." He said, "What did you say?" "Never mind." A black pearl was the love of his life. The virtue.

You see, this is our problem: all the things, the possessions of this life that we desire to have instead of the wisdom and understanding lips that the Word of God will give us. You do not find very many people, one out of a thousand. As I said earlier, I thank God for accumulating so many here. So many here that just means that so many other churches have nobody because God brought us a host of men and women here who really know and love the Word of God. Your kids are growing up loving it and understanding it.

Back in the 1800s, I think it was 1849, they had a gold rush out in California. Somebody found gold at Sutter's Mill, and everybody from the East Coast ran to California to get rich, and they started the great gold rush. But when they got out there, it was soon discovered that there was a

mineral that looked exactly like gold, but it was not gold. Its technical name is Iron Pyrite. We know it as fool's gold.

In life, you are going to find, just to illustrate the Bible, because the Bible talks about the fact that the real Christianity, there is fake Christianity that looks so good and so close, but it will not get you to heaven. All through history and all through life, there are two choices in everything. The Bible says in Psalms 78 that heaven is north, and one of these days when the Lord comes back, we are wrapped up, we are going to head north. But you realize in life there are two norths: there is what they call true north, and there is what they call magnetic north. Your compass points to magnetic north, which will always be about two or three degrees off. You know what? It shows you that there is a true salvation and a true heaven, but then there is one that is only a couple of degrees off, and it may not sound like a couple of degrees is a lot, but you start traveling millions and millions and millions of miles, and by the time you, you will be so far off, you will never get there.

I showed you last week that there are two kinds of light: there is a dark light and there is true light. Diamonds. You know what? You can get a diamond, and it is a beautiful thing, it is worth a lot of money, and then they make those zirconium ones that look just like the real thing, but they are fake, they are not real diamonds. You could not tell by looking at it, but you analyze it under one of those glasses, and you can see. There are Bibles out there that there are real Bibles and there is a false Bible. There is a true church and a false church. When it comes to gold, there is true gold, and then there is fool's gold. Many a man loaded his wagon with bags of fool's gold, and I can see him now driving to town thinking he is a millionaire and all the things he is going to buy. How disappointed he was when he got to the assayer there, and he took that gold in there, and he looked at it, and he says, "It ain't real gold, fool's gold." You see, it took a guy with some experience in minerals and prospecting to tell the real from the fake, and he was excited about it right up to the point when the guy looked at it and said, "It is worthless."

Today, God's people in Christianity have loaded their wagons with fool's gold. The things like in verse 15 that they have desired more than the precious jewels of the lips of knowledge, and in all their life, they think they are okay right up to the judgment seat of Christ. What a thing it is going to be: gold and silver and precious stones. In reality, you walk up there at the judgment seat of Christ thinking you have all of those things and find out it is fool's gold. All your life you invested in the wrong things.

Isaiah 55:2 says:

*Isaiah 55:2*

*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*

We spend all our lives, and I am not saying anything wrong with this in moderation and in doing it in balance. We spend all our life buying things that have nothing to do with God and the Word of God, and I wonder why we are not satisfied. The ones in this church that are satisfied, you do

not cause any problem. You are in the ministry, you are doing it. Do you know why? Because your soul is fat with that book. You may be in shape physically. You may have some real nice abs. You may have a great body. You may look great, but all this stuff, but your soul is 9,000 pounds. You are fat. Fatness of the soul. You know what the fatness of the soul produces? Satisfaction. That is why you do not get upset about anything. You are satisfied. You know why people get their nose bent out of their eyes? They are not satisfied. You have got to be satisfied with the lips of knowledge and what God has given you.

## V. Guarding Your Garments and Crown

Proverbs 20:16

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

As the verse stands again, we have seen this before in Proverbs 6:1, Proverbs 11:15, and Proverbs 17:18. It basically talks about if you are going to cosign for somebody, or you are going to give yourself to somebody, or you are going to be part of something with somebody, that you make sure you are not going to get left holding the bag or you are not going to get hosed. There is more to it here than that. I want to talk to you about a practical application for your life and my life. We have been talking about the judgment seat of Christ here. I want to tell you here that when it talks about somebody losing their garments and somebody being surety, I want to tell you something. There are three things dealing with the judgment seat of Christ that will mess you up:

3. One will be the person you marry.
4. Two will be the people you associate with.
5. Three is who you get your Bible from.

Those three things will make you or break you with the judgment seat of Christ. We have been talking about the true riches versus worldly riches. The judgment seat of Christ, real gold versus fool's gold, gold in the riches of this world. Yet there is a gold and a precious stone above all the value of the things of this world. It will be the lips of knowledge of the Word of God.

Notice a couple of key words here we want to look at in verse 16.

- First of all, somebody taking your garment.
- Second of all, a strange woman.
- Third of all, verse 17, I know we have not read it yet. We will do this next week, but I want to use it, the bread of deceit.

Now the strange woman will be fake religions of the world. The bread of deceit will be the fake Bibles of the world. Then the garments. That is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ. The Bible says in Revelation 19:8 that when we go through the judgment seat of Christ, that we get a robe of righteousness, a garment. You also get a crown, a crown of righteousness. 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8. But I want you to look at Revelation 3:11:

*Revelation 3:11*

*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

Somebody can take your crown. It may be the woman or the man you marry. It may be the people that you hang out with. Or it may be where you are going to church and who you are listening to, getting your Bible that does not tell you the truth.

Now in the context here of what we have got, look at Revelation 16:15:

*Revelation 16:15*

*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

Without question, there is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ found in 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5. 2 Corinthians 5:1 says:

*2 Corinthians 5:1*

*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

*2 Corinthians 5:2-4*

*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:*

*If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

*For we that in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

This is where somebody can take your crown, and somebody can take your garment. Oh, you are still saved? But the Bible says in the judgment seat of Christ, you are standing naked before God. 1 Corinthians 3 says that you build upon that foundation today you got saved: gold, silver, precious stone, or wood, hay, and stubble. When you walk in there and you think, "I have got gold, silver, and precious stones," and the Lord analyzes it, He says the fire will sort it out. He says, "Uh-uh, you got fool's gold. Wood, hay, and stubble." Oh yeah.

Verse 16 is a warning to make sure who you associate with as a Christian. That whoever you are listening to, whoever you are teaching, you know that is why honestly, I read back there in Corinthians where it talks about that the ministry needs to be a ministry of truth, and we are open and transparent and commending yourself to every man's conscience and all that. Many, many years ago, I saw the ministry as if it is not based on truth where you, a person has the right to question anything that is being taught. You know, in many churches, you ask the pastor a question, "I do not understand that," or "I do not get that," or "I am struggling with that." He gets offended. I have had people on Thursday night Bible study that have said stuff to me or questioned something, and somebody will come up and say, "Well, I think he was being disrespectful." You know, I can tell when you are disrespectful versus you just want to know. I have been disrespected so many times all my life. I do not know the difference, trust me. You will know I know when I answer you.

But I understand you cannot have a ministry that is not open. I do not expect anybody just to believe whatever I say. I believe you to question everything I say. Now you may not do it in a bad way, but I certainly hope that you just do not believe that everything I say and take it at face value, and you do not study for your own self. It is what it has to be. I have been taught by some of the greatest guys on the planet, but you know what? I always investigated it for myself because I realize even the best guy can be off. He may not go at it to teach you not the truth and give you something that is off, but we are all human. It is a thing where you have to come to the place in ministry that you are open. That people can ask whatever they want to ask about what you are teaching. "Where did you get that?" I get phone calls all week long. I have a Thursday, every other week I have a Bible study up in Lincoln with all the good folks up there. A couple of weeks ago, we got into something, and it was really, and all you could hear was silence. "Wow! Wow! Wow!" The next three or four days, I get questions trying to explain it. That is what it is supposed to be. That is how you learn.

I will keep you accountable in this ministry, but when it comes to my teaching the Bible, I expect you to keep me accountable. I expect you to take the Word of God that I give you, but I expect you to make sure that it is the Word of God, that it is the right teaching. When you find it is not? I have had guys, people say to me, over the years, "You know, well, he teaches this," and he says, "I do not believe that." Hey, you know what? Okay. Then at least you have the courtesy to come in in front of everybody. If I said it for anybody, show me where I am wrong. I will give you a Thursday, and I will give you half the time. I am not going to do it because there is another agenda involved. Truth does not have to be defended. It will defend itself. The quicker you learn that, the better off you are. But there are some men and women that will take your crown from you. They will take your garment from you, and you have to guard against that.

I think the mark of Christianity today and the Laodicean church period is God's people are just too footloose and fancy free. They think because a person goes to church where people believe this or believe that, or they say they are Christians, that everybody is okay. That is not true. It is not true when it comes to you and the judgment seat of Christ. The principles, the verses, they are great for all of us. A time to wake up. A time to open up our eyes. To get honest with ourselves. Get the reality check. It is not about what I feel or what I want to believe. It is about what does the Bible say?

Proverbs 20:13

Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

You want satisfaction in life? It will not come in all the things you buy. That is temporary. It will not even come with the person that you think is a dream woman or man in your life. It will not come with having children. It will come by your being satisfied with the bread that God has given you. Every other satisfaction in life will start with the bread that you have. Do you have bread this morning? Do you have it? Is your soul fat? Are you filling it up every day? Is it hard for you to get through those doors back there where you have to make it bigger spiritually for you? That is what I am talking about. Then to the point where that fatness satisfies you. Because when you get to that point, I am not saying there will not be things in life that bug you. I am not

saying things in life that do not get you down. But they will not keep you down. The fatness of the Word of God will always overcome it.

I told you a couple of weeks ago that every time a Christian starts to associate with the negative things in life, the negative always wins. It always will. It will always win. But at the same time, a Christian always starts hanging out with the right things and the fatness of the Word of God, you always win. It just decides which way you are going to go. Opening your eyes, waking up, watching with Him this last hour while everybody else has fallen asleep. You know, I do not expect to get to the judgment seat of Christ and have much. I do not look at it in those terms. But my biggest desire is not to get there and get a lot of rewards. My biggest desire is to get there and I have stayed awake. Got there with my eyes open. You know, if you ever wake somebody up from a deep sleep, how startled they are, that is what the judgment seat of Christ is going to be for a lot of God's people. I want to go into it with my eyes open. I want to go into it understanding. I want to go into it knowing. I did not do everything right, and I made a lot of stupid mistakes and did a lot of dumb things, but I will tell you what, I never slept on my watch. Good, bad or indifferent, I am awake, and I am holding that line.