

# Proverbs 20:17-18

Sunday 6/25/2017

There is a prayer meeting for all the high school kids for camp tomorrow night at the Bracken's at 6 o'clock. They are going to meet together and have a time of prayer for camp and all the things that are going on there. If you are in the high school class and want to be part of that, you are more than welcome at 6 o'clock at Stephen and Cole's. I am sure they would love to have you there.

If you have your Bibles, I want to invite you to turn back to Proverbs 20. You will remember last week we looked at some great principles that dealt with the judgment seat of Christ in relationship to basically two aspects: the crowns that we are going to get and the garment. The Bible made it very clear in the book of Revelation that we should be careful.

*Revelation 3:11*

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

*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.*

We tied that into 2 Corinthians 5 and 1 Corinthians 3. We talked about the man, or in relationship to the Christian, who basically falls asleep and fails the Lord in his obligation in the final hours of New Testament Christianity. That is really what the whole thing is dealing with. We examined the concept of the lips of wisdom and knowledge, whose value the Bible says is far above gold and rubies. We talked about the standards in life of values, and yet, look at the true value. We talked about fool's gold, how it looks like gold but in reality it is not real gold. It looks good but it is absolutely worthless.

Then we talked about the warnings. 2 John 1:8 says that we should be careful to receive a full reward, everything that God has for us. We talked about our watch and how we are to take this stand in these last hours of the church age to do our work for God. As the apostles could not wait with Him and fell asleep and could not watch with Him in one hour, our hour is the eleventh hour before the Lord comes back, and we need to be awake and do what God wants us to do.

Everybody knows that something is about to happen, even the world. We as Christians have the Bible, and we know what is coming online, but even the unsaved world knows that something has got to give, something is close to happening. In Chicago, they have what they call the Doomsday Clock. It was started in 1947, right after Israel became a nation, which I think is pretty interesting. It is a twelve-hour clock that the end of the world is supposed to happen at 12 o'clock midnight. Every event from 1947 up to the end of the world pushed it that much farther. Right now, we are two and a half minutes to midnight on that clock. This clock is maintained by unsaved people who do not have any idea about the Bible or what God is doing or what He wants to do. But everybody knows that something is about to happen. We, as we talked about last

week, need to be awake and aware and do what God calls us to do. This is not a time to fall asleep in your Christian life. I just want to tell you that.

## I. The Ultimate Definitive Verse

Today I want to give you what I think is the ultimate definitive verse on our Christian life and our walk with God. If there was one simple answer to all our problems in life and the issues that we struggle with, this would be it. I was talking Thursday night about giving you your magic verse. I talked about how you could go home and take all the verses off your refrigerator, all of them off your mirror, all your little three by five cards, toss them, throw them away. If you just want one verse that is going to fix every problem you have, I have people call me all the time and say, "Can you give me a verse for this? Can you give me a verse for this?" I always tell them, "Look, there is not one verse that you can just play across the board." Well, there is. I am going to give it to you today.

The magic verse that will solve every problem in your life. The magic verse that the Bible talks about the sin that does so easily beset us, to hinder us, to run the race—the race for you and me against time. This verse will be the definitive on it, and it will take us down to what I call the lowest common denominator of understanding the principle, where it gets to the bottom line, where you cannot take any more from it. It is right there in front of you, and you have to take it the way it is.

If you ever wanted to ask, and many of you probably have, "Why?" Why is this happening? Why does this person do this? Why does this situation exist? How does this happen? If you ever looked at a circumstance in a church or a Christian's life, or you ever looked at somebody who seemingly was doing good and doing great and then suddenly fell apart, or somebody who just can never get their life together, here is the answer. You are going to get it today. You are going to get everything that you need in this great verse, and you picked a good day to come to church today because you are going to get what you need.

Now allow me to read just two verses today, and that is all the farther we are going to go, but these are two powerful verses, Proverbs 20:17-18. These two verses will literally change your life if you apply them and you look at it, and I hope you do today.

*Proverbs 20:17*

*Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.*

*Proverbs 20:18*

*Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.*

## II. Prayer for Wisdom

Let us pray. Father, we ask You today to give us wisdom and insight into all that we are going to look at. We pray, Father, for each man and woman here, for each young kid here, that the Word of God will do its work, that the Holy Spirit of God will take it and permeate it into their hearts,

that they will come away today understanding things in a greater way, in a better way, in a deeper way than they have ever had it before. We love You. We thank You for our time we have set aside. Bless it now and use it for Your honor and glory in Jesus' name and sake we ask it. Amen.

### III. The Bread of Deceit

As it stands in our passage here, this is the sluggard of last week. This is the man who would not work. This is the person who gets his bread by deceit, by scamming others, by using others. We know from the world system that the world is full of that. Most of us have probably got a phone call from the IRS guy who says that if you do not send me this amount of money quickly, we are going to come in and arrest you and take everything you have. Of course, they make millions of dollars doing that. It is a scam. The guy will call you up, and it was always a thing to me when I talked to this guy, he always had a foreign accent. That was my first clue that he was not with the IRS. He comes to the place where he tells you that you have this outstanding debt, and the IRS is going to come in, and this is their last chance. You have got to send them some money, and then they are going to make it all right. Of course, it is a scam.

You go down to the plaza or go down there, and you see all the people on the street corner with signs, "Help me, I am homeless." All of this stuff. I noticed one thing about those guys: they all have better cell phones than I have. Anybody who knows anything knows that is an organization. I think they even have a union now. That is where it is at. That is a scam. They do not want to work, and it is easier to stand on a street corner and probably make more money than you make going to work. But that is just the way it is. We will have people that will call churches and try to scam them out of money or out of food. They will tell them, "We are up here from Georgia someplace, and we are broken down, and we need help, and I have three little kids." I had a guy one time call me. He said he was stuck in a hotel room over here in Independence, and he was just going down the list of churches in the phone book. He was talking about that he has kids, and he cannot go to Walmart and needs somebody to go for him and somebody to come and pick him up and all these things. Then he gets upset when you do not just drop everything you are doing. Of course, that is just the way it is in life. In the worldly scenario, it is true every day.

But I want to take it in a larger format than that. There is a bigger picture here. Last week we saw the judgment seat of Christ, and I told you that three things will get you in trouble at the judgment seat of Christ. I want to add a fourth one today. We talked about this Thursday night, so I gave you a little lead time on it.

First, I told you that the number one thing that will mess you up at the judgment seat of Christ is who you get married to. It will make you or break you. The second thing is obviously who you associate with and who you hang out with. We have talked about that before. I told you last week also the third one is who you get your Bible from. Who do you allow to teach you and instruct you in the Word of God?

I am going to add a fourth one today based on our text here in Proverbs 20:17, and that will be the bread of deceit. The Bible says it is like gravel in your mouth, a mouth full of gravel. I would not try this at home, but if you would go out in your driveway, if you have a gravel driveway, and

fill your mouth with gravel, you would find that you cannot speak very well. It tastes terrible. Yet the illustration is here that someone who has the bread of deceit has gravel in their mouth; they do not speak the truth clearly. The truth does not come out. It is all garbled. You will never speak the truth clearly when your mouth is full of the bread of deceit. Of course, like in the gravel, you need, as the Bible said last week, the lips of knowledge that are a precious jewel.

I told you in Malachi 1:6-7, there is a great verse there.

*Malachi 1:6*

*A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?*

*Malachi 1:7*

*Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.*

Now that is a question. He is telling a bunch of priests in the Old Testament who are responsible for the spiritual care of the nation of Israel that they despise His name. They ask the question, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" His answer is in Malachi 1:7. "You offer polluted bread upon mine altar." And they say, "Wherein have we polluted thee?" And that you say, "The table of the Lord is contemptible." There is bread of deceit. There is bread that has been polluted.

For anybody that cannot figure out so far what this verse is saying when it says, "What is thy name?" Revelation 19:13 says, "And his name was The Word of God." Polluted bread is the polluted Bibles that are out there today, the ones that take away truth out of God's Word. The NIVs, the ASVs, and all the rest of them that have presented a polluted bread that God said in Israel's time polluted the table and polluted the sacrifices. When you get polluted bread, a mouthful of gravel, what it produces then is whatever you do for the Lord is polluted. It winds up polluting the fellowship of the table. That is the showbread that you had in the Old Testament. You think the Bible you have is a good one when in fact it has been, you have been deceived, it is polluted.

I have given it to you many, many times, the seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible. The seven missing elements of New Testament Christianity in the 20th and 21st century according to the Bible.

1. First of all, 2 Timothy 3:16 says that you lose your doctrine. When you lose doctrine, you are on your way down because now you have no clue what is right and what is wrong.
2. The second thing is in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, there is no work of God in you because there are no furnishings.
3. The third one is in John 14:23, He says, "If any man love me, he will keep my words." You will lose your love for God. You may love Him on your terms, but you will never love Him on His terms. That seems to be popular today. We all want to say we love God. Yes, you want to love Him on your terms. You want to love Him on His terms.

4. The fourth thing is that John 4:24, there is no worship of God now. The worship of God is gone.
5. The fifth thing is found in John 15:7, when you lose the Word of God, your prayer life goes.
6. The sixth thing is in Jeremiah 1:8-10, you lose the power in preaching. That is why today in churches across this country, there is no more preaching of the Word of God, just a bunch of teachers. They teach you nice things about the Bible.
7. Then of course, the seventh thing found in Joshua 1:6-9, you lose your inheritance.

Those are the seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible. Yet 99% of God's people have no clue that they have lost these things, and they are deceived into thinking that they are okay, like we talked about last week, a wagon full of fool's gold on their way to the judgment seat of Christ.

## IV. Every Purpose Established by Counsel

Now I want to look at Proverbs 20:18, and I want to focus on it. Here is the key verse to everything in your Christian life. If you want a magic verse, if you want one verse that you can discard—and I am obviously being facetious here, I am not telling you or meaning for you to, but I am saying you could if you wanted to. If you want just one verse that starts your day off that will do everything for you, here it is. This is it. Save your refrigerator space. Forget all the other verses, just get one down, it is all you need.

*Proverbs 20:18*

*Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.*

Now that is the single verse to every issue that you are going to have in life. I know it does not look like much. Allow me to broaden your horizons this morning. I want to take this verse, and I want to look at it, and I want to show you four key words in this verse. Four key words, and along with these four things, I am going to give you five things that I want you to write down because I know that most of you will not remember what I am saying today. So as we come through here, I want to specifically point out five things that I want you to write down and just take with you here. But I want to talk about four key words that we want to look at to get this down.

### ➤ Every Purpose

Now the first word he says here is "every purpose." Do you know what is wrong with most of God's people? They have no purpose in life. Oh, they think that going to work tomorrow morning and having children and doing all this stuff is a purpose in life. No, not if you are a Christian. We have a purpose in life as a child of God, and it is not your job, it is not your career, it is not your hobby, it is not what you like to do necessarily. God has a purpose for you, and He saves you for that purpose.

In Christianity, the worst disaster that you will ever see, the worst disaster you will ever find, will be a child of God who has lost or does not understand or gets his life so screwed up that he loses

his purpose, and now it is just for him or for her. Now it is what they want to do. Forget God, forget the ministry, forget this, forget that. "I have lost my focus, I have lost my purpose, and now life is all about what I want." That is a disaster in the making. Last week we talked about fast asleep on your watch. Do you know what that is? That is a person with no purpose. God's people will continually lose their focus, that purpose. Purpose will be what you are focused on. Purpose will be what drives you in that focus. Purpose will be you knowing and understanding that God saved you for a reason, He gave you a purpose, and He wants you to fulfill that purpose. God's people will just continually lose their focus and get completely off track.

Now write the first thing down I want to give you. Here it is. I want you to go home with this. We are talking about purpose. Here it is:

- 1.) When you begin to lose your purpose, when you lose your purpose as a Christian, you have just entered the door of the beginning of you losing everything.

I want you to know that because you lose your purpose. It is only a matter of a chain of events that is going to happen. Things that are going to begin to unfold, they are going to take you from worse to worse, and you are going to wind up going through the door. When you lose your purpose, you are now going through the door of losing everything in time, and you will.

- Established

Now the next word I want you to look at here is the word "established." At some point in your life, at some point in your Christian life, you need to be established in the Word of God. Most Christians never get here. I have never understood it. Well, I do, but I do not necessarily believe it. I have never understood why a person can truly be saved and born again and claim to be a child of God and have such a disdain for the Word of God, that they never pick it up, they never read it, they never study it. In my mind, from my Bible, I remember reading somewhere, and it may be just me making this up, that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things become new. Once you get saved, your desires change. Do you know why? Because your purpose is to change, and when your purpose has changed, you realize now that you know what? I need to be established in the Word of God.

When you get established, it simply means that you now have your purpose down. That is what it means. When you get established in the Word of God, it means you clearly understand your purpose. You know who you are in Christ, you know where you are going with Christ, and you know how you are going to get there, and nothing will take you off that. I have seen young men, young ladies, in fact, where they begin to get into the church, begin to get into the Bible, and then we have all seen it. Some old boyfriend calls on the phone, or some old girlfriend calls on the phone, and they completely lose their focus. Do you know why? Because they are not established. They have no purpose. They are not nailed down in what God wants them to do. They do not understand who they are. They do not understand what God has called them to do.

Then at some point, through the Word of God and being established in it, you are going to need to be established in your New Testament local church as a child of God with a purpose. The church only grows through leadership: men and women who get their purpose, get established in

the Word of God, and then allow God through the Word of God to establish them in the work of the ministry, so that other people want to learn from them, want to grow through them. You will find that in this particular church, and I cannot speak for others, a host of people that people want to learn the Word of God from. Most churches are one-dimensional. You will have the pastor, and he is probably not very good at it, but the multi-dimensional church will be someone where it is filled with men and women who can actually take the Word of God and do something because they have established them.

I have had people when I asked them if they want to be discipled, they ask for a particular person. They will say, "Well, can so-and-so do this, or can she do this, or can he do this?" I have had couples that come in with marital problems, and they will say, "Can we get so-and-so to work with us?" Do you know why they ask that? Because you are established. People say, "You are not perfect. You have the same problems everybody else, but you have a purpose in life, and you have been established in the Word of God, and you are established here."

Back in 1 Samuel 3, we see the life and the development of Samuel as he goes into the ministry, and what a tremendous example that is. He says in 1 Samuel 3, down at the end of the chapter when he sums it all up, he says in verses 19, 20, and 21:

*1 Samuel 3:19*

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

*1 Samuel 3:20*

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

*1 Samuel 3:21*

*And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.*

God established him. God established him through the priesthood that he was involved in, and everybody in Israel knew who Samuel was. So when God then called him to be the greatest, one of the greatest men in the Bible, one of the greatest prophets in the Bible, when God called him, there was not any opposition to it. Do you know why? God already established him. Do you know where we get into opposition or you get into problems in your life? When you are trying to do something for the Lord that you establish yourself, and God did not establish you. That is where it comes in. People get mad at me for that. You will find in the New Testament, it is the difference between you establishing yourself and God establishing you. In the New Testament, we see Paul. Paul, we talked about it. Paul was established in Acts 13. We see Timothy. Timothy was established in his church in Acts 16. God established them through a biblical process. I want you to know the whole key to that thing in Samuel was the fact that he did not let any of the words fall to the ground. He took everything that God said to heart. He took everything that God said, and he did it.

- Counsel

Now the third thing, third word here, he says that by purpose, let every word be established. Then he says "by counsel." Here is where some things really come in your life.

*Proverbs 15:22*

*Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.*

Have you ever had any disappointment in life? Everybody has. There is disappointment in life in just about everything that we do. You know truly, when you understand your purpose and you are established in the Word of God and what God has called you to do, there really is not any disappointment in your life, or there should not be, because you learn the great principle that all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose. How can there be disappointment in that?

Now I realize that you will have people you try to work with, and many of you pour your life into people, and those people come up short, and you get disappointed. We all want to see them make it, but that is the reality. That is just the reality of the ministry. Not everybody is going to make it. When I work with somebody and that person bails out and does not do what they need to do and goes back to the world, you know what? I do not necessarily get it back up by day that I get disappointed in them. I just go around thanking God that I did not bail out. I look around here and see all the ones of you who did not bail out. Hey, it is going to happen.

But the Bible says by counsel, he says, "Without counsel, your purpose is going to come to a disappointing end. But in the multitude of counselors, they are established." There are your two words: purpose and established. Notice how they build on each other. You get your purpose, and you get established through right counsel.

*Proverbs 11:14*

*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

Now I have got to say this. This verse has been abused for years for people to justify going around to everybody and asking them what their advice or their opinion on their issue. "Hey, I have got this problem. What do you think I ought to do? Oh, I have got this problem. What do you think I ought to do?" They think that verse means that there is safety in a multitude of counselors, that you go to a bunch of different people and get their opinion on what you should do, and then you just pick the one you want to do anyhow. That is not what it is talking about.

You have a Bible in front of you. That Bible was written by 66 authors. It has 66 books in it. At the very get-go, you have 66 counselors in that book that make up your multitude of counselors. Add to that all the characters in the Bible: David, Joshua, Moses, Abraham. The list is endless. You have man after man after man after man and woman after woman after woman in that Bible that will give you the counsel where there is safety that you can get established truth.

Now that is the second thing I want you to write down.

- 2.) You must establish truth in your life.

At some point, you must establish truth in your life. Quit living in a world that does not exist. Establish truth in your life. The Bible is a record of the cause and the effect of how to fix every problem that we get into, by showing you hundreds of cases of failed purposes and then established purposes. I want to tell you something. In any relationship, wherever it is, if there is no established truth, you do not have anything. You do not have anything.

I deal with a lot of people, I have for almost a half a century, and I have worked with them in all kinds of scenarios. You know what I have said, and I have said it many, many times: "I do not care where you have come from. I do not care what you did in life. I do not care the mistakes you made. I do not care how bad it was. I do not care. It does not bother me. All I care about is where you want to go from this point in your life forward." We all have a history. We all have a past. We can dig up dirt in everybody's past if we wanted to. What is the point? Where do you want to go from here? That is the key.

I only have one rule in dealing with people. I do not care what you have done. I do not care whatever transpires. I have one rule: when we start to work together, never lie to me. Never tell me something that is not true. Because the basis that we are going to try to help you with is going to be based on a book of truth. Without that book of truth, we have nothing to work with. The moment you or anybody depart from the book of truth and start telling me something else that is not true, we do not have anything. I am out. I am done.

The only thing we can have with God that makes a difference is truth. In the world you live in, there is no truth. The government will not tell you the truth. Your family will not tell you the truth. Sometimes your boss will not tell you the truth. There is no truth that is established. The only established truth that we have is in the book that you hold in your hand. That has to be the basis for everything. That has to be the basis. Truth is the fundamental concept by which everything has to work from. In your life at some point, you have to establish truth in your life. You have to realize that truth is the bedrock of your relationship with God and your relationship with others. If there is no truth, you do not have anything. You do not have anything.

When I teach the Bible, it will always be based on the absolute established truth that are based on the counselors of the Bible. My opinion is worthless. My personal preference is worthless. My likes or dislikes are worthless. They mean absolutely nothing alongside the 66 counselors in the Bible. They are the ones. In dealing with people and their issues, I keep my emotions out of it. I have one passion in life, only one: it is truth. It is all I care about. All I care about is, "Is it true what you just said? Is it true? Are you and I established in this church in truth?" That is all that matters.

I had a guy one time get into sin in his life, and he got upset. You know how they do it. They always try to justify that it is your fault. He said, "You know what? I want you to know. I am going to leave the church." He says, "I am going to go. I am going to find another church." I said to him, "You do not need to find another church. You need to find another God. You need to find another Bible because you are not leaving because of anything that is done here. That is your scapegoat. You are leaving because you have violated a Bible principle set down by God, and you do not want to do it. So going to another church is not going to fix your problem. You better

get another religion. You better find a God who agrees with what you want to do. You better find a God who wants to go along with your sin because you are going to go to another church, and hopefully the guy will preach the same message there, and you are not going to like that. The problem is not where you are at in a church. The problem is where you are at in your sin. You better change some other things." But that is the world we live in today.

- Make War

Then the fourth thing he says, he says, "make war with good advice." Now we are in a war. The Bible talks about it. Ephesians 6 talks about putting on the whole armor of God. It says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers." We are in a war. I do not really think that most people understand this warfare. Over and over again, we are told to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We are told to do all of these things. Yet the warfare that you and I are in is not a physical battle. It is not a battle necessarily with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Do you know where the real battle exists? It is the battle for your mind. We are going to camp in a month, and the battle for that camp is going to be for these young lions. Every Sunday when I get up and preach, every Thursday night, the battle rages. It is not a wage of what you are going to do or what you are not going to do. It is a wage against what you are going to think in your mind and let your mind go to. That is the battle. It always has been. It is just that simple. It is a battle for the mind.

The Bible, 66 counselors, is a book that is good, absolute, solid advice based on God's instructions to you on the issues of life we all face. The solid advice, this good counsel, will come to us in the form of Bible principles. We talk about it all the time.

## V. The Christian Life: A Principled Life

Now the third thing I want you to write down here.

- 3.) The Christian life should be a disciplined life.

The Christian life should be a disciplined life because the Christian life should be a principled life. It is based on principles. Self-discipline just does not happen. You meet many people who are totally undisciplined. Fathers are undisciplined with their children. Parents or moms are undisciplined with their kids. You find that many times Christians are undisciplined with the Bible or undisciplined with anything about Christianity. The Christian life should be a disciplined lifestyle. The only way the Christian life can be a disciplined lifestyle is if it is a principled lifestyle. Self-discipline just does not happen. You do not wake up some morning and take the self-discipline pill. When you were born and grew up, some people developed self-discipline, some people did not.

Now I believe there are some things in life that can help you with self-discipline, but I want to tell you something. Self-discipline is something that you have to decide you are going to do for yourself. There used to be a thing where they would say, "Well, send a guy in the army, and that will give him discipline." Well, not necessarily. If you have ever been in the army, you know there are a lot of screwballs in the army that all they do is get everybody else in trouble.

Discipline did not help them at all. I am not saying being in a strict form of regiment of discipline can help you if that is where you want to go. But your self-discipline just did not happen.

Most of you are educated here. All of you went to high school, grammar school. Many of you went to college. Your education just did not happen. In school, you had classes to prepare you for life. You had teachers who taught those classes who instructed you. It was an ongoing training, teaching process. Your education, you are not able to speak and reason today and talk intelligently or know things just because it happened. You are not any more than self-discipline is something that just happens in your life. You went to a school where somebody taught you, trained you, disciplined you in learning. But at the top of that learning chain, there was one man or in some cases a woman, and they were called the principal. That principal was the absolute enforcer of the rules and regulations to the school that everybody had to follow. You know as well as I do, when you got in trouble and you got sent to the principal's office, you knew you were in a mess. There was no higher chain of authority in the school that you went to than the principal. In life, there is no higher chain of authority of self-discipline than you, than the principles that you submit yourself to.

Oh, I remember that day. You kids, you do not have a clue. Back in my day, they paddled you. At every high school, they had a wood shop. The first thing that shop teacher did the first of the year was make out a whole battery of paddles. He had a paddle for every rear end that was in that school. Sometimes they drilled holes in them. That makes it even hurt more. The most amazing thing, I remember this, I have nightmares about it. When somebody would get really a problem, they would get sent to the principal, we knew they were going to get a whack. They usually got three whacks. It was really quiet in school. The halls, you could walk down there, you could hear the echo. The principal's office was always centrally located. We would all just know that so-and-so was down at the principal's, we would all be waiting. You could hear a pin drop. We were waiting for the crack. It was like being in a prison and being there for an execution. You knew it was coming. You just did not know when the lights were going to dim, the switch. We would be listening, we would be looking at each other. We would be sweating bullets. All of a sudden, you would hear it, like a .22 rifle going off down that hallway. Crack! Crack! Crack!

Now I am going to tell you something. Do not tell me that capital punishment is not a great deterrent to crime. Because for this kid here, I never got to go to the principal's office. Praise the Lord. Do you know the reason why I did not? I heard the cracks of everybody else's going down there, and I did not want any part of it. But it was the principal. When you went down to the principal's office, there was no higher authority that could deal with you within that school system. The principles of the Word of God are the highest authority that you can put in your life. It is just that simple.

*Proverbs 4:7*

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

Now here is the fourth thing I want you to write down.

- 4.) Principles of the Word of God will lead to godly wisdom, which will lead to God's understanding, which will establish you in your purpose by good solid advice.

I will say it again. Principles of the Word of God will lead to godly wisdom, which will lead to God's understanding in your life, which will establish you in your purpose by good solid advice. When I deal with you, I never tell you what to do. That is not my job. I always give you the principles behind what you are doing, whether it is good or it is bad. My life dealing with you is just giving you options, giving you choices. You have to make it because you have to live them. I cannot. Every child of God who is far from God and will lose his crown and will lose his or her garment, I want to tell you something. It all started just with one thing: violated principles. Because as I gave you the first thing to write down, when you violate the first principle, you are on your way to losing everything.

Look at Hebrews 5.

*Hebrews 5:12*

*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

*Hebrews 5:13*

*For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

*Hebrews 5:14*

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Do you know what is wrong with some of God's people? Why are you not teaching somebody? How long have you been saved? Really? I have people in this church who have been saved three or four years, and they are teaching people. I have some who have been saved a year or less, and they are teaching people. Do you know what he says here? He is asking a question. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, and ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

What is that? Well, for here, when you come in and you want to begin to grow in the Word of God, what do we do first? Discipleship One. We talk about salvation and eternal security. Lesson two talks about the ordinances of the church. We will talk about the Holy Spirit and the Word of God and prayer. We will talk about the will of God versus the plan of God in your life. We will talk about the importance of the New Testament local church. We will talk about your responsibility to giving to God. We will talk about the judgment seat of Christ. Those are the first principles of the oracles of God. That is where you start.

Then we have Discipleship Two. Seven things that change about you. It is the next level up, but again, it is the basic first principles of the oracles of God. It lays the foundation of principles in

your life that you are going to build on. I know the seven things that change, but I will tell you internally and how it affects you. I will tell you what changed the day you got saved, the seven things.

8. The first thing that changed was your purpose.
9. Then the second thing, once your purpose changed, was your passion changed.
10. Once your purpose and your passion change, then your whole perspective changes.
11. Once your purpose and your passion and your perspective change, then your patience changes.

When those four things happen, there is an effect on the inner man. When it does its work, it will affect the outer man. Praise God, all these things change the end of man. You are not going to hell anymore. You are going to heaven.

Hebrews 5:13-14 talks about milk versus meat. Somebody that is full of age by reason of use. Do you know how you grow in the Word of God? Do you know how you build principles in your life? I can give you the ten principles and the seven in Discipleship Two, but do you know how you build other principles in your life? By reason of using what we give you. You will never grow faster than when you start taking what God has given you and you teach somebody else.

People get an attitude about things in the church, in Christianity. They think that they are right and justified in their attitude. But you know what? All you do is deceive yourself because you never get any purpose in life. You never get any wisdom in life. All you do is go through life, and you never exercise your senses. It is no wonder some of you are hooked up with people that you cannot figure out what they are doing wrong, that it is really wrong. It is no wonder that some of you get hung up with people out there, and you have to scratch your head and say, "Well, I do not know. I do not know if they are right or the church is right." Do you know what your problem is? You have no ability to discern good and evil. You have no discernment on it. You are caught in the middle. You have no clue what is right and what is wrong when it comes to the standard of the Word of God. Why? You have no purpose. There is nothing you are doing in your life of teaching anybody that will exercise you that you can say, "Oh, that is wrong. That is right." You have no discernment. Your senses are dormant. They are not being exercised. What do we do? "When for the time ye ought to be teachers." Nobody has to teach again. I know some people have been discipled so many times. If you look in a dictionary, there are pictures there. Milk versus meat. What is it for you? Milk versus meat. There has to come some time that you establish yourself in the Word of God, and it will establish you in the church, and people will know that you have a purpose, and they will come to you for good advice, for counsel. You will not give them your own personal opinion. You will be running back to the 66 counselors of the Bible.

Now here, look right here in Hebrews 5, look at Hebrews 6:1. Here is somebody who leaves the principles.

*Hebrews 6:1*

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*

*Hebrews 6:2*

*Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

Now we have a great definition here. Now we know that principles in the Bible are the doctrines of the Bible. Do you see it? "Leaving therefore the principles of the doctrine of Christ." Now we have a piece of the puzzle that is even better. Now we know that the principles that you get in the Word of God are the doctrines of the Bible. A Christian will have a purpose in life, and that purpose needs to be established. That purpose can only be established through the principles of the wisdom and understanding that will form the baseline of good counsel and good solid advice to wage your spiritual warfare that is against your mind, what you think. Every problem a man or a woman, Christian man and woman, ever got into started with what you thought versus what God's Word said. It is history. The Bible in its lowest form and common denominator is simply God's opinion and viewpoint on everything in life. Your job and my job is real simple: make my viewpoint His viewpoint. Dump the rest.

Now I have got to tell you, without a doubt, this is the hardest thing to do in our Christian life. I get it. It will only happen when we finally come to the end of self. Do you know what the end of self is? Do you know what we talk about? "Well, you have got to get broken. You have got to come to the end of the self." Do you know what the end of self is? The end of self is simply you realizing that your way is the wrong way. That is the end of self. That is not very theological. We will show many books, but it is great truth.

People will dump God's Word and follow their feelings. People will dump God's Word and follow their heart. People will dump God's Word and follow their emotions. People will dump God's Word and follow bad advice. People will dump God's Word for everything instead of just following Proverbs 20:17-18 in your life. It will take a strong self-discipline stand in your life. It is the only thing you can do. You will notice around here I am always pointing out the principles. I do not care if it is Institute. I do not care if it is People Ministries. I do not care if it is Sunday morning or Thursday night. I am always showing you the principles. I am so principled in the thing that over the years, we talked about, "Here is a book we have in a bookstore: 24 Principles of Finding a Spouse based on Genesis 24." Principles. We have one here: Principles of Marriage, 1 Corinthians 7. We have one here: a library of biblical principles that tells you everything you want to know about what principles are. Do you know why? Because around here, principles are everything. It is all we do. Bible principles are the bedrock of the foundation of the Christian life. If you will ever establish yourself, or if you are ever going to find your purpose, it is going to be done by the principles of the Word of God.

## VI. Life's Seasons and Purposes

Now allow me to give you some of the common ones that we all struggle with, just for a few minutes here. We already talked about choosing a husband or a wife. I told you how important

that is to the Judgment Seat of Christ. Genesis 24 lays out the principles. How many people ever pay attention to the principles? No, you look at her, she looked at you. You are, she is beautiful, you are halfway decent, and she is hard up, and the rest is history. It does not matter what they think about the Word of God. It does not matter what they care about God. It does not matter, you let your emotions and your passion dictate over the principles.

Marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Biggest issue around today. Yet in 1 Corinthians 7, 18 principles on it. 18 principles that you need to get down. Your children. Hundreds of principles. Here is one I get all the time. You have a job, and you get laid off from your job. You get off your job, or you get fired, or something happens, and they shut you down, let you go. You get two or three job offers, and people have called me on the phone and said, "Which one do I choose?" There are principles for that in the Bible. There are principles for that in the Bible.

I had a guy one time years ago call me up, and he says, "Bobby, it looks like I am moving to St. Louis." I said, "Oh, really?" I said, "Oh, I am going to hate the loser." He said, "Yeah," he says, "my job folded up, and they offered me a job in St. Louis at another company, and it was more money, and I really did not know what to do, so I just prayed about it and put it in God's hands, and so therefore God answered my prayer. I am going to move to St. Louis." I said, "Oh, I have got to ask this. I said, 'You gave it to God, how did God answer your prayer?'" He said, "Well," he said, "I put my house up for sale, and I told the Lord if He wanted me to go to St. Louis, go ahead and sell my house, and if the house did not sell, I would not move to St. Louis." Now that sounds good. There is only one hitch. This kid forgot that the devil had his realtor's license.

Do you know why God will never operate that way? Do you know why? And I know this is hard for some of you to grasp. Do you know why when you do something like that, God will not be a million miles around, and the devil will be all over it? Do you know why? Because God already gave you a set of principles in the Word of God to deal with something like that. You had old Gideon down there one time. Gideon said, "Well, Lord, You want me to go do to God?" He said, "I want you to go do this, Gideon. This is what I want you to do, and I am going to give you a great victory." Gideon said, "Okay, Lord, praise the Lord." Then when it came down to do it, he said, "Well, Lord," he said, "I am going to put this fleece out and do this with a fleece," and God did it. Then he said, "Well, I am going to do it again," and he put the fleece out, and God did it. Then he went and fought the battle. Do you know what? When you study Gideon's life, at the end, he winds up in idolatry. He winds up in idolatry. Do you know what the great moral lesson is? Gideon did not need to put out the fleece one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight times. Do you know why he did not need to test God what God wanted to do? God already told him what He wanted him to do.

Do you know why you do not have to go through that stupid stuff of, "Well, I am going to put my house up for sale, if God sells it, then I will know that is of God"? No, the devil will sell it. You will make a mess out of your life. Do you know why? It is already here how to deal with that. Now God takes pity on us. He does. Praise the Lord for that. He takes pity on us. But I want to tell you something He is not going to do. He is not going to look at you and me and my stupidity when He has given me a book that I have not read and I have not studied, and I make some dumb move like that, and God is not going to come down and say, "Well, because he is

stupid, I am going to violate My own principle and help him out." He is not going to do that. You are going to wind up in St. Louis. You are going to make a mess out of your life, and you are going to lose what God had for you because God already gave you the principle on it. He is not going to come down and redefine it for you again. He expects you to learn the Bible.

Somebody says, "Well, I am looking for a church." You will find a paper in the paper, a big church section, that says, "Go to the church of your choice." Do not ever do that. Do not ever go to the church of your choice. Do not ever go someplace where they tell you what you want to hear. Do not go to any church where the pastor does not tick you off about twice a week. That is what you are looking for. You want somebody to get in your face and tell you the truth because your whole life, my whole life, was built on non-truth. At some point in your life, you need to have somebody tell you the truth. You may not like it, but that is okay, just take it. A lot of people tell me things I do not like.

Somebody says, "The principles of how to start a church." We looked at it, Acts 11-13. Here is a good one. How in your life do you know when God is in something or when He is not? That is one I get all the time. How do you know in your life when something happens if God is in it or God is not? Here is the answer: God never violates His own principles, but you have got to know the principles. You have got to know the principles. You have got to know them.

Who here wants to learn principles? Who here wants to learn principles? Who wants to learn them? Okay, good deal. Here we go. I am going to do a good deed here. Did you raise your hand? You did? I do not think you did. Are you sure? Who else wants to raise your hand? Okay. You know more principles than I do. I have that book. You have that book? Can I give it to somebody else? He is a principled man right here. He has got a principled woman. He does. He does. He does.

I will tell you another one. Most of you are all saved here this morning. What principles do you use to measure your spiritual growth? Do you measure it at all? I do not mean this in a bad way, but we all see people who get retarded growth, and they do not grow. They have to get growth hormones or something like that. I preached one time, it was a blessing in my life, I preached one time at a convention for midgets. I did. I got a standing ovation and did not even know it.

How do you measure your spiritual growth? Can you? Do you know where to go in that Bible to find out, are you growing? You know, you like that, did not you, FTSE? He will be using that all week long. We go through our Christian life, and just like your physical life, you grow up, and you do not even know it. The only time you know it is when your shoes do not fit anymore or your legs hang out the bottom of your pants because they are too short, but you do not stand there every day and see your growth. It is the same way spiritually. You have to have some way to measure your growth. If we would go home by my home in Ohio, I would be able to measure your growth. You have to have some way to measure your growth. If we would go home by my home in Ohio on 1451 Alton Avenue, I remember it very well. The kitchen there had a door that went down, and I do not know if you could still see it, but my dad had marked along that door from the time I was about three or four years old. Every year he would have me stand there, and he would put a cut with his pocket knife, he would cut a hole in that little thing. It was all the

way up to the day I left in the army. If I would go back there right now, you know what I would see in that house? I would see a lot of memories. I would see a house that I grew up in, but when I look at that door, I would see the fact that Bob Alexander grew from here, he grew from there. Do you know what is wrong with us as Christians? You do not have any standard to show you that you grew from here or from there, so in most cases, you just stay right here. There are principles in that Bible, six of them, six principles that will absolutely measure your spiritual growth. I mean, come on. You want to learn the Bible? Okay. Proverbs 2:1-5 is where you start. There are six things there when learning the Bible.

Here is a good one. I get calls all the time. "Well, my father is in the hospital, and he is dying, and he is on life support, and the doctors say that he is brain dead, and there is nothing he can do." We hear about it all the time in the news. Here is a woman who has been in a coma for 28 years or whatever, and everybody says she is dead, and the family just cannot, and I get called, "When do you pull the plug?" It is in the Bible. It is in the Bible. Do you think God would let you make that hard decision by yourself? Do you really? Now it is not your fault that you have been reading something else. Do you really think that that terrible tragedy of life that you would have to face that He would just say, "Go ahead and do that. Just do whatever you want. I do not really know what to tell you about that. Figure it out on your own." I have had people say, "Well, I prayed about it. I prayed about it. I prayed about it. I just cannot get any peace." You will never get any peace praying about it. Do you know why? I already gave you the principle on it.

Do you know what is a waste of time for you and for me? You are not going to like this, but I am going to tell you. You go ahead and write this down too. This is not one of my five, but it will give you six. Do you know what is really a waste of time? You and me praying for things and asking God to give us an answer when He has already put the principle in the Word of God that has the answer. So you think you can shortcut by not studying the Bible, and then you get in a jam. You just throw your prayer up to God, and He will say, "Okay, here it is." He does not work that way. He will sit there with His arms crossed and His mouth shut and just keep looking at the book. That is where the answers are. It is not His fault. You do not want to learn it.

Prayer, one of the three infirmities in the Bible. You know those principles on prayer. I have had people all the time, and I have got to be honest. I have had people all my life talk about, and it is usually, and there are some good people who do it, but it is usually the Pharisees. They will come up and they will say, "Yes, I am fasting." Well, you just blew it because the Bible says you are not supposed to tell anybody when you are fasting. "I am fasting." "Oh, you are so spiritual." "Well, I am fasting." So a guy one time, he says, "Well," he says, "in my spiritual gift, I have the gift of humility." I said, "No, you had the gift of humility, you just lost it." But I am telling you, fasting in the Bible is defined by principles. I have never met anybody in the last 15, 20 years of my life who fasted ever did it biblically, but they do not care. You think I want to go through all that stuff and not eat for nothing? There better be a purpose to it.

You want to deal with people when they have issues, Romans 14 and 15 have the principles on it. Dealing with issues within a church, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. What the Bible does for you. Basically the four things, 2 Timothy 3, there are the principles. Who you associate with. We talked about it a while back. The mixed multitude went into it in great detail. Getting into the

ministry, seven absolutes every young man needs to know about the ministry. They are in the Bible. When your child is ready for salvation, how many times I think, "Well, I think he is getting close. I think he is getting this or I think she is getting ready." You know what? The Bible gives you in Romans 7 every principle you need to know exactly where the time is. There are seven laws in the Bible, seven absolute laws that everything in the universe physically and spiritually runs by. You violate the laws, you pay the price.

The principles about spending our money. You only have so much emotion to give out, and we waste it so many times. I told you Thursday night, how you get on some movie, and you are sad, and you cry, and you weep, and all this, or somebody on reality TV does this or does that, and you cry. I know we have all been there. When I was five years old, and I went to see Davy Crockett in the Alamo with Fess Parker, when he got killed at the end, I cried for four days. Fess Parker was over at the bank cashing his check. I get it. I understand. But you know what? We will spend our emotions on those things, and there are people around you in your neighborhood and you work with who are dying and going to hell. You do not shed a tear over them. Do not tell me about it. Do you know what governs those things? Principles. Do you know how to govern your emotions? Principles. Do you know how to keep your emotions in check so you do not get out of balance and get it someplace else to take you from the purpose of God? Principles.

This one verse will do it for you. If you just get up every morning and realize that your purpose in life is going to be established by good counsel, your problems are over. You are done. You do not have one problem at all. It is safe to say that every issue we have will start with not following the principles. God's advice and God's good counsel out of the Word of God versus our own.

Now let me show you something. Turn over to Ecclesiastes 3. This is amazing. I have never given you this before, but I am going to give it to you now. In Ecclesiastes 3, this has been called in chapter 1 the cycle of life. You have 28 issues of life laid out for you as far as when you will or when you will not do these things. 28 issues in chapter 3 that are the issues of life that every one of us will face. Every issue in life that you are going to get involved in will be found in these 28 things. When you investigate these 28 things through the Bible, they start and go to one definitive verse that defines them as the principle to it.

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

When you have a purpose in life, these are the things that come in the season of your life. There are four seasons in your life. When you are a young child, that is the springtime. You get older in adulthood, that is your summer. You get into fall, you get a little older, my age, I am in the fall of my life. When you get really up there, aged, then it is the wintertime of your life. Everybody. So he says to everything, there is a season. There is a season to your life. In your life, there is a time to every purpose. Here they are, 28 of them.

Now the first thing he says here is "a time to be born."

- That will be Job 5:7.

Then he will say there is "a time to die."

- The definitive on that will be Ecclesiastes 7:1-2.

Whenever I preach a funeral, if you noticed, I always preach that of Ecclesiastes 7:1-2. Now I am not fighting it, but most preachers will go every place else in the Bible and put some little silly thing together. That is fine if that is what you want to do. But I am principled, you see? I know that Ecclesiastes 7:1-2 is the definitive passage on somebody dying. So if I am going to get the most out of what I am going to say to get it to them, I am going to pick the best passage God would have picked if He was going to preach it. That is me. I cannot speak for you.

Then he says there is "a time to plant."

- That will be Isaiah 18:9.

He said there is "a time to pluck up."

- That will be Jeremiah 1:10.

He said there is "a time to kill."

- That will be Genesis 9:6.

Or when your wife asks you, "Do I look fat in this dress?" you give the wrong answer.

There is "a time to heal."

- That will be Hosea 6:1.

There is "a time to break down and a time to build up."

- That is Jeremiah 1:10 in both cases.

In your life, there is a time that you need to break down some things, and there is a time that you need to build up. When you come into this church, there are some things that you have got to do. Do you know what good hard preaching does? Good hard preaching, good advice from the principles. It will break down the things out of your life that do not need to be there, and then it will build up the things in your life that need to be there. That is the principle.

He said there is "a time to weep."

- Psalm 126:6.

Psalm 126:6 is the definitive on weeping in the Bible. It is not over some reality TV show or Dorothy trying to get to the land of Oz, yet with people lost without Christ.

He said there is "a time to laugh."

- That will be Psalm 126:2 and Proverbs 1:26.

There is "a time to mourn."

- That will be Luke 19:43.

There is "a time to dance."

- That will be 2 Samuel 6:14 and Exodus 15:20.

He says there is "a time to cast away stones."

- That will be 2 Kings 3:25.

Then he says there is "a time to gather stones."

- That will be Genesis 31:46 and Joshua 4:3.

Everything, all of these are the issues of life that you struggle with.

Oh, here are two good ones. There is "a time to embrace." Do not get too excited now because the next one is "there is a time to refrain from embracing." Pucker up. Now I know you are all excited now because there is somebody in here you want to kiss. But let me just tell you something. When it says "a time to embrace," John 17:17, what you need to embrace as a Christian first is truth. When you embrace truth first, you will not have a problem embracing the wrong things.

And there is "a time to refrain from embracing."

- That is Proverbs 5 and Proverbs 7.

Did you ever see that passage? The sap is there, there is a guy who is a goofy guy. The Bible calls him a simple guy without knowledge and understanding. He is walking down the streets of a city, and there is a hooker on the street corner. He has never been to the big city before. Never been around women like that. She marks him immediately as somebody she can take advantage of. So the Bible says in Proverbs 5 and Proverbs 7, there is this strange woman and this kid who is a simple guy who is void of understanding. He is walking down the street. He is not paying attention to anything. She catches him, and with her face, this is called body language, by the way, she has got her face all painted up. She has got her eyelashes on. She has got all things to things very high of herself. She has got a cute face. She thinks she has got a great body and everything. So she looked at this guy and she says, "Hi, I paid my vows." She is a religious hooker. "I paid my vows. I have been to church Sunday. I paid my vows. Why do not we come and make love till Saturday, Saturday morning, and make love till in the morning, second coming of Christ." He falls for it. The Bible says she kills him. See, there is a time to embrace. That would be truth. There is a time to refrain from embracing. That would be the wrong things. Those are the two examples in the Bible. Those stupid little guys just fall for it all the time, all the time.

Okay. Says there is "a time to get and there is a time to lose."

- That will be 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5.

The judgment seat of Christ. That will be your time to get. But unfortunately, it will be time for some of you to lose.

There is "a time to keep." We talked about that last week.

- Revelation 3:11 says you are to keep your crowns, and Revelation 16:15 says you are to keep your garment.

There is "a time to keep." Then there is "a time to cast away."

- Isaiah 31:7.

There are some things in our lives we need to cast away at times and not keep them.

Matthew says there is "a time to rend."

- That is Matthew 21:51.

Then it says there is "a time to sew," like sewing clothes.

- That will be Proverbs 31.

Do you know what that is dealing with? The fundamental principle there is moms ought to be making clothing for their children so they will have something to wear at the judgment seat of Christ. Right now, you ought to be sewing your garments ready to be put on at the judgment seat of Christ instead of thinking you are going to go to Sears and buy it on the way up.

I grew up, and I got to see all the different changes of people's clothes. If you stay, I want to tell you, if you keep your clothes in the closet long enough, the style will come back in. I am waiting for leisure suits to come back in. My favorite, no, my favorite suit growing up was a seersucker suit. Who knows what a seersucker suit is? Anybody know? Bless your heart. A seersucker suit. Sears had a sale, and I was the sucker. They are never coming back. I put them out on the street, and the people, they will not even take them. Count on them. Anyway, never mind that. You better be making some clothes because there is a time to sew.

There is "a time to keep silent."

- Proverbs 26:4 says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly." That is a great principle.

Then there is "a time to speak."

- Proverbs 26:5 says, "Answer a fool according to his folly."

You better know when the difference is. Do you know how you know the difference? Principles.

There is "a time to love." Do not get excited.

- Psalm 119:97, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." You love the Word of God first.

Then it says there is "a time to hate."

- That is Psalm 139:22.

You say, "Well, I am a Christian, and I love God." Really? Give me the seven things in the Bible that God loves. How are you going to love God when you do not even know what He loves?

Then on top of that, there are seven things that He hates.

There is "a time for war."

- That will be Revelation 19, Second Coming of Christ.

Then the last one is "a time for peace."

- That is Revelation 20. That is the Millennium of Christ.

See, everything that you are going to face in life is found in these 28 things. That is why the Bible says over there that to everything there is a season. Your life is going to go through four seasons, and there is a time and every purpose under heaven. There is a purpose in your life, and there is something that you are going to have to deal with in that purpose. Here are the 28 things that are going to come up in your life. The principles of the Word of God will clearly lay out and show us how to make our way through these things and come out on the other side with a victory.

## VII. The Key to a Victorious Christian Life

Now here is the last thing I want you to write down. Here is number five. Really, it is number six, but here it is.

- 5.) The key to the victorious Christian life will simply be a principled life.

It is not complicated. There will be no seminar where you have to buy the tape for \$500 and study for the rest of your life on a victorious Christian life. It is real simple. You can throw every other verse away that we have got because "every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war." If you put that one principle in your life and you make everything in your life a purpose, and you get established by God's counsel, and you get good advice in your making war, you will never have a problem in your life that you cannot deal with. The key to a victorious Christian life will simply be a principled life. Putting God's opinion over our opinion in anything, in any matter.

As I stated, this requires self-discipline. It requires you to have the ability that you are going to take every purpose and see that God has a purpose for you in this life that you need to be established in the Word of God by counsel, the principles, and then getting the good advice from the counselors, the Word of God. That is how you make your war. That war is against your mind. That war is against what you think versus what God thinks. Your opinion over His opinion. Your association with people when they do wrong versus what the Bible says that they should not have done, which was right. And you being able to discern good versus evil. It comes down to that. That is the key.

In reality, and I know I was being facetious with you when I said it, but in reality, the only verse that you need that will fix everything in your life is this one, Proverbs 20:18. It will get you to do the number one thing. I have people come all the time, and they have issues, and sometimes their issues are very complicated. I know as well as you know, one of the principles of dealing with people is when you have problems in your life, it takes you a lot longer to get out of a mess than it took you to get in a mess. That is just a solid principle. I will have them come in, and I want to

help them, and sometimes all I can do is just give them a ray of hope that there is a plan here that we can do some things. But I always try to, they always ask me, they will lay it out, and sometimes they are not too bad, sometimes they are easy to fix. Many times they are really complicated. Many times they have now got all kinds of issues in it. They always, always ask me the same thing. They always say, "You know, is there anything that we can do? What do you think? I just need to get out from under all of this." I know that there is no way that I am going to be able to fix that in one session. I know it is going to take some time. But I always tell them, "There is one thing you can do right now. Really, there are two things you can do right now, right now, tonight, in spite of all your issues, in spite of all your problems."

12. The first thing you need to do: stop listening to yourself and start listening to the Word of God.

13. The second thing that you need to do that will begin to reverse the process: quit making bad choices. Stop making bad choices.

If you will stop making bad choices, then the bad choice bucket is going to be empty sooner or later, and now you just start to reverse the process. But you just keep adding bad choices onto other bad choices, and you are never going to get out of it. It is like getting sixty thousand dollars on your credit card. You are never going to pay it off. You may have all the intentions in the world to pay it off, but the interest is going to eat you alive, and for the rest of your life, you are going to be paying on that credit card, and it is never going to get paid off because all you are paying is the interest, and the principle is not going down.

I want to tell you something. When you continue to make bad choices in your life, and you try to work with it, and you keep making bad choices, you just keep paying the interest, compounding the interest, and the principle, the real issues, never get solved. There comes a point in your life when you have to stop making bad choices, and you do that by getting a principled life. You do that by realizing that every purpose, and God has a purpose for you and for me, but it has to be established by counsel and with good advice, the Word of God. That is how you make your war. The warfare, again, the warfare, it is not somebody out here or somebody over here at a Roman Catholic Church or the Illuminati or this or that. The warfare, the battle in the war, is the war with your mind: what God says over what you are going to do.

The Bible says, "Give no place to the devil." Place is latitude. The distance that you give the devil to work in your life is simply this: when the Bible says, "Give no place to the devil," here is what it means: the place that you give the devil to get into your life is the distance between what God says and what you do with it. When they line up, there is no distance, no way to get in. When you do not line them up, he will get in. As my old grandmother used to say, "You give the devil twelve inches, and he will become the ruler." He will. He will take over everything in your life, and it has to come back to a self-disciplined, principled life. It is hard to do. It is hard to do, but it will never get done unless you start doing it, and you start where you can. You stop making bad choices. Stop right now. "I am not going to make another bad choice that is not lined up with the principle, and if I do not know what the principles are before I do it, I am going to find somebody that can take me to the Word of God and show me." That is the key. Keep the other verses on your refrigerator. Take this one home with you. It will solve every problem.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We thank You for the time today.