

Proverbs 21

Sunday 9/3/2017

I think it is probably clear to all of us who have been coming through the Book of Proverbs that there are many side roads to the Book of Proverbs and many great things that Proverbs provides for us, but I think it is pretty clear that the Book of Proverbs is about us getting knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. We have talked many, many times how that is a process in your life that an unsaved man can have knowledge and an unsaved man can have wisdom, but only a saved man can have understanding because understanding is how God fits into any equation in life or history or whatever.

You will remember that we saw way back in the day when we started it in Proverbs 2. I showed you how the breakdown of Proverbs really works for you. Proverbs 1 through 7 really focuses on him speaking to his son and its personal instructions to you and me from God of how to get these three things. Then in Proverbs 8 through 30, we find the Proverbs themselves, an in-depth look at the issues of life that we have been laboriously coming through and laying out for you. Then you get to the final chapter, Proverbs 31, and we see the final product, the virtuous woman. We will have a great time when we get to that.

I showed you in Proverbs 2 the simple six-step process for us to get those three invaluable areas in our life. I am just going to read Proverbs 2 again. You do not have to turn back to it; you can just follow along in your mind.

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

Now the six things that he talks about here, we went through these, but just to show you, if you want to ever get the three main ingredients of life—knowledge, wisdom, and understanding—that the Book of Proverbs provides for you, here are the things you have to do:

1. He talks about, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words." That is receiving the very Word of God and recognizing that it is God's Word and it is set apart from everything else in your life.
2. Then he says, "if thou wilt hide my commandments with thee." That is the personal time that you have in the Bible. That is Psalms 119:11.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

3. Then he says, "if thou wilt incline thine ear unto wisdom." That is the work that is involved. The Bible talks about "study to shew thyself approved." You have to work hard at learning what the Bible says that we are to do.
4. The next thing he says is, "and apply thine heart to understanding." That is the application of the Word of God. It does not do you any good if you have the Bible and read the Bible if you do not apply what the Bible says. So we see the application of the Word of God.
5. Then he says, "if thou cryest after her and lift up thy voice." That is a picture of your prayer life. Of course, the great example in the Bible, probably the greatest example of somebody praying for God to give them wisdom and understanding, would be Solomon's prayer when he prays before the Lord not to give him riches, not to give him honor, and not to make him a great king, but to give him the wisdom to be the right kind of king for God's people. That is one of the greatest prayers in the Bible that is a model for you and for me to learn the Word of God. There is a whole series of things in there that you can look at.
6. The sixth thing was to "seek and to search out like silver and for hid treasures." There is your attitude toward finding the treasures in the Word of God.

I watched the people who win these great lotteries. It was \$87,250,000, and we would all like to win \$300,000,000, but it would probably ruin all of us if we ever did. But the bottom line is, I want to tell you something: I have gotten more excited about God showing me something out of the Word of God than winning a winning lottery ticket because of the truth of the Word of God. It all goes back to your attitude toward these things. As I have already said, the key to getting all there is in your life will come down to one thing: your attitude toward the Word of God, how you look at it. The Book of Proverbs is built around one idea, which is getting understanding, that in everything you look at in life, you have the ability to see God's hand in it.

I. The Nature of Understanding: Seeing and Visualizing

Today, going back to Proverbs 21, we are going to look at just three verses today: verses 5, 6, and 7. We are going to see how you get to the place in your life of getting God's understanding and knowledge, getting what God has. You will remember, if I read over here in Proverbs 2, it says, "when you do all these things, then shall they understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." It did not say the knowledge about God. It said that when you do these six things, you get the same knowledge that God has. You look at things in life just like He sees them. That is the key to this whole concept and getting what He has.

I know that we are all human and we all have our issues. We all are frail and we all fail and we all have problems. I understand that. But as I said last week, you need to let God, through your spiritual growth, develop you to your full potential that He has for you. I would say, based on my experience in the Bible and dealing with people and the people I have known, that any human being, anybody in this room, could get to the place in your life where when it comes to you in the Bible, you know where you are at, know what you are dealing with, 80, 85, maybe 90 percent of the time. You know exactly what you have, how it lays out, doctrinally, inspirationally, and

historically. You can get that much of the Bible down and get that much of the Bible going for you in your world and in your life.

I think that is a realistic thing. I think you ought to get to the place in your life where you can look at any passage in the Bible, almost any passage. You can look at any passage in the Bible, anything that you are up against, anything that somebody asks you, anything that you are reading. About 80 to 85 to 90 percent of the time, you can figure out where you are at, doctrinally, historically, and inspirationally. I really believe that. I believe that should be a goal for you. Remembering that we have a calling from God and a purpose from God, we need to become that living sacrifice like we talked about last week, counting the cost and paying the tab. Paying the tab is doing the Word of God and getting it into your life.

Let me start by helping you understand the word "understanding" a little bit better. The key word to the term "understanding" will be the word "see," like "I see." If you do not understand something in the Bible and you come over to me and I lay it out for you and systematically show it, instinctively, you say, when I am done, you say, "Oh, I see it now." In other words, the key word to understand the word "understanding" is the word "see." That is understanding, your ability to understand in your mind, your ability now to visualize the concept and see it. Where before you did not understand it, you could not see it. Now somebody explains it to you, now suddenly, "Okay, now I see it." The key to understanding is to be able to visualize the concept and then see it.

In Noah's time, this is a good example, it had never rained. Yet Noah for 120 years was preaching that there was a coming rainstorm that was going to drown out the world. I guarantee you that one of the biggest problems he had was convincing people what rain was when they never saw what rain was. They did not understand what rain was until they saw it, and then it was too late. I mean, they got it when they figured it out, but six inches a minute, 30 feet an hour, 725 feet a day—that is a lot of water. This is exactly what the word "understanding" means. It means that you look at a concept in the Bible or anything in life and you see it. You can take the concept and it is not abstract to you. You can visualize it. You can see it.

II. Component-Based Bible Study

This is exactly how I taught you the Word of God, or I am teaching you the Word of God, for you folks in the Bible Institute. I have broken the Bible down into 17 vital compartments. It is not theological; it is not some... I just took the Bible, which you have been told all your life is a very complex book. What I am doing is showing you how it is not, how the Bible is the easiest book in the world to understand if you want it. The key to it is being able to visualize it.

Now, 31,171 verses in the King James Bible, 1,189 chapters, 66 books—that is a lot of visualization. That is a lot of vision to be able to see that. But when you break it down into 17 components, what we are doing in Bible Institute is once a month, we are taking one or two of those components, and I am completely breaking them down, showing it to them, giving it to them, and explaining every aspect of it. They come away being able to see what is going on in

those sections. Then in time, once we get through the 17 sections, we can bolt all those sections back together, voila, to have the whole Bible, a visual representation in your mind.

The rest of your life, if you do your work, the rest of your life, and here is the key to the Bible: The key to the Bible is visually seeing it. The key to the Bible is understanding it. The key to the Bible is when somebody talks about the tribulation period, you see it in your mind. You know what it is. Somebody talks about the millennium, you see it. Somebody talks about the first coming of Christ, you see it. Somebody talks about the second coming of Christ, you see it. You automatically see the difference between that one and the second coming because you visualize it.

But you cannot just open up the Bible and start taking visual pictures of it. You have to break it down. You have to break it down into sections and then visualize, understand each section. When you see each section and understand it completely, in time, you will put your whole Bible together and then you will have understanding. No matter what anybody asks you, what anybody says to you, what anybody does with the Word of God, you are automatically sitting in any place at all, whether you are watching the news, whether you are listening to somebody teach the Bible, or you are just talking to somebody, you are in a constant state of visually understanding what they are saying because you see it.

Once we do that with the Bible, then we train you to do that with dealing with people. We will get to that part in just a little bit. But I want you to understand the concept of understanding.

I came up with an idea based on something that happened in World War II. I am a crazy guy. I will see something in the world and I will make the spiritual application, and suddenly I have it. I actually know how to put it into a Bible context. I remember, I do not even remember what I was watching, but it was talking about shipbuilding. Early in World War II, the Germans had the U-boats, underwater submarines, and they had perfected U-boats where America was still playing catch-up at the convoy.

It was an incredible thing. Shipbuilding back then was a real art, and it took an average of two years to build a ship. Our problem was, as you can well figure, when you lose that many ships, you cannot replace them as fast as you lose them. It was about 1943, maybe late 1942, when a guy came up with the idea of componently building ships. What they did was they gave factories all across the country different contracts to build different parts of the ship. They would lay the keel wherever they were going to lay the keel on the East Coast or the West Coast, and then they would bring in all these components that were completely done. Everything was done in them. All they had to do was set them on the deck, put another piece to it, weld it together, hook up the ship. By the end of World War II, where at the beginning of World War II it was taking two years, two and a half years to build a ship, by the end of World War II they were turning out a ship every 30 days. That was the miracle of the concept of building it componently.

When I saw that years ago, I thought to myself, if that will work in building a ship, that will work in my Bible. So what I began to do was realize that I could either take two and a half years to build a ship or I could do it in 30 days. Now you will not learn your Bible in 30 days, but you know what I am talking about. That is exactly what I did. That is exactly what I am doing with

you. I am building it componently. I am going to take these Bible sections and I am going to put them section by section by section by section, and then you are going to weld them all together, and you are going to have your Bible.

That is what we did in the people ministry. I began to give you principles, and we will talk about it here in a little bit, that you can understand how to work with people and deal with people. That is exactly what we want to do. I want to talk to you today about getting to the place in your life where you have that understanding, putting it together componently. I want you to see the end result.

III. Diligence and Discipline for Plenteousness

Now we are going to begin here reading in Proverbs 21:5.

The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.

That is a great verse and principle that tells us in no uncertain terms that the real key to getting the Bible down will be our diligence to learn it. I have said it many, many times, and it is true, and I want you to understand what I am saying here: When it comes to the Bible, there is no fast track to the Bible. There is no fast track to learning the Bible, but there is an inside lane. I want to show you that inside lane this morning.

I want to show you how you can get to the place in your life, especially you young people. Us older guys and gals, I mean, you can still do it, but we get stuck in our ways and we do not want to change. If our day does not go exactly the way we think it should go, the next month is black and gloom. I know that. But you young kids, you young couples, you have it on fire. You have it. Your mind is quicker, smarter, sharper, and there is no reason why you cannot get to the place in your life where God is giving you the plenteousness that you cannot figure out your Bible. When I say older, I am saying in your sixties and your seventies. If you are fifty or forty, you guys up here for your birthday, you are still good. You are still good. You are still good. You may not move quite as fast as you did a couple years ago, but you are still good.

That is a great verse. In Bible Institute, as I broke down those 17 Bible categories, what I do then is they have one month to really get it down. I figure that we will get more done that way than if we met every week. If you want to really get your Bible down, we are starting with the whole Bible, then we are going to move into every aspect of it. I kind of liken it to this: Right now I am just laying the foundation and the walls of the Bible. We will use 17 concepts to give you an overall appreciation that you understand it. Once we get done with that, then we are going to start putting the interior in it. We are going to start putting the sink and the refrigerator and all the stuff as we get in a Bible way, getting all that inside stuff that you need. But I have you go from month to month, and when you get those one or two sections, the rest of that month you will get it down. You learn it. You really understand it. You come next week, your goal ought to be that you could, if I called on you to teach it from what I taught last week, you could get up and do it.

That was my goal for four or five years back in Canton when I was in Mel Sabaka's youth group and went to his Bible studies. I do not think I asked a question in all the years that I was there, maybe one or two, but I do not think I did. That was not my goal. My goal was simply this: I wanted to get to the point in my life that if there were two or three or four questions answered that night, I would take that next week, get those things down, run them through my Bible, get them in my Bible. My goal was, by the time next week if somebody else asked those questions, I could answer them. That was the way I worked it. This is what we are doing with the Bible on a larger scale for you. You can learn your Bible, and there is no reason why everybody in this room could not get to the place where you get your full potential, that when it comes to that Bible, you can visualize everything in it and have understanding to know where you are at with it. It is just the way it works. Now, if you guys in Institute do not do that, you are not going to learn it.

There are two words that I want to focus on today. One of them is the word "diligence," and the other one is the word "discipline," because it is going to take both in your life. The word "discipline" in the Bible means a steady pace in the application of what you do. It means to give attention to it. It means to be industrious. What does that mean? Industry.

When I grew up, I lived in Canton, Ohio. Back in the day, Canton, Ohio was the steel mill capital of the world. You had Republic Steel all over the place. You had Timken roller bearings all over the place. It was just a steel capital. We lived not a half a mile from the Timken Roller Bearing Company, and right at the end of that was one of the Republic Steel Companies. My dad worked for Republic Steel. I remember going to sleep at night and I could hear the sounds of that factory down there. We could drive by and you would see these red hot big iron steel rails coming down there, and they would be turning them in there and working on them and doing whatever they did with them. Every once in a while you could hear a crane drop a load of them, and even though I was a half a mile away, you could hear it clang and hit the ground. I thought to myself, that is industry.

When the Bible talks about diligence, that you are to be industrious, those factories ran three shifts. It was like the Ford Company. It is an industry. Something always going on. They are always working, unless they are calling in Bible questions. They are always going after it. All night long I would hear those steel billets hit the ground. All night long you would hear the horns blowing down there, the trucks going in and out. They were an industry. To be industrious with the Bible means that you work all three shifts. You stay with the book. You want it more than anything else in life.

It talks about the word "diligence" meaning not to be careless. It means to give attention to detail. Last week we saw a phrase where it said the plowing of the wicked was sin, and that is a true statement. We talked about it. But the plowing of the wicked is someone who has no care, no diligence. They just plow through life. Most of God's people, saved people, when it comes to learning their Bible, they have no plan. They just plow through it. They just jump in some place and they try to learn it. They try to get into it, and they never do.

When it comes to reading and learning your Bible, I have told you this many, many times: We have two basic problems. Now my church here, our church, I solve this problem for you. But we all have two basic problems.

7. Problem number one is when we are reading the Bible, we do not know what to look for. There have been a lot of good people who have the best intentions that want to start reading their Bible, but they get discouraged and they quit reading it after a while because, I will be honest with you, a lot of it is just, if you do not know what you are looking for, it is just endless dribble about this guy or this person or this situation, and there is no meaning to it.
8. The second problem we all have is when we do find something, we do not know what to do with it. I solve those two problems for you.

Understanding will solve those two problems for you. It gives you the ability that wherever you are at in the Bible, because you have put it together componently, because you have visualized the Bible to the point that you now understand it, you can see everything in there. When you get something, you know exactly what you are looking for in Genesis, you know exactly what you are looking for in Matthew, you know exactly what you are looking for in Acts. When you find something, you know how to put it in the context because you can visualize it. You have understanding. That is the diligence of all things in life. That is what you need to do.

The Bible is the only book on planet earth that the key to it is not how well you read or how well you comprehend or even how intelligent you are, but rather what you think about it before you ever open it. It goes back to your attitude.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

If you do not believe it, it will not work in you. It is just that simple. It is not complicated. It is not complicated.

Now the plenteousness here in this verse 5 will be all that you will get from the Bible when you are diligent about it. That book will give you an incredible depth into all things in life: the patterns of life, the structure of life, the world, and everything about it. It will give you an in-depth understanding in spiritual things, physical things, and emotional things. An incredible ability of depth to reason, to discern, and to understand all the things around you.

A good example of this is found in Proverbs 28:5. We are not there yet, but it simply says:

Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.

That is a great statement. If you are seeking the Lord diligently through the Word of God, you are going to come to the place in your life where you understand all things. You are going to get there. That is when, as I talked about last week and alluded to it this week, that is when you reach your full potential. You will never reach your full potential with God until you first understand everything that God is doing as well as we can.

You see it in everything in world history, in American history. Our ability to see it, to understand it from what God's purpose is, not from what man's purpose is or Gentile nations' purpose is. Being able to speak with authority on the subject because the final authority of the Word of God will define it all for you. That is what I cannot stand about God's people. They never speak with any kind of authority. They do not know anything about anything with the Bible. It is always, you go to one of these Bible studies where you have seven or eight people sitting around with a Bible, and somebody will read a passage and somebody will say, "Well, what do you think?" And then somebody else will say, "Well, what do you think?" And they will go around the room and get everybody's opinion. Hey, who cares what you think? Do not take that wrong, but who cares what your opinion is? I want to go to a place where I do not get man's opinion. I have been getting that all my life. I want to go to a place where a man can open that book and give me what God says. Not what man wants me to know, but that is the world we live in today because they do not know what they are doing with it. They really do not. They cannot speak with authority. They cannot speak with authority in anything.

It is an issue that is prevalent today in Christianity: speaking with authority in any subject because the final authority of the Word of God will define everything for you. You take, for instance, how the world looks at the Gentile nations of history. When you go to college someplace or even in high school and they teach you world history, they will talk about the Egyptians, the early, middle, late dynasties. They will talk about Assyria. They will talk about Babylon. They will talk about Persia. They will talk about the Romans and the Greeks and all of that. They will get into somewhat modern history, and you will study about England and the Spanish Armada and Spain and that. You will learn about the 100 Years' War, the 30 Years' War, the War of the Roses. You will learn about the Russian Revolution in 1917. Then you will learn about the United States of America, how the Pilgrims came over in the Plymouth and they got there and they colonized everything and all the things that go on. They will go on and on and on and on like that really meant something. When God talks about history, God talks about one thing: the nation of Israel.

While all this was going on in your Bible, while Egypt was conquering the world and while Assyria was conquering the world and Babylon and the Greeks and the Romans and all that stuff, God never recorded one thing about it in a positive sense. All you find out is what God is doing with the nation of Israel. That is the difference. That is the difference from seeing history from man's standpoint with no understanding. A lot of facts and a lot of knowledge and a lot of wisdom, but no understanding. If you want to understand history, you have to understand history from God's standpoint. You have to look at those nations and then you have to visualize what God is doing down through history.

In the Old Testament, you have 18 types of the Antichrist laid out in your Bible, and those 18 types will be a composite of the man of sin when he comes. We have talked about it; I have given them to you many, many times. In the same way, you have 21 types of Christ. Of course, the Antichrist, you have 18 types because his number is 666, or 6 plus 6 plus 6 is 18. God's number in the Bible is 7, so you have 21 types: 7, 7, 7 is 21, and that is just how it works. But in modern history, from the crucifixion up to today, in our own world that we live in, we have 5 types of the

Antichrist that are not recorded in the Bible. God just did not give you the 18 types to show you the composite man of sin. He gave you 5 types after the Bible was done so you could carry on and get an understanding. This is why Paul says of the times and the seasons, "brethren, I have no need to write them to you." He says you should not be ignorant of these times, but people are. Why? Because they do not have any understanding. They cannot look outside the Bible and see their own history and understand and visualize what God is doing.

So in the Old Testament, we had 18 types of the Antichrist. When you get from the crucifixion on up to the time we live in now, you have 5 types. They are incredible types.

9. The first one is Caesar.
10. The second one would be Constantine in 300. What a game player he was.
11. The third one would be Charlemagne. Most of God's people do not even know what Charlemagne brought to the table in history. They think it is a misspelling of the word "champagne."
12. You have Napoleon. They just think that that is three flavors of ice cream. No, that is Neapolitan.
13. Of course, the greatest type of the Antichrist in the 20th century was Adolf Hitler.

But you see, to the Gentile world, it is just history. To the child of God with understanding, it is understanding what God is doing. I told you before that there is a book that I read years ago. I read it probably once every two years or something. It is an incredible book. They made a movie out of it. The movie is as good as the book, I think. The name of the book is called *The Bunker*. It is also the name of the movie. It was written by a guy by the name of Donovan, I think. What this guy did is he correlated the last 30 days of Adolf Hitler in the underground bunker in Berlin right up through his suicide and everything that took place. It showed the complete unraveling of the Third Reich. It was an incredible thing.

I am reading it and I am just soaking it all up because I know what Adolf Hitler represents in history. When the Nazi parties put their organization together, they did not have a lot of people, so they kind of fudged on the numbers when they pushed out their cards. Adolf Hitler's party number was 555. The next one is going to be 666. He is the last one. Then the one after that, praise the Lord, is going to be 777. See how it works?

I am reading along there one night about, I do not know, 11:30, and I read something that just made my hair stand up on the back of my head. I mean, it just kind of... I am reading down there, it is getting close to the end. It is getting close to the end. Now, if Hitler is a perfect type of Antichrist, then you want to have understanding. He wiped out the Jews. He has a bad right arm. I mean, he is a perfect picture of it. He is the right religion. He had 12 men around him that were apostles just like Christ did. It is an incredible deal.

They are all coming up and saying goodbye. They know the end is near. Some of them are going to try to break out and make it to the West before the Russians get there because the Russians took Berlin, and he did not want to be taken by the Russians. Adolf Hitler, of course, is going to commit suicide, him and his wife, Eva Braun. The Goebbels committed suicide. She poisoned all

of her little kids. She had five or six of them, gave them all chocolate laced with cyanide, and killed them all. She did not want to leave the Führer's side. Just a real mess.

So they are all coming by and saying goodbye. Heinz Linge was Hitler's valet. It is right there in the book. When I read it that night, the hair stood up on the back of my neck. They are all saying goodbye. Heinz Linge, his valet, comes up and he shakes his hand, and Hitler thanks him for his faithful service. He looks up and he says, "Mein Führer, what am I to do now?" Adolf Hitler said to him, "Wait for the man to come after me and follow him." Heinz Linge said, "I never knew what he meant by that." I do. Donovan, who wrote the book, he never understood what that meant. I do. Why? I have understanding. I look at it and I visualize who he is, how he fits into the 20th century. That is what understanding does for you. It gives you the ability to see history or whatever and see it not as the Gentiles portrayed in your history books, but what God is doing and see God's hand in it. But you have to be diligent to get there. That is depth, you see. That is depth. But it takes diligence. That is plenteousness. That is having plenty out of the Bible, but it takes diligence and it takes discipline.

You see it in a matter of religion. I mean, come on, who is right? I mean, really, who is right? The thousand churches out there, 20 or 30 major denominations out there, they are all wrong but one. That is an arrogant thing for anybody to say. How do you ever figure it out? I mean, why is what we believe right as a New Testament church and everybody else is wrong? I mean, why is that?

I showed the guys in Institute last week when we were getting into that 400 silent years. I showed them that when history records everything from that time that God finished with Israel to the first coming of Christ, that is where you have Buddha come in, Confucius come in, all of the Brahmanism comes in, all of the Far East religions come in in that 400 years. Why? Secular history just tells you, "Well, that is where it was expanding and they are now..." No, the devil was taking, once Israel got out of the way, he is now propagating the world with false Eastern religion that all counterfeited what Solomon had. You have to have understanding to see that.

Then I will throw another one out to them. I said, "Have you ever wondered why Muhammadism, Islam, did not start until 570, 570 years after Christ? Why did it not start back there?" I mean, I told them why. There is a reason for everything in history that God is doing, and there is a reason why He allowed those to come in then, but did not allow the Muslim faith to come in until 570 AD. He had something He needed them to do. Secular history never gets it. Your history books will never get it, but you will get it when you have understanding because understanding is visualizing what God is doing and why God is doing it. That is the key. That is the key.

I have people all the time, they come to me and they say, "Well, I have an uncle that is a JW. I have an uncle that is a Mormon. I have an uncle that is a Seventh-day Adventist. I have an aunt that is in Unity. I have somebody in the Church of Christ. I have somebody in the charismatic movement. How do you deal with somebody like that?" Well, the first thing you do is I have understanding. You realize that none of those seven American cults, they did not start in Europe. They started in America. There is a reason why they started in America, and the reason why they

all started in the 1800s. But when you go to a class on religion, they will not give you that. Why? They have a lot of facts. They have a lot of knowledge. They have a lot of wisdom. They do not have any understanding. I know why those seven started from 1800 to 1900. I understand why. I can visualize it in my mind. I know what God was doing in America. I also know what the devil was doing in America. I can see it.

People say, "Well, you always think you are right and everybody else is wrong." Well, it is a nasty job, but somebody has got to do it. At the end of the day, no, I do not think I am right and everybody else is wrong. I think the book is right. It has nothing to do with me. You give me too much credit. I have nothing to do with it. I just believe a book God gave me. I cannot help it that He has given me plenty from it. I know it is not my fault. I wish I would have stayed stupid. Then we could have been good friends. People say, "Well, he thinks he knows more about the Bible than anybody." That is not true. There are a lot of people out there who know the Bible a lot better than I do. A guy said one time, "Well, you just think you know better the Bible than anybody." No, no, no. I just know it better than you.

Getting the same knowledge. The answer is simple. When you have understanding and find the knowledge of God, the exact same knowledge that God has, then you have understanding through diligence and discipline to speak with authority. People are not going to like that. People, you can have a lot of different authorities. You get a husband and wife in marriage. You can have the wife wants to be an authority and the husband wants to be an authority. You can have a lot of authorities, but I want to tell you something: You can only have one final authority. For me, that is the Word of God. But when you have understanding through diligence, you speak with authority, and people do not like that today. We have this lukewarmness in the church age; we have this idea that anybody that is dogmatic and any absolute standard of truth and final authority is wrong. If you do not like that or believe that, just come on Thursday night and let us open up the book. It will be so clear, so fast, you will not know what hit you.

Now get this. This is worth coming for today. In fact, you can all leave and I will give you this if you want. Turn over to Matthew 7:28-29. The scribes' and the Pharisees' problem with the Lord Jesus was simple. They hated Christ, we know that, but they hated Him for one reason. When you get a King James Bible today, people are going to hate you. We had a kid show up for Bible study that had not been around for a long time, and he told his dad he was coming to Bible study, and his dad said, "Well, have fun, but don't drink the Kool-Aid." The kid would have been a lot smarter if he had gotten not only Kool-Aid for himself, but the rest of his family too. Here is the problem: When you have a Bible that is the final authority, it is going to cause you all kinds of problems.

Now look at Matthew 7:28-29.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

See that? They hated Him because He was the final authority. They hated Him because He had doctrine. They hated Him because they were speaking empty words about everything and had no authority whatsoever. He shows up as the final authority, and they hated Him and had to get rid of Him. If you get that book down in your life and you get understanding and you realize this is the final authority in life, you will have plenty. God will give you plenty, plenty, plenty, and you will have a plenteous life. That will offset everybody trying to kill you because they will hate you. They will hate you. He was the final authority. He had right doctrine. That was always the issue. It will always be the issue.

I want you to notice this: "The people were astonished at his doctrine." The common ordinary man loved it. It was the professional Christians, the Bible scholars, the scribes that had a problem with it. Today the issue is the same. You lose the book, you lose doctrine, and when you lose doctrine, you have no authority. So the scribes and the religious leaders today come into the pulpit, and they become your final authority. You will find that in Matthew 21:23, Matthew 24:27, Mark 11:28-29, Luke 20:2, Luke 20:8. Over and over again, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees are asking Jesus, "By what authority do you do these things? What was your authority?" So they did not have one.

Now look at the last part of this verse: "But of every one that is hasty only to want." This is true in life. My grandma used to say, my mama used to say, "Haste makes waste." That is a true statement. Let me say this: Do not get in a hurry when it comes to learning your Bible. I said there was no fast track. There was an inside lane. There is a right way to do it that will get it quicker than the wrong way, but it will take diligence. It will take discipline. If you get in a hurry when it comes to the Bible, you will miss too many things. You will not take the time on the right things.

I remember when I was back in the day, I wanted to really learn the Bible and know the Bible, and I was listening to Dr. Ruckman, and Dr. Ruckman had been reading the Bible through once every 33 days, and Mel Sabaka, he picked up on that. He started reading through the Bible every 30-some days. So I thought that was key to the Bible. If you want to learn the Bible, I mean, I tried everything. I wanted to learn it. God just put up with my stupidity. I heard that if you played a tape at night when you went to bed while you are asleep, you would wake up in the morning and it would be imprinted in your mind and you would have it memorized. So I started going to sleep with a guy reading the Bible. All it did was wake me up four or five times a night. I did not get anything out of it.

So I thought the next thing is, this guy talked about light sleep versus deep sleep. He says if you can, you can have more time to do things in life. To me, that was the Bible. If you follow the light sleep and the deep sleep, figure out and get your deep sleep, then you do not have to have the light sleep, and you can do more for what you want to do. To me, that was the Bible. Now, I did that, and I could not figure it out there with the next chapter. That sucker was taking a nap in the afternoon. It did not work either.

So I started, well, 33, you have to read 50 chapters a day, 50 chapters a day to get through the Bible in a month, 50 chapters a day. I started it because I wanted to learn the Bible. I thought,

well, that will do it. If the other stuff did not work, this will really work. I did it for two years. At the end of one year, I was in the worst spiritual shape you ever saw in your life. I got so hung up on getting the 50 chapters a day to meet my goal, to satisfy me, that I was missing everything in there that He wanted me to see. But it taught me a great lesson that was invaluable. It taught me it was not how many times I went through the Bible, but rather how many times the Bible went through me.

So I slowed up. I slowed up. I realized that there is no fast track to the Bible, but you have to... I had a rule when I was studying the Bible. My rule was, if I saw something right there, stop what I am doing, go back and run the reference, and take whatever time it takes to put all the references together. I cannot tell you how that 30, 40 years later, that has saved my heart so many times on the Thursday night Bible study, that I took the time to do it. If you say to yourself, "I will go back and do it later," you will never do it. You will never do it. You cannot get hasty when it comes to the Bible. I needed to develop a plan, a system, a way to break that book down to make it easy to stay diligent with, and it took discipline.

We have done that for you here based on the things that I have learned and the mistakes that I have made. You have a good structure: Discipleship One and Discipleship Two. We have Bible Institute, we have the people ministry, you have one-on-one. You can have everything you need to get what you need. But back in the day, I did not have any of that. I was kind of left on my own to figure it out. I will be honest, I used a lot of things around me that I already knew that had worked. I just kind of put them in a Bible format. I had just graduated from high school, probably two, three, or four years earlier before I got right with the Lord. I had just gotten out of school, still fresh in my mind. As I looked at the Bible and what I was being taught, all the things that everybody was throwing at me, I figured that the Bible was just like going to class in high school. In high school, we had classes throughout the day, we had subjects, and we had to be diligent with those subjects. Each subject was different. But at the end of the day, it all came together to give me a proper education. I could see that. I mean, I was not the smartest guy in the world, but I was the fastest one in the slow class. I saw that.

Now, I had already known that seven in the Bible was the number of perfection. So whatever I had to do had to be by sevens. That was just my deal. So I sat down and looked at the Bible. This is 30, 40 years ago. I came up with seven classes. I broke the Bible down into seven classes. I was diligent with those seven classes.

- > English Class
- > Government/Civics Class
- > Biology Class
- > History Class
- > Music Class
- > Math Class

➤ Science Class

Now there are two classes I would not allow in my school, and you would not let them in yours. One of them was recess. The second was no drama class.

I look at my life at some 40, 50 years in the Bible. Here is what I have learned: The longer I am in the Bible, the less I know about the Bible. The longer I am in the Bible, the more I grow, and God gets me to some place where I am doing what God wants me to do. I realize that there are no experts in the Bible. There are no experts when it comes to the Word of God. There are just students on different levels. I may be in my post-grad work right now, but I am still a student. There are no experts when it comes to knowing the Bible. There are only students on different levels of learning. Some of you are on the beginning level, some of you are in the mid-level, some of you are upper level, some of you are getting up there really good. It is just that simple.

I have a test that I never have, but I would give somebody that was given to me to find out if you really know the Bible. There are a lot of wannabes out there. When I came up out of my training, it was a standard thinking that if a man could not pass this test, he was not ready to pastor or do anything with people on any kind of level of building a church. The test consisted of just 10 questions. I still have them in front of my Bible. They are so designed that these 10 will reveal for anybody if some guy has really been diligent with the Word of God. We have a lot of people who know a lot of things about the Bible, but they do not know the Bible. The test was an oral test. You would be asked a question, and you would have to give an answer, and a guy would time you on the answer. He would not time you to see how fast you gave it. He would time you because you had to fill up 10, 15, 20 minutes of an answer without your Bible from your memory and laying it out. Because they knew that if it was in here and in here, and you could spell it out, you had it. They wanted to see if we could visualize that we really understood what we are talking about. The longer somebody talked, the more they got it; he understands it. Believe me, when you are called to do that, if you pass the test, you know your Bible. The only way to pass that was to have been diligent and disciplined in the book, just studying it. It proved one thing about every guy that went through it: They had disciplined themselves and were diligent, and now they have the plenteousness of what the Bible had to offer. I mean, let me tell you something. If you fill up 20 minutes on something that is one of these questions, brother, you better know something because you have to start pulling. It shows the depth that you have to be able to draw from because that is what it is going to take in your Christian life.

Now, those were the old school days. You do not get that today. Those were the old school days, which I am happy to be part of. Nothing today is like it was. When you go to basic training today and you go into the military, I cannot even imagine it. They are not allowed to cuss at you. No, I am not an advocate of cussing too much. But I will tell you what. When I was in basic training, brother, they not only cussed at you, they hit you, they kicked you, they beat you. You cannot do any of that today. The guy can scream real loud, but he cannot use one curse word. Please, and I am not an advocate of cussing, but screaming without cussing has been very powerful. Do not take that wrong. In the military, I mean, you get some drill sergeant. Have you ever seen, most of you probably saw the movie, Full Metal Jacket? The first half of that, where they were in basic training, that is the Marine Corps. I mean to tell you, I was running down the road one time, and

we were down there, and we had rifles at port arms over our head. We were running like four miles, and my arm was so tired I could hardly stand it. I started to lower my rifle, and I saw the drill sergeant up there, and I saw the other guy over here, and I thought I could get away with it. What I did not see was the other drill sergeant coming up behind me, and I laid that rifle down, and he had a rifle, and he butt-stroked me along the back of the head, knocked me down, dropped my rifle, knocked my helmet off. I mean, knocked me almost completely out. But I never dropped my rifle again.

Now, if he would have just said, "Now look, keep your rifle over your head." They made us hold buckets out with sand in it. Buckets out with sand for 20, 30 minutes at a time. Oh, they were so heavy. You could feel your arms dropping. We hated the guy who did it. The guy who did it, we hated him. His name was Webb, Sergeant Webb. He had been in Vietnam two, three times. We hated him. He was sadistic, and he made us hold those buckets of sand out there and standing out there. Boy, you dropped down those things. If you had to hold them for 20 minutes, by the time we were done, it was 30 minutes, and they were like 10 pounds each. 10 pounds may not seem like much, but I will tell you what. We all hated him. The day we graduated, he pulled us all in a circle. He says, "I know you guys hate me. I know you guys hate everything I have done for you, and you hate every time you are going to see a gallon bucket, you are going to think of all the agony that puts you through." But he said, "There is a reason to it." He turned around, unbuttoned his shirt, took his shirt off, turned around. He had scars all the way through here. He says, "One night in Vietnam on my second tour, we got overrun." He says, "The VC was coming over the wire. I was out of ammo." He says, "This guy came with a sword or whatever it was, and he went down to slice me in half, and I held my rifle up and blocked that sword with that rifle. But the downward thrust came down. Even though I was holding it, it came down to that thing, and he cut me across here and it cut me across here because I could not hold that rifle up. One of my buddies shot him to keep me from dying. But I got these scars." He says, "From that day on, when I became a drill sergeant there, I promise you one thing: not one of you guys here will ever die because you could not hold your rifle up. You held the buckets."

Now see, the Bible is just like that. A lot of times you do not understand why God does some of the things He does to you. But then when you get into the book and He explains, like He did at the end of my basic, the guy that we hated, now we all loved. Of all my days in basic, he is the one guy I remember. He cared enough about me to hurt me to maybe save my life. I am telling you. I am telling you. It is the difference between the old school, the way they trained you, and the way they train you today with the Bible. Now in the military, they give you your color test. "What is your favorite color?" Sensitivity training. They have women drill sergeants.

IV. Principles for Dealing with Life and People

Through the authority of doctrine, the principles and the Word of God, it will develop you. You will reach your full potential in being filled to the brim with biblical principles. You will look at each set of principles. That is the key that I was going to say to you. The Bible is in components, but principles are in components. Just like you have a recipe for dinner and it has different

components to make the dinner good, in dealing with problems, you have different principles that make up the recipe to solve the problems. You have to put them together.

There is a set of principles for:

- Somebody that is in false religion.
- Somebody that is in false salvation.
- Relationship issues.
- Training up your children.
- Reaching a lost child that went to the world and trying to get them back.
- Dating.
- Marriage.

But remember, you have to be able to understand how to use them. Talk about the balance of life. There is a set of principles. In dealing with people, you are doing one thing. People are going through a tough time in their life. How do you help them? I know. Here is why you help them. Here is what you are to them. When they are going through a tough time emotionally, physically, and spiritually in life, you are Romans 15:1. You are being strong for the ones that are weak.

But how do you take a weak person and make them strong? You take the principles in the packages that fit their problem, and you give them the principles. You hold them accountable to the principle. You show them. You get them to understand just like I am trying to get you to understand the whole concept of the Bible so you can visualize and see it. They have to learn to visualize the principles that will fix their problem. You know as well as I do, when somebody is going through a tough time emotionally, they always cannot see it right away. So you have to be patient. You have to work with them. You have to help them. You have to hold their hand. You have to get them through it. But through diligence and discipline, you have an endless supply of principles of plenteousness to speak intelligently and deal with all that you have to deal with on a biblical level with authority. But it all goes back to start with your attitude toward the Word of God.

V. The Dangers of Hasty Gain and False Authority

Now look at Proverbs 21:6.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

Now doctrinally, this is all the tribulation period. I will not have time to get into that, but it is all doctrinally in the tribulation dealing with the richest religion on the face of the planet in the tribulation period. But as we look at it from an inspirational concept, it says that if you ever get the hidden treasures of the Word of God, if you ever fill yourself up with plenteousness of the Bible principles and the Bible itself, you will have to do it the right way.

My computer popped up on the internet the other day; it had the 50 richest preachers in the country. I needed to start with one and work my way up. When I went through it, I said, "I have to see this. I want to find out who all these guys are." I had an idea of some of them. But every one of them, every one of them, every one of them, if they are in the pulpit today, every one of

them, every one of those 50 were lying about the Bible and the truth of the Bible to get what they wanted from people. Their whole ministry, everything they do, is based on lies. The book of the world system of valueless treasures. 98% of the messages today are based on a lie about the Bible they are having or a message that is just going to tell you what you want to hear. Is that what you need to hear? Every time you go to church, you want to waste the time going to church hearing about how good you are. You do not want to... You can get a mirror to do that and just say, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest on the wall?" And it will say, "Well, you are, Bob." You want to hear the truth about what you have to change in your life.

Now it says in that verse that they are "tossed to and fro." That means there is no satisfaction in their lives. A Christian in life is in total turmoil because all they have got in life is vanity. The Bible says people without discipline and diligence will be unstable. There is no rock foundation. They are like that story in Matthew 7:26, where you have two guys. One builds his house upon a rock, one builds it on the sand, and when the one who built it on the sand, when tough times came, it did not last. But the one who built it on the rock withstood everything that was coming. I want to build your life on the rock, the foundation.

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Building a phony Christian life or ministry without knowing one thing about the book God gave you. Picking and choosing like Saul did last week. Building it on telling people what they want to hear instead of what they need to know. Not a ministry based on truth like 2 Corinthians 4. It is just denouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness or handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of truth. Putting out the truth whether you like it or you do not like it.

VI. The Robbery of God's Word

Now look at Proverbs 21:7.

The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

There is somebody stealing and robbing you of God's truth. It will destroy you in time. That is what happened to the leadership that God gave to Israel. That is what most pastors are doing today. Look at Jeremiah 23:20. These next two verses are worth coming for today too, by the way. I am glad you did not leave. This is a great unknown verse.

Now look at this. Somebody says, "Well, I do not know about the King James Bible." "Well, I do not know where he gets that at." "Well, I do not know where I get all that." I get it out of the Bible. You have to read it sometime. Now let me show you the greatest unknown verse that you have probably never seen that will tell you that the Bible you have in your hand today is the right Bible. Now watch this.

The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

He told you in the latter days He is going to give you a book that has the thoughts of God in it that is perfect. I do not have to tell you which one that is. He said God will not return until He gives us a book that is the book of His thought, that in the latter days—that will be the crucifixion to the rapture, the last three thousand years, three days of the seven—we can consider God's thoughts perfectly.

Now let me show you this one. Jeremiah 23:30. Just stay with it.

Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

There it is. That is 99% of the Baptist churches that you are going to walk into. It is 100% of the Neo-Evangelical crowd you are going to hang out with, and the Charismatic movement mess is right in there too. And anybody else that tells you that you do not have a final authority that you can go to in the latter days, you can consider the very thoughts of God perfectly.

Proverbs 21:7 says that "the robbery of the wicked shall destroy them because they refuse to do judgment." God gave us a book which contains the mind of God, His thoughts, and those about everything in life. Now you and I in the latter days can consider it perfectly. You can read it, you can study it, you are to be diligent with it, you are to discipline yourself with it. But the prophets of God have robbed us, and they have stolen the Word of God from us. Now Christian and God's people, spiritually speaking, have been destroyed. They have no power of God in their life at all.

Our verse says, "The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want." Learning the book based on your loving it, being diligent and being disciplined in it. That is the only way you are going to get the understanding of God. Again, understanding is your ability to look at anything in life, any problem a person has. Anytime I put you up with somebody to deal with an issue in their life, no matter what it may be. Anytime you start to disciple somebody. Anytime you have to develop the discernment to look at that situation and see it as God sees it and realize that I understand what I have because I can see it. I see it based on the principles involved in this particular circumstance and situation. We will hold up there.