

Proverbs 25:8-10

October 29, 2023

Last week, we looked at Proverbs 25:5-7. To provide continuity between last week and this week, we were primarily dealing with the doctrinal side of the number one event in the Bible—the single event that everything in the Bible points to. It is also the theme of the Bible and is referenced in the Old Testament over a thousand times, well over 1,200. That is the establishment of God's throne and righteousness. That was the theme last week.

Then we saw all the aspects of that. We saw the establishment of God's eternal government. We know it in the Bible as the kingdom of heaven, and it is called the Day of the Lord. It is called God's eternal day. It is illustrated all the way through the Bible. In fact, you do not go two chapters in Genesis before you see how this thing lays out. The Bible talks about God creating everything in six days and resting on the seventh. Of course, we know that to be true. If you go back and look at those six days of creation and the seventh day that He rests, you will see a picture of man's history on this earth and then the establishment of God's day.

That second coming of Christ, or Christ coming back into the millennium, is called the Day of the Lord. Remember, I told you last week there are two fundamental days in the Bible doctrinally. The Day of the Lord is the second coming of Christ. The Day of Jesus Christ, or the Day of Christ, is the rapture of the church. One, He comes to get His bride; the other, God comes to get His wife, the nation of Israel. So they are both very important, and the whole Bible unfolds itself around those two days, whether you are dealing with Christ in the church or God with the nation of Israel.

But in Genesis 1 and 2, you will find where God begins that reconstruction of the original creation. It says, “The evening and the morning were the first day.” Then it moves on a little bit, and then it says, “The evening and the morning were the second day.” Then it moves on a little bit farther, describes some things, and it says, “The evening and the morning were the third day,” “evening and the morning were the fourth day,” “evening and morning were the fifth day,” “evening and morning were the sixth day.” Then when you get to Genesis 2, you are going to find that suddenly we come to the seventh day. On the seventh day, the Bible says God rested from all of His work. That is a picture of man being on this earth for 6,000 years and the 7,000th year being God's eternal day, God's day of rest that ushers in the throne of righteousness.

So you will find “evening and the morning were the first day,” “second day,” “third day,” “fourth day,” “fifth day,” “sixth day.” When it comes to that seventh day, the Bible says that He sanctified that day. He set it apart and made it holy. You will not find on the seventh day, “the evening and the morning were the seventh day.” The reason for that is because that illustrates the eternal day of God that we talked about last week. It is an incredible study. You do not go one chapter in the Bible before you see, as we talked about last week, the pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ through God's eternal day, which is the theme of the Bible. We start in Genesis 1 right there, and then you just move right on through it over and over and over. He draws our attention to that day in the Bible.

We looked at that day as it is related to the nation of Israel. We saw how it impacted them. Also, we looked at it as it impacts the people who have rejected Christ and tried to establish their own self-righteousness in the place of God's righteousness. We talked about the final judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment, found in Revelation 20:11.

In the Bible, if you have learned this from Bible Institute for those of you that are in it, you will find that there are seven judgments laid out in the Bible for you. The Bible unfolds itself around these seven judgments. We have talked about them. We have laid them out already in Bible Institute this year when we started the internal stuff, the doctrinal stuff. The last judgment is going to be this judgment right here. When God comes back to establish His throne and righteousness, He judges the dead, and they stand before Him, and the books are opened.

You know, that judgment, even though men do not understand it and they certainly do not understand the gravity of it, everybody in some way, shape, or form believes that you are going to have to give an account of something in your life at some point. The idea is, in most cases, that when you die, you go up there to heaven, and there is a big set of scales. Saint Peter is at the gate, going to let you in or not let you in. There is this big set of scales, and all your bad works go in this one, and all your good works go in this one, and it balances it out. If your bad works outweigh your good ones, then you go to hell. If the good ones outweigh your bad ones, then you go to heaven. That is, in some form, always been the mindset. You are going to stand before God and give an account, but we look at the fact that what we did good versus what we did bad is going to be the determining factor. I want to say to you this morning, that is simply not true. When you get to that Great White Throne Judgment, if you get there, He is going to put you in this hand, and He is going to put Jesus Christ in His hand. He is going to weigh you out. That is how it works.

Then we looked from the book of Psalms to the book of Proverbs, the laughter of God, one of the most horrific, unbelievable, doctrinal teachings in the Bible, the laugh of condemnation. We covered all that last week in Proverbs 25:5-7.

I. Practical Lessons on Dealing with People

Now today, we are going to move on in the same chapter, Proverbs 25:8-10. Within these verses, we are going to kind of shift gears. We are going to find some great practical lessons here on life and dealing with people. It is some great material here.

We have, and I briefed them yesterday, yesterday we had our people ministry. I have a group of probably 80, 90 people who have committed to work with me in helping people. It ranges all the way from basic discipleship up to third-level major problems of people who have satanic strongholds in their life, addictions, whatever. We are here for bad marriages, going through some really tough times. This church is here for you. Obviously, I am one man. As the church grows and gets bigger, I have reproduced what I know, what I have learned in the lives of men and women who wanted to learn it. They work with me side by side. We call it simply the people ministry because the ministry is people.

I told them yesterday that this was going to be, I am bringing them through all the different patterns in the Bible of dealing with problems. I told them from time to time on Sunday morning, we will hit a place in the Bible that fits right into where we are at. So I am just going to take and add this to what you are already getting, what you got yesterday. I told them yesterday, this is going to be of great benefit to you because you are going to find some great principles in a practical way of dealing with people's issues and problems that you are going to get into.

When you start to work with people, you have entered into the one most complex world that exists because people all come at their problems from different angles. Fundamentally, the problems that cause and the effect are the same. An unsaved man will have the problems he has for simply one reason. A saved person will have the problems they have simply for one reason. But where it gets complex is when you start to get into the individual personality and dealing with the nature, that old sin nature versus the new nature, it can get quite challenging. It is a great thing. So you are going to learn today from that.

I want to read for you today Proverbs 25:8-10. I think it will be a benefit for you.

Proverbs 25:8-10

8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another:

10 Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

These three verses are clearly connected to a single thought. I want to look at the verses individually, but I want to tie them back to that individual single thought. The thought is dealing with things that you hear, dealing with things that people will tell you. That is going to be the central theme here as we come through this.

II. Do Not Be Hasty in Judgment

Now look at verse 8: "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame." This verse will be vital in understanding how to deal with people who are in situations that you and I have to deal with.

I go back to the people ministry for a moment. I told them when we started that I am going to train you to be an extension of my ministry. I want you to look at problems, handle problems, deal with problems the way that I would. I do mine based on the principles of the Word of God; I expect them to do it too. I tell them when we get into the people ministry that this will happen, that there are no secrets between me and you with the people that you are working with. Many times you are working with somebody, and they will tell you something, and they will say, "Well, don't tell Bob." Of course, we know that we will never fix anybody's problems by you and I allowing somebody to come in between us. I have said it many, many times, in probably a more graphic way, the first time you do that, you are out of a job. It is as simple as that. We work

together, and we realize the purpose, and this is why I want to say this, the purpose why we work together is never to hurt anybody. It is always to help somebody.

But you are going to find out dealing with human nature that sometimes people will say, “Oh, I want to get disciplined.” You know this to be true. “Oh, I want to get my marriage fixed. I want to do this. I want to do that. I want to get my life back to God.” If we had everybody that has come through this church would have stayed in this church, we would outgrow this whole building, and we would be meeting down at the Chief Stadium someplace when they were not playing their games. The reason why we are still here and growing at the rate that we are growing, which there is certainly nothing wrong with, is because you are going to find in dealing with human nature most people do not want to do what they need to do. Most people that you are going to deal with want you to treat their symptoms. They do not want you to solve their problems.

It is a lot like you go to the doctor, and you have strep throat, and he puts you on antibiotics. This is more true of men than it is women because women are much smarter than men and much more diligent. Right, ladies? Thank you. I know what I have done many, many times, but I have learned my lesson. You take the medicine until you start feeling better. Then when you start feeling better, you do not take the medicine anymore. Let me explain that. Let me go inside. You stop taking the medicine not because you just feel better. You stop taking the medicine because now that you feel better, here it comes, you think you know more than the doctor does. You think you know more than the pharmacist does, and you do not. You will get sick over and over and over again until you learn your lesson. If I was your doctor, I would make you stay sick the rest of your life and never give you any more medicine, but that is just me. That is what we do. That is human nature at its best.

You are going to find that when you start to work with people, many times, not exclusively, many times, once they start to feel better about their problem, you are going to find that they now know more about it than you do, or they think they do. Of course, this is going to be the problem. We want to talk today about all aspects of this. Some of the things I am going to say, I said what I said about the people ministry because some of it does not apply to you because we share information because we work together. So I want that to be very clear.

Now the first thing he is trying to get across to us is this: Do not jump into a situation and make a judgment call without having all the facts. That is what he is saying. Do not believe everything you hear. The old saying was, “Believe nothing you hear and only half of what you see.” You have to come to the place where you put into your life a foolproof, fail-safe system of checking things out for yourself.

I have been in this business a while, and I have dealt with a lot of people. Some things that I have learned in dealing with people and their compounding issues and what goes on in their life, I try to pass on to you. Our people ministry, as much of it is starting in the Bible, bringing you through real-life scenarios, patterns, principles, models in the Bible that show you in any given situation exactly what you ought to do. The Bible is not dealing with people's problems are not hard. It may be hard when they do not want to do what they need to do, but on your end, it is not if you just understand a simple basic rule. God in His Bible has put everything into a pattern

form. Everything in life goes by a pattern in the Bible. People get the idea you have to go inside, outside the Bible. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. What you want to do is you want to identify the pattern for the problem that the person has, and then when you deal with them, follow the pattern. Now, I give you this: everybody is a little different, so you might have to tweak the pattern, but the same pattern. That is what we have to learn.

I have learned some things dealing with people. Hey, I have made my share of mistakes. I do not want you to think that all my life I just had a perfect handle on dealing with people's problems. That is simply not true. It is a learning process that I went through much like you are going through. That is why it cuts you slack sometimes when maybe you do not handle it exactly right. I never looked at exactly how you did it, but when I see the motive is that you were trying to do the right thing, you just did not have all the pieces, I can understand that because I have sure screwed it up over the years many, many times. I have learned that you need to be careful when you hear things about someone else.

In dealing with people, one of the great principles we use is responding versus reacting. In marriage situations, if you want to cut down the fight between you and your wife, or you and your husband, you simply learn how to respond instead of react. When somebody wants to have no problem with people, you know, just simply respond instead of react. A good example of that is you are going down the freeway, and some clown pulls right out in front of you. Does not put on their turn signal, almost clips the front of your car. Your first inclination is one of reaction. Now you can do that several ways. If you are a very violent person, a couple of 9 millimeters over his hood will let him know that he cut in front of you. I would not suggest that. You have the old Christian hand gesture that you could give them. I would not suggest that. I would say instead of reacting to them, you respond to them. Get down the road three or four miles before you give them that special gesture. You know, let it sink in a little bit. No, no, I am just kidding. Just process it. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Let them know that, let yourself know that maybe they are preoccupied. Maybe they have issues in their life. Maybe they had something else on their mind. Maybe they were high on marijuana. Maybe they were, you know, maybe they were in a hurry to get somewhere. Somebody got hurt. It got your adrenaline pumped up. That is a good thing. Respond to it. Do not react to it.

It is the same way when, and I am going to tell you why, when people will tell you something about somebody else, when people will come to you and bend your ear about somebody else, and it is not positive, it is negative, you do not want to react by getting on the bandwagon with them. You want to do the biblical principles, and you want to respond to it. I am going to talk to you about that. I am going to talk to you about some things that I have learned from dealing with people. Many times you are going to find that, and you have to be careful. Many times there is a hidden agenda behind what somebody is telling you. We tend to believe that because they said it, but that is just, that is the gospel, you know. Many times behind what somebody says, there will be jealousy about that person. Many times there will be envy about them. Many times they themselves have an issue with that person that has never been resolved. So they want to paint that person in a bad light to you because to them that person is a bad person. Whether they are or not is not immaterial.

Sometimes people will accuse others of the very same thing they are doing to mask and cover up their own sin so they can get the spotlight off of them and put it on somebody else. Sometimes they will sandbag somebody because they want to elevate themselves, and that person they look at is a threat. We need to be very careful just buying what somebody tells you. You know, many times the person who is telling you something about somebody, they do not even have any direct knowledge about it. They got it three or fourth hand down the line someplace, and their whole, their ministry is they are the minister of information. They are just passing on. They themselves were not anywhere around when what they are telling you about this person, guy or gal.

I know for a fact, human nature, the flesh. When we tell our side of the story, we always make ourselves look better than it really is. That is just the law of self-preservation. I have dealt with marital situations all my life, you know, where the husband and wife have problems. You get them separate someplace after we have an initial meeting, and I, you know, and I deal with what I have to deal with, whatever it may be. If I have to come down on the husband, or I have to come down on the wife, or I have to come down on both of them. Many times it depends. People are different. How many times over the years, you know, they have told somebody else about that meeting, and somewhere in the process, I must have left for an hour. Because that is not how I remember it. But I know human nature. I know, I know when we are going to tell our side of the story, we are going to put ourselves in the best light that we can. That is just what we do. People will lie. People will misrepresent. They will tell half-truths to position themselves. In many cases, it is because they want to destroy somebody, or at least as the things I said before, they have some hidden agenda by which they want to follow.

III. The Solomon Principle

There is a great illustration of this in the Bible, and most of you have heard this before, but it is a thing where I think it is, it is since I know in my own personal life and dealing with people, it is the bedrock foundation pattern that I start with. I know it is in your life too, that those that work with me, how many times we brought everything back to this, and it is found in 1 Kings 3:16-28. We lovingly call it in the people ministry, the Solomon Principle. It is one of the greatest illustrations in the Bible that will illustrate not only what I am saying here, but what I am going to say throughout the rest of our morning. So allow me to read it and just make a few brief comments about it.

1 Kings 3:16-28

16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and my son is the living. Thus they spake before the king.

23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but the dead is thy son, and my son is the living. Thus they spake before the king.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son: and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: for she is the mother thereof.

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

Now, I have to confess to you, for years and years and years, I read that story, and I was a little confused. Especially the last part when it said all of Israel, you know, wondered at his wisdom by the way he handled this. I never saw it in the biblical light. Once I got a little more into the Bible, and I read the book of Hebrews and other places in the Bible, I realized that the Word of God is like in Hebrews 4 to a sharp two-edged sword. Then I began to see the principle emerge.

First of all, here is the situation you are going to find yourself in, just like Solomon. Solomon does not know who these women are. He does not know who they are. He did not call any witnesses. He has got two women standing before him. One says it is my baby; the other says, "No, it is mine." He has no idea whose it is. But he does one of the most incredible things that is a picture of what you and I do when we find ourselves in a similar situation with a "he says, she says." That is a fact he called for the sword. The sword being a picture of the Word of God.

Hey, when you have people that come in, and they have issues, and you do not know them, I will tell you what Solomon did know. He knew they both were harlots. That is the first thing you need to realize when you start dealing with people. They are sinners. There is no perfect person. There is no perfect Christian. We all can give way to our old sin nature. When he is looking at these two women, the first thing he says is they are both harlots. They are both sinners. I cannot believe either one of them. I do not need to. Bring me the sword.

That is a great picture that when you deal with people, and they tell you something that you do not know if they are telling you the truth or not, the greatest way to find out the truth, put them under the sword. Put them under the Bible. Put them into a program in the Bible that will require them to be accountable to the principles of the Word of God. Put them under the sword. You do not have to decide who is telling the truth or not. You just have the sword to tell you. It is one of the most fantastic principles anywhere in the Bible. When you start to work with people, this is where you start. This is home base. Something that people will tell you whatever. You have to have an infallible system that will always show you the truth. Of course, in this case here, it is the sword, the Word of God.

So you want to be careful buying the accusation that the person is bringing to you, especially if they have no dog in the fight. I mean, the truth is, we are going to move into this part of it here in a little bit. The truth is, if their motive was right and biblical and pure and right, they would not be spreading the accusation to you. That is your first clue. If they are really where they need to be with God, they would know the pattern for dealing with something, with somebody. That is not the pattern. But they do not do that. They just keep moving it on down the road, so to speak.

Now Solomon finds himself in the same predicament that you and I will find ourselves many times. In the story, he did not know who was telling the truth or not. So what he does, Hebrews 4, he brings a sword, and he says, "Cut that baby in half." The real mother, see, the real mother, here is how it produced the truth. The real mother would have rather had her baby raised with a woman that was not a mother than to see her baby dead. You know what the Word of God will do in your life? It will produce the truth. It will show you exactly who is doing what is right and who is not. Because in doing what is right, there are patterns. There are principles that you follow. When you are dealing with a husband and a wife, or you are dealing with two people, or you are dealing with whatever you are dealing with, you always look for the one who follows the principles. You give them what the Bible says, and then you just stand back and see if they follow it. If a day, two days, a week later, they are violating the very principle by going back to, then you know what you have got. It is not complicated. The Word of God will always produce the truth. The principles of the Word of God will always show you who is lying and who is not because of the truth of that book and the principles and the patterns that you follow.

Now Solomon heard both women. He listened to both of them making their statements. Do you know why he did that? Because all through the book of Proverbs, we have principle after principle after principle that Solomon himself is following. It may not say he is following it here, but you know he is following it because he talks about it, and he is like I try to tell you to be. He understands one great truth: God never violates His own principles. Those principles are absolute. You want to find out the absolute truth in any given situation, follow the absolute principles. That is what he does. So he hears both of them. He does not say, "I am busy today, just have somebody come in and tell me what it is." Uh-uh. He listens to both women's stories before he makes his judgment call. This is one of the greatest truths found anywhere in the Word of God. He is following his own principles, his own proverb, because he is following here Proverbs 18:13, which is one of the greatest truths anywhere in the Bible, where it simply says,

Proverbs 18:13

13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

Simply put, there are two sides to every story. If you make up your mind that somebody is guilty, you make up your mind that somebody is this or somebody is that, or this situation is this, or this husband is this, or this wife is this, or this person is this, without hearing both sides of the story, you will be just like the verse that we are reading here, the first verse, you will not know what to do in the end. You know why? Because it will be folly and shame unto you. You want to mark that verse in your Bible.

So, many times, as I said, they will have a hidden agenda why they are doing what they are doing. You never buy what they say because they are all sinners. You are a sinner. I am a sinner. You realize that you have to get both sides of the story because he that answers a matter before he hears it, foolish and shame unto him. He is going to have some trouble.

IV. The Sins of the Saints

Now I have a message that I preached. I have never really preached it to you. I use up search in different parts of it, but it is a message called "The Sins of the Saints." Now, the sins of the saints, you might guess it, found in Proverbs again. It is Proverbs 6:16. In that passage, you will find, I will not read it. It is a familiar passage. I can tell you about it. It says the six things that God hates, and the seventh is an abomination. So it talks about the seven things that God hates.

Historically, that is given to Israel. Doctrinally, this is the unspiritualistic characteristics of the devil. Inspirationally, it is the sins of the saints. It is the things that we as God's people have entered into the newness of life. Old things are passed away. All things become new. It is the sins that should be out of our lives, but for some reason, and they are very clearly connected with the devil. I mean, if you look at Proverbs 6:16, there is your second six, and then there are six things, six, six, six, clearly connected to the wrong guy. But for the life of me, I do not understand why God's people embrace these. You are supposed to be different than this. You are supposed to live above the worldly circumstances. You are supposed to be a new creature in Christ Jesus. Your soul has been regenerated. You are now seated in heavenly places. God has given you the mind of Christ. Why do we insist as God's people to follow the six things that make up the characteristics of the devil in our Christian life?

You know what they are?

- 1.) A proud look. Pride was the number one problem in the Bible because it is where it all started with the devil. I will say this because it was the first sin in the Bible. It will be the number one problem in God's people's lives. It will be our pride. Pride will keep you from saying, "I am sorry." Pride will keep you from taking the blame when it is your fault. Pride will keep you from making amends with somebody. Pride will give you to the place where you will think that you will hold a grudge and send somebody all of their lives.
- 2.) The second thing is a lying tongue. That is Proverbs 25, lying about something that is not true. Finding a story from your perspective, building it up a little bit to make yourself look good, to make the other person look bad. Happens all the time.

- 3.) Hands that shed innocent blood. Oh, are you kidding me? The great thing is, “Well, I never killed anybody.” My Bible says over there in 1 John 3:15, if you hate somebody in your heart, you are a murderer.
- 4.) Wicked imagination. Man, we do not even have to go there. We did that in Ezekiel yesterday, did we? Ezekiel 8 and 9.
- 5.) Feet running swift to mischief. Boy, that is a good one for God's people. You know, God's people are the most problematic people on the planet. They get themselves in more trouble. They get themselves in more problems. The reason why Christianity is stalled like a four-wheel drive in 40 feet of mud and not going anywhere is simply because of the bad decisions that we all make. Now, we make bad decisions simply for one reason: our feet are too busy running to the wrong things. That is how it works. Sorry, I did not plan on preaching these, but hey, look at them. It is like that alien movie. When you look down inside this thing, it gets all over your face, man. I cannot see now, but I think I have got this memorized for the rest of the day. The Bible just jumps on you like that. It does.
- 6.) False witness.
- 7.) And then, of course, the last one, sowing discord among the brethren.

You see, when the devil wants to destroy Christianity, what he wants to do, like he wanted to destroy Israel, so he infused these seven things in Israel. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. You betcha. I mean, over there in Matthew 12 and Matthew 13, it tells the story that these, about the nation of Israel, and seven wicked spirits go into him, which were worse than the one that was in him. There they are. When the devil wants to destroy either the nation of Israel or Christians in Christianity, he will use God's people to do it through his unspiritual, spiritual gifts that he wants to give you, and God's people are willing to embrace them.

So knowing that, we all tell the story of our lives from our own viewpoint. So you will want to make sure you get the facts. There is an old saying that if you are in a room here, and I tell a story to A.J., and A.J. tells it to you, and you tell it to him, and you tell it to him, and you tell it to him, and it works all the way back here, by the end of the day, it is not a story anymore. It is a novel. You have to take, you have to hear both sides of the story. Then you let the principles of the Word of God through the hand of God show you, based on the pattern and the principles, what you have got. There is no deception with God. You find preachers that, in their preaching, are deceptive. They do not always tell you the truth. You show people in their relationship, they are deceptive. When it comes to the characteristics of Christ, there is no deception. Everything is light, clear.

I dealt with a pastor one time, or helped him with a situation that he had, and he called me, and he says, and I get this quite often, somebody, a pastor will call me and say, “Hey, I have got a situation here, I just, you know, I would like to run it by you, and you know, tell me what you think, I do not know how to handle this.” He told me this story between a husband and wife, you know, situation, and I said, “Did you get both sides of the story? Did you sit down and listen to both of them individually? So they were free to say what they wanted to say.” He says, “Yeah,” he says, “I got completely two completely new versions that did not line up at anything.” His statement to me was this. He says, “I guess the truth lies in the stories that I heard.” He says, “I

just guess the truth lies somewhere in the middle.” I said, “You know,” I said, “that is never true.” I said, “Because the truth will always be found in the one who is doing what the Bible says.” You look for that.

Now, I give you, there is a time that neither one of them do what is right, but that is even easier. Once you know the pattern, once you know the principles, you do not get, you do not get, you do not get a smoke screen, it does not affect you. You can tell in a heartbeat when somebody is not doing what is right. You know why? Because you have been patterned already. Just like you shoot somebody. You know, this is not a day and age to try to kill somebody, shoot somebody, or do something terrible thing and think you are going to get caught with it. Man, they will, they will, you will shoot a guy, and you will run off. Nobody sees you, no cameras around. You think you made it. They will find a shell casing and get your fingerprint on the shell casing when you put it in the clip, and they will find you. You will break into somebody's car, and you think that nobody, and they will find you by the fingerprint or the DNA. In other words, they have learned in solving crime that there is a pattern to crime, and the human body has DNA and fingerprints which establishes you in any situation. That is what the Bible does. The Bible principles are the DNA that rats you out. Yeah, it is good.

Because, as I told the pastor, you always have to look for the one who is doing what the Bible says. When they are doing what the Bible says, there is no deception. There are no lies. There are no half-truths. There is no “I am going here when you are somewhere else.” It is clear. It is plain. So you always look for the one who is following what the Bible says to the best of their ability. You never be hasty in your judgment. You hear it out. Then you prove it out, 1 Kings 3.

Sometimes know this. Sometimes people will try to use you to hurt somebody else. You would never knowingly allow that to happen. But because you do not follow the principles and the patterns, and you do not hear both sides of the story, you hear what somebody says, you agree with them, or at least you do not take it any farther than that, and then you become complicit in them trying to hurt whoever they are trying to hurt.

Early on in my ministry, and I, you know, I do not claim to be the smartest guy on the planet. That is not me. I always just tell you I am the smartest guy in a slow class. I have had to learn a lot of things the hard way in my life. That can be good or bad. Somebody says, “Well, those are the best lessons you learn.” Yeah, but they hurt like the dickens. I want to tell you sometimes. So I have watched people try to use me to hurt somebody else. I just simply, when it comes to you guys, I will not allow that to happen.

I had a girl one time, a girl and a guy were boyfriend and girlfriend. They are no longer. She is married, and he is married someplace else, and now they have got another whole set of problems. But anyway, they were dating here in this church. It has been a number of years ago. They got in spit-fat fights, you know, it was, you know. So she called me on the phone one night, and she tells me that this guy that she has been with is out here doing all these things. She just says, “I thought you ought to know.” Now, the Bible says, “Confess your faults one to another.” Here it comes. I reacted. I did not respond. It made me mad because I had put this kid in some positions, and what she told me, you know, here is my mistake. She is a sweet little gal. She was a nice

little gal. I forgot the fact that she had horns growing out of her head and demons all around her. As you all do. Because I do. So I reacted. I called the guy on the phone. I just ripped him a new one. I mean, I just, I just wailed into him. Come to find out that that was not the truth. Now you want the last part of verse, that verse, "What do you do in the end when your neighbor shames you?" That was me. We have all been in that situation where we have done something stupid, and it is now, "What do I do?" I, you know, you have your life verse around the campfire by not even in the Bible, but it ought to be, it is just, "Now what do I do?" I mean, that is, we have all been there. I felt embarrassed. I felt in shame. Then I was angry because I realized in a heartbeat that this little sweetheart gal had used me to make him look bad. I fell for it. That has been several times over the years that that has happened. It does not happen anymore. It has not happened for a long time.

I will tell you another story. This one, even better yet. Do you like these stories? I am going to put pictures up here on the movie screen so you can actually see them. A gal called me on the phone. This has been a while back. I changed the names in the places to protect the guilty. A gal called me on the phone, and she said, "Bob," she says, "my husband is, I, I, we need to, I want you to bring church discipline against my husband." I said, "Okay." I said, "Yes." She said, "He is, he is fooling around with all these women. He is doing this. He is doing that." I, you know what? "He is posting pictures of himself on, on, yeah, thank you. Those picture-pasting places. And he is, he is, he is doing this. He is doing this. He is doing this. He is doing this." She says, "I am so sick of this. I want, I want the church to bring him before that church and discipline him." That was the phone call she gave me.

My response was this. Now, see, I did not react this time. I learned a little bit in life. I said, "Well," I said, "I, I am sorry to hear that, but I said, bottom line is this." I said, "I need to talk to him." I said, "I do not have a problem doing that. If that is the case, but I want to, I want to hear his side of the story." "Well, why do you want to hear his side of the story? I just told you what he is doing." I said, "Yeah, I know, but I do not ever do anything on that major level without hearing where he is at with the thing." Well, she got irate with me, left the church, come to find out. Well, this is how they will use you. Come to find out she has already been involved with another guy. She had already made plans to be with this guy. The guy, her husband, was not doing any of those things. He was out of touch, and I could not get a hold of him. What she wanted was me to church him, to bring him before the church when he had no say to defend himself, clobber him on her say, and then she would have the liberty and the right to say, "Well, because look what the church did. He was wrong." She would then justify and say, "I found me somebody else," when she already had everything but the honeymoon suite candles being lit. That is what they will do to you if you do not respond and you react. I am just telling you, you have got to realize that people many times will have an agenda, and they want to draw you in. If they were really doing the right thing, you would never hear about it. If you do not follow Proverbs 18:13, then as verse 8 says, you do not know what to do in the end, and you get burned, and it is shame unto you. You look stupid. It is the absolute importance of not just hearing and knowing biblical principles, but the fact that you actually apply and use them in the people you deal with. As I said, God never violates His own principle.

V. Debate Your Cause with Your Neighbor

All right, look at verse 9 now. We have got to move through here. “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another.” How much plainer could it be? You have got a problem? You hear something? Instead of spreading it onto somebody else, you debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself. You go to that person, not everybody else. Find out the facts. They may be wrong. Find out the facts for yourself by using the principles of the Word of God and see where the situation really lies. Let the sword prove it out. Rule number one is God will always have His hand and take care of the one who is doing what is right or trying to do what is right. Hey, we all do dumb things. We all make mistakes. 1 Kings 3 shows us the pattern. You want to look for God's hand. You want to look for the principle involved. You want to see that one will stay with the book and do it by the book. The other one will say that he is or she is not, but they will be right back where they were thinking this time they will not get caught again.

In the last part of that verse, “and discover not a secret to another,” that simply means when you go to the Greek, keep your mouth shut. If you have got the truth about a story, and somebody else wants the truth, let them go find it like you did. Do not be the minister of information. Truth will prove everything. If they do not want to go and get the truth, do not be the truth bearer to them because the Bible says, “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself.”

VI. The Consequences of Infamy

Look at verse 10. “Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.” Now that is a great word, infamy. Infamy means total loss of reputation, a total loss of character and respect. He is basically saying when somebody, when you do not get all the facts, and you react instead of responding, and you let somebody use you to hurt somebody else or try to hurt somebody else, and then the truth comes out. Because we were hasty in our judgment. Because we thought we knew what really happened. We never bothered to get the whole story, Proverbs 18:13. Now it is a shame and folly unto us. You drank the Kool-Aid. You believed what they said because you thought they were credible. You believed what they said because they were your friend. You did not follow the Solomon principle and realize that many times somebody will come and say something to you because they have got an ulterior motive. I will say it again. The very fact they are coming to you and saying something in the first place tells you there is a problem. Remember, the best argument is a clear statement of truth. You can always find the truth, but the only way you find it is truth with truth.

I have had people all my life try to badmouth other people and say how terrible they are. I have had people come up to me and say, “Hey, you are so and so in your church,” and I say, “Yeah, they are.” He said, “Well, I will not tell you. You need to watch out for her. You need to watch out for him.” I just simply say, “Well, thank you very much.” You know what? It does not go any farther now. I do not need somebody telling me whether you are good or whether you are bad because I put you under the sword every chance I get, and it will tell me everything I need to know about you. In fact, while we are sitting here this morning, you ought to see the information that is coming across your desk. That is the way it works.

Bottom line in dealing with any situation. When a person comes to you or you are dealing with somebody or in any situation how this works, you first and foremost want to look for the seven fruits of the Spirit of God in that person's life. Galatians 5:22-23 lays it out because you can fake a lot of things. I mean, you can come here this morning, and your insides could be as black as the bottom of this pit. You could have been out doing dope last night and doing everything God knows, and you come here all dressed up, cleaned up this morning, a little bleary-eyed, but you are good, and you sit there, and everybody thinks you are praying the Lord like everybody else. But you know what? You can fake that, but I will tell you something you cannot fake. You cannot fake the seven fruits of the Spirit in your life. Because they do not come because you get them out of a book. They do not come because you get them and memorize them. They come because if you have built your life into the character qualities of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when you become Christ-like, you do not be devil-like. I do not know who said that was good, but that was good too what I just said.

Fruit of the Spirit. Notice fruit, not fruits, fruit of the Spirit because they are all found in one person, the Holy Spirit of God in your life.

- 1.) The first one is love. I do not have time to go through all these. It is unconditional love. You love people but under the conditions. Most of God's people can never do that. They will love somebody on a conditional basis. If they are nice to me, if they are this or that, if they fall into my little parameter where I think somebody would be, I will love them. We do not have that right. You know why? Because the first time God looked at me and you, we did not fit into any of His parameters, and yet He still loved us. He loved us unconditionally. Why would a child of God take God's unconditional love and then fail to give that unconditional love to somebody else?
- 2.) Joy. Joy is in our heart out of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Joy and happiness are two different things. Happiness is you being happy based on the happenings of life. Joy is everlasting, and it is in your heart no matter how bad your day goes.
- 3.) Peace. All my favorite verse on peace, Psalms 119:165. Psalms 119:165
165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Try that one. A lady one time when I preached a message, she came up to me, she was a Brother Alexander, and she was your typical one. You know, she was, you could tell she is. Anyway, she came up, and she said, "Brother Alexander, I just want to tell you I was offended by your message." I said, "Well, I am sorry about that." She said, "I would like to talk to you about it." I said, "Yes, ma'am." I said, "First of all, Psalms 119:165. Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. Now what was your problem?" See, that is better than hitting them. No, it is. It is. I mean, I mean, who would not? You know when somebody, I mean, I am human. Somebody says, I mean, that was a good message I preached. I could have slapped her. I mean, but you know sometimes you can give some a good pounding with your fist, but the best pounding is the verse that hits her right between the eyes. Well, what do you say after that? "I am still offended?" She walked away with her tail between the legs. I do not know if she had a tail, but if she had a pitchfork and a broom, that is for sure.
- 4.) Longsuffering. You know how longsuffering God was toward you and me? Do you really, I know you say amen, but do you really know that? Probably most of you got saved, maybe

somebody got saved when you were kids. I got saved when I was 19 or 20. I look at my own life for 19 years, God should have just killed me someplace along the line and stuffed me in a lake of fire. But you know why He did not? Because He is longsuffering. He put up with me. Is it not amazing how God will put up with you and me, but we cannot put up with somebody else? That is not a character quality of the Lord Jesus Christ. "You do not know what so and so did." Well, I know what you and I did before we got saved and what we could talk about after we did get saved. What is the difference between you and them? Longsuffering.

- 5.) Patience. God's people, the most impatient people on the planet today.
- 6.) Gentleness. That is compassion. That is in your delivery of preaching, or you are helping, you never want to hurt anybody. I mean, the Word of God may bruise you, but that is what it is supposed to do. The Word of God may bang you up a little bit. That is what it is supposed to do. But that is God. I did not write the Bible. I am just preaching what He told me to preach. It did not matter to me.
- 7.) Goodness. Goodness. There is only one good in the Bible, it is always Jesus Christ. We say, "My goodness." We use that phrase flippantly. What we are basically saying is, "My Jesus." The goodness of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. The goodness of God is Christ for you and me, and it talks about the character qualities. Your goodness that you have or you should have should be nothing more than the character qualities of the Lord Jesus Christ displayed in your everyday life.
- 8.) And then the last one, temperance. That is balance. That is being able to respond versus react. That is being able to hear something and understand the balance of how you deal with it.

Now I have told you many, many times that the devil is the greatest imitator of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, he is so good back in the book of Revelation in two or three places when he talks about Christ, the Holy Spirit of God puts in His Christ. So you know there are two Christs. He imitates the Lord Jesus Christ every way. Here I just gave you in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, the characteristics of God that should be in your life. But the devil imitates that too because in Proverbs 6:16, you have the seven unholy fruit of His Spirit. He imitates the fruit of God just like he imitates everything else, and God's people fall right into it.

So God's people get a proud look. God's people get a lying tongue. God's people get hands that shed innocent blood, wicked imagination, feet that are swift or running to mischief, a false witness. They sow discord among the brethren, and yet they go, they are God's people. They are saved. They are on the way to heaven. They go through all of life. They never miss church. They are deacons. They are Sunday school teachers. They are pastors. They are Christians. They talk about the Lord. They read their Bibles. They do everything that Christians are supposed to do. But why in the world do they have the characteristics of the devil's spirit in their life? It is as simple as that. To those seven spirits of God, you find what a real child of God should be. He should be one that forgives unconditionally like he loves unconditionally. He should not be one who holds a grudge against anybody, anytime, any place for anything. Somebody says, "Well, he never asked for my forgiveness." Let me tell you something. God forgave you in Christ long before you asked for His forgiveness. You idiot. Love, peace, joy. Those are the character qualities of the fruit of the spirit. Those are what we display toward each other.

I will never understand how a man or a woman who was saved on their way to heaven, has the Holy Spirit of God inside them, can give over to the devil's spirit in their life and not take the spirits or the fruit of the spirit found in the book of Galatians. But then I guess the answer to that is the same way they can take the devil's Bible over God's Bible. I guess it is the same thing. A child following the seven fruit of the spirit and filled with them will not mix them with the unholy fruit of the devil. It will not happen. He will not speak to what he does not know for sure. You will never know for sure until you get both sides of the story. He will not lie about somebody else. He will not ridicule somebody else. He will not bear false witness with somebody else. He will not sow discord with the brethren with somebody else. He will go to that person privately, and they will talk about whatever the issue is. When he talks about it and he gets the answers, then you take it and you prove it through the Word of God, and you simply see where the hand of God is in the situation that you are dealing with. It is absolutely simply amazing.

Now God's people will never get the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God in their lives, but in their life will have the unholy fruit of the seven spirits that is found in Proverbs. I mean, ask yourself, is the way you teach, treat your brothers and sisters in Christ the way Christ can teach them? I often wondered in John 4, you have the great story of the woman at the well. I often wondered if that woman would ever even get saved if you and I had been dealing with it instead of the Lord. Here is a woman whose character was completely trash. She just got five husbands that we know about. She is the epitome of you and me before we were saved. She is everything against her. She stands in total contrast to everything that God is. Christ should have done exactly what you and I would have done, bypassed her, went on and told all the other people. Do you know what she did? I am God, I know what she did last night. I know what she did. Five husbands, ha ha ha, there is 26. That is what we do. He did not. He did put the emphasis on this. After He forgave her, He said, "Go and sin no more." That is all He said to her. She followed that advice.

You know, it never ceases to amaze me how unbiblical and unscriptural some of God's saved people really are. It takes a sermon like this where the sword is hanging over the whole place this morning to really see we who claim to be God's children, why are not we following the characteristics of Christ? When somebody in this church comes to you and says, "I want to tell you about," why are not you stopping them dead in their tracks? That is what Jesus would do. That is what I would do. You think people have come to me and said, "Well, I am going to tell you about so and so," and I say, "You know what, you do not need to tell me about so and so." "Why is that?" "Because I like what so and so is doing a lot better than what you are not doing." We hit the road. If I need to deal with so and so, I will deal with so and so. I do not need you helping me with it. Forget telling me about so and so. Tell me about yourself.

I am just telling you, you have got the choice between the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God or the seven unclean spirits of the fruit of the devil. A Christian can be saved on his way to heaven and live, forsake the fruit of the spirit, take that fruit. The Bible does say, "By their fruits you shall know them." God's people today are the most unforgiving people on the planet. God forgave you and me in Christ long before you ever asked and I ever asked for it. But boy, we will not give our forgiveness to somebody. We will hold on to that thing for years and years and months and

months and weeks and weeks and days and days, and we will just let that thing go to seed. You know what? If God would do that with you and me, you would have a cardiac arrest. You would not, you would be on your knees asking God not to do it. See, you are like the guy back in the Bible in the New Testament that had a debt to pay, and the Lord said, "It is okay, we will take care of it." Then he had some people that worked for him that had debts to pay, and he went with a ball bat and beat the brains out of them. Remember that story? That is what we do. We have got God's forgiveness. We should have been in hell, but God gave us our forgiveness, but then our brethren around us will beat them with a ball bat to the bloody. Do not tell me about it. I have been in this business too long. I know God's people. God's people ought to be the most forgiving people on the planet based on their understanding of God's forgiveness to them. Yet they rejoice when a brother and sister falls. They high-five. They are happy. "Let us go and eat. Praise the Lord. They got what they deserve." Well, maybe one of these days you will get what you deserve. Then you will not be high-fiving so much.

I have watched them set people up for failure and thought that was of the Lord. Not only did they rejoice when a brother and sister falls, but when somebody is wounded down in sin, whether it is their fault or not, we are the first ones that want to run up and put a bullet in their head and shoot our own wounded. Did Jesus do that to you? Did He do that to me? When I was laying in the gutter of the road of life, and I was oozing out life destined for the lake of fire and should have been just scooped up in a big old gospel snow shovel and pissed into the lake of fire. You know what He did? He knelt down by my side. He picked me up, and He said to me, "Come let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." We cannot do that. "Though your sins be as scarlet." How is that? God's people. I have got bumper stickers we are going to sell after this sermon. Put them under your car. "Let God, kill them all. Let God sort them out." That is what you need. They will hear something about somebody without ever getting both sides of the story. They will take it and sow discord. They will never find out the truth. Good or bad. They will never get the real truth. Whether it is good or bad, there are always principles that you follow in either case. But no, no, no, no, no. We do not want that. We do not want to put an end to it. We do not want to solve problems. We want to keep discovering and putting it out because the devil wants to use you and me to destroy the work of God.

At the judgment seat of Christ, I preached it to you before. Job 26:1-4. The six questions He is probably going to ask you and me at the judgment seat of Christ. You know what the last one is? Job 26:4, "Whose spirit came from thee?" There it is. Is it Galatians 5 or the devil's Proverbs 6? It is so fundamentally basic in its layout. You have to really work at rejecting the book to get around this.

VII. Three Principles for Dealing with Rumors

Now in closing this morning, I just want to give you a quick summary here, and we are done, of Proverbs 25:8-10. But three simple principles, and you will want to take everything I said this morning and put it into these three. Write these down.

1. Before you draw a conclusion about a rumor you have heard, you go to that person and discuss it with him and get their side of the story no matter who says what. Find out the truth or get both sides of the story.
2. Do not pass on the information to someone else or even discuss it until you have all the facts, and then you need to be very careful and do not give them any real details, but rather send them to that person themselves that they may follow the biblical pattern to get the answer. Let me just say this, Romans 16:17, we need to start doing this. If they do not, then do what it says in that verse, mark those that cause division among you. If they are not willing to follow the pattern but they want to keep it moving along the line, mark them. You say, "Well, they will leave the church." I have got a couple of really good ones I will send them to.
3. When this is not done, the first two. If you just watch in time, time will prove all things. My old expression is when nothing else tells, time will tell. You let it prove itself out, and in time it will all come out. The Bible says, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:21. You prove it by the spirit by which the Holy Spirit of God gives you in all matters of dealing with people. God will give you the understanding and give you the ability to see that thing and understand it, put it in the pattern, and see who is following what spirit.

Now it goes without saying, and I know I am preaching into the wind here on this one. If God's people would just follow these simple little principles found in Proverbs 25:8-10 that we have talked about today, we would solve 98% of the problems in God's church of the body of Christ. But unfortunately, just like the devil's Bible is the predominant Bible for God's people, the devil's spirit is the predominant spirit that God's people go with.

You want to remember two things, and I am done.

- 1.) God never violates His own principles.
- 2.) God never steps outside the established patterns by which He uses.

You learn those two rules, follow those, discover the patterns, the principles, let us help you put it together in a format that you can work for you, and you will never get caught up in these things. That is why, that is the success of our ministry here. That is why I have got 80, 90 people in the people ministry. That is why we have got people from all walks of life. They come in with marital problems, personal problems, addiction problems. It does not matter. We have the tools because simply our greatest tool is the book of patterns. When a person, no matter what their problem is, allows themselves to be changed by the pattern of principles, it is going to work for you. When you will not, it will not. When you have a church full of the devil's spirit, of those seven things, this is why churches are some of the most backbiting, angry, bitter people you ever met in your life. They have been following the wrong spirit, and now what you are seeing in life is the actual fruit of that spirit. When you get in God's spirit, you see the fruit of that, and I am going to say it again, "By their fruits, you shall know them."

Let us pray. Father, thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you today. Thank you for the Word of God that you have given us for the great book of Proverbs and for the great principles. We love you, Lord. We thank you, Father, that you give us a book that clearly in all

areas tells us everything we need to do. We love you. We pray, Father, that we will embrace those spirits found in Galatians that will become more Christ-like, that will grow up into Him and be everything and see everything the way He sees it. We will be careful to give you all the honor and the glory and the praise. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask of Him. Amen.