

Proverbs 25:14-16

Sunday 12/2/2018

Last week, we began our next section in Proverbs, verses 14, 15, and 16 of chapter 25. We only got through one verse, but it was well worth our time. We dealt with the aspect of spiritual gifts and how important they really are, and yet how completely misunderstood they are.

From time to time in our teaching and our preaching, whether it be Thursday night or on Sunday morning, there will be a message that will come along that, in my estimation, will be a doctrinal statement. It will be more than just a message. It will be something that covers a subject in great detail to the point where it needs to be archived. If sometime down the line in the future or in your life, you want to go through that study and get all that you can from it, it is available for you. Many times, most of the time, they are just sermons where you can glean a lot of principles. But every once in a while, something will come up, and we will deal with it. It won't be a general sermon that you'll get a number of principles from, but rather a doctrinal statement that needs to be put into your library or our library on the website so that people for now and future generations can always go back to it.

I don't have a lot of books in my library. Most pastors, if you were to go into their office, if you could ever get in, they are showcased behind their back with hundreds and hundreds of books in them. I can say to you right now that they haven't read any of them. There are actual places where you can buy books by the pound or books by the inch, or however you want to do it, that you can just line your walls with them. It gives the impression that you are really well-read. It's an impressive thing. You're going to see that when most pastors have their pictures taken, books are behind them. That is very subtly trying to display to the people who are looking at that picture that they are well-read. I've had young guys go into a guy's office and say, "Man, did you see all the books that he had?" Did you know he hadn't read any of them? That's how it usually works.

In my library, I have about 40 books. I went through 400,000 books in my lifetime, but I only kept 40. Those 40 books are books that I will continue to go back through because, in specifics, they will give me something that I really want or really need. Over the years, I've accumulated them, got rid of the junk, and kept the ones that I will go back to. There are three or four books that I will read every year just to keep myself up on it. These messages are like those books. There will be something that you will want to keep, something that you will want to go back to.

A while back, on a Sunday morning, I believe it was, I did a sermon on wine, new wine versus old wine, that dealt with Deuteronomy chapter 32. That is a classic message that is a doctrinal statement. It's a definitive statement. You can go to that passage and go to that material, and you get everything you'll ever want to know about anything about drinking alcohol, new wine, old wine, and how the Bible deals with it. In Genesis chapter 24, we have on the website, I've done it many times, on how to find a spouse. The 19 or 20 principles found there, if you're looking for a mate, looking for a spouse, looking for someone to spend the rest of your life with, there are principles that you must follow or you should follow. That's a statement. That's something that you want to hang on to.

In 1 Samuel chapter 3, we've taught it many times, the definitive passage on how somebody gets into the ministry in the life of Samuel. We talked about that many, many times. Thursday night, somebody asked a question out of 1 Corinthians chapter 7, and we talked about the doctrinal definitive passage in the New Testament on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, 1 Corinthians chapter 7. You can take places like that and sit down and get everything that the Bible has to say on it, so that when you walk away from it, if you've done your work, you've got it down. You have everything that there is. Obviously, we've done them on the King James Bible. We've done them on church history. They're quite a little more lengthy. But in people ministry yesterday, we went through and I gave you the seven men in the Old Testament that is a complete picture of what your Christian life should be. Those are definitive messages that do more than just like a shotgun effect where everybody can get something out of it. These are specific, that if you want to learn segments of the Bible that you have to learn, by the way, in time in your life, this is how you do it.

Last week, we did that with the biblical teaching on spiritual gifts, as complete and thorough as it could be, using the Bible to define spiritual gifts for us and how they will fit into our lives. It was based on the verse in Proverbs chapter 25, verse 14, where it says,

Proverbs 25:14

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

We talked about how that in Christianity today, people are boasting of great spiritual things in their life, but there's no power. There's no authority. The thing that the scribes and the Pharisees hated about the Lord Jesus Christ was His doctrine because it tells you very clearly that His doctrine that they hated was the authority that He had that they didn't have. People with a false gift, they're like the old saying, "There's a lot of smoke, but there's no fire." There's no power. There's no authority. There's no impact. Nothing to impact your life to lead you or force you or to deal in your heart and your life to change by bringing you under conviction.

I'll tell you something. Preaching or sermons, whether it's teaching, preaching, or whatever it is, if at the end of the day, if it doesn't convict you about something in your life, there's something wrong with it, because the Word of God convicts. That's what it does. You'll remember we defined spiritual gifts out of 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. There again, the definitive passage in the New Testament on spiritual gifts. We found out there was an order to spiritual gifts. There are three orders to it:

1. The gifts of the office, which is a pastor, a bishop.
2. The sign gifts that were given to the apostles.
3. The gifts that we hear so much about that we have or to empower us to do the work of God.

We talked about how that salvation God gave you in the Spirit of God. All that the Spirit of God that God has, you got the day you got saved. You may not know how to use it all yet, but you got it all. It's there. As you grow in maturity, you learn how to use that Spirit, and the Spirit learns better how to use you. So you got the Spirit of God. The same exact Spirit, every aspect that Christ had or God has. You don't, like the Charismatics, get half the Spirit, and then you got to

get baptism of the Holy Ghost to get more of the Spirit, and then it comes. No, no. The moment you got saved, as far as the Spirit of God is concerned, you got everything that God Himself has inside you today.

So then He gave you His Spirit, then He gave you His mind. Just like you have all of God's Spirit that God has, you have all of God's mind, everything that's in God's mind you have in the book that God gave you. That's why our issue is with the King James Bible. God doesn't change His mind. You have this Bible here, and you have an NIV over here that's got 86,000 changes between the two. You're telling me that God changed His mind 86,000 times? I don't believe that. You got a book that the day you got saved that is everything that is in God's mind that you have, that you don't have to wonder about what God thinks about anything. Just like the Spirit of God, the more you get into the Spirit of God, the more the Spirit of God gets in you. Just like the Spirit of God with the Bible, the more you read the Bible, the more the Bible begins to read you. It's a complete deal.

Then you've got His body. You were called the church, it's called the body of Christ. You're in that spiritual body right now, but there's a day coming at the rapture of the church when you're going to get the glorified spiritual body, and then you'll be absolutely completed as far as everything that God's had for you and for me, and then we move on into eternity. So you got all of God in those three things.

We talked about how that the modern-day Baptist pastors and the neo-evangelical crowd, and most Christians, they'll hamstring their people by the ridiculous teaching on our relationship with God that you have one main gift or two gifts, and that's what you find and that's what you focus on. Of course, we talked about the ridiculously stupid gift test that everybody gives to find your spiritual gift. I showed you that in the Bible you have the fruit of the Spirit and you have the gifts of the Spirit. You have the power of God in your life, which is the gifts, but you have to have the character of God in your life. You'll never have the power of God in your life to do the work that God wants you to do, until you first have the character of God in your life to do that work for Him. When you get the character of God in your life and then you do the work of God, God empowers you through the Spirit that you have and gives you whatever you need to get the job done within the category of our three gifts that we talked about, or the three orders of the gifts. This will stand last week as a doctrinal statement of what the Bible teaches on the aspect of spiritual gifts. It will add to your spiritual library as you add them to your faith and you grow and you materialize.

I. Patience and Spiritual Growth

That was last week, and I'm telling you that because we're going to get into the next verse today, and these verses kind of go together, so it's not good to just jump in cold without kind of bridging it through. So today we're going to look at the next verse. There are two more verses. We won't get through both of them today, and we're going to learn from them. So I want to read both verses and then we're going to go from there. It says,

Proverbs 25:15-16

15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

Now, verse 15 says, "By long forbearing is a prince persuaded and a soft tongue breaketh the bone." This will be a great lesson with the principles that we're going to look at for anybody who has a desire to work with people. It also, first of all, like everything else, has to be applied to you first. So it'll be great for some of you who are beginning to build your relationship with the Lord. But either as a position as a pastor or a person who works alongside of the pastor, me working and dealing with people's needs, these will be some great principles. It'll be good for you if you're growing in the Lord and you're maturing that process in your life, or if you're someone who is working with me hand in hand and you're working with people like so many of you are, or in your own life that you're going to someday, God's going to call you into the ministry, and it'll help you. It'll help you.

It's a single concept we're going to talk about today, but it has many aspects that we have to consider, and I personally think that it's one of the great keys to a successful ministry and not only that, but a successful Christian life. The overall concept of what he's saying here is just basically two things. We're going to look at the first one for a while and then we'll come into the second one. The first one is dealing with people's lives and the situations you find them in. It will take an incredible amount of long forbearing. This is also called long suffering in Galatians chapter 5, but most generally it's known as the word patience.

I want to talk to you about patience today out of this passage here, and let me clear something up based on last week that I want to make clear that you understand. A man said to me one time, he said, "You know, I don't have a lot of patience. That's not my spiritual gift." I remember when he said that, I thought to myself, I didn't say anything to him, but I thought to myself, I remembered 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 5, that patience is not a spiritual gift. Patience is something that 2 Peter 1:5 tells us that we are to add to our faith. It's not a gift. It's not something that God gave you patience and didn't give you patience. It's something that as you grow and you mature, there are seven things there in that passage that we are to add to our faith as we grow and mature, and patience is one of them. Yet, I look at that and I think to myself, how nice it is to be able to disqualify yourself from something that you don't want to fix in your life by simply saying, "That's not my gift." That's what human nature does.

I told you last week about the ridiculously stupid spiritual gift test that you take the test and you grade yourself on a level one to five on your own spirituality. Did you ever figure out why in high school they never let you grade your own tests? They won't let you grade your own tests because they don't trust you. They know, bottom line is, you're going to pass yourself. You're not going to be honest enough to fail yourself unless you're just stupid. How ridiculously stupid is it to allow you and me, who still has an old sin nature, by the way, who likes to think of ourselves higher than we are, to take a test that you gauge your spirituality on one to five, and then you're going to tally it up, and you know, I've been in these situations where you figure out what your

gift is and then you walk around, "Yes, I have that gift. Yes, I have the gift of compassion. I have that. Don't touch me. I have that gift. I've not yet ascended to the Father." I know how it works.

A guy told me one time, he says, "Well, I'm not a soul winner." And I said, he said, "Soul winning's not my spiritual gift." And I did say something to him. I said, "You know what? Soul winning is not a spiritual gift. You know what soul winning is? Soul winning is the absolute proof positive that you have an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ." When you get married, and most of you do, and most of you will, and some of you that aren't want to, and some of you who are headed that way, let me tell you about the facts of life, it's commonly called the birds and the bees. I know all about this because I put a bird and bees in a bottle one time and they killed each other, so I'm good to tell it how this thing goes. When two people enter into that intimate relationship, they're going to produce fruit at some point. Maybe not the first time, maybe not the second time, and if they don't do something to stop that, they're going to have a baby. It's the intimate relationship between a husband and wife that in time will bear fruit. You and I as a child of God are to bear fruit, and it comes from the intimate relationship that we have with Christ spiritually that is going to produce fruit. Maybe not every person you meet, maybe not every time you talk to somebody, maybe not every week, maybe not every month, there's no time frame to it, but I'm telling you, soul winning is not a spiritual gift any more than patience is. Soul winning is the product byproduct of your intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit of God, and the Word of God that in time, just like a husband and wife, will bear fruit. It's just that simple. It's not hard.

Human nature, this is true of all of us, human nature will always excuse itself unless you find just a totally honest person, which I carry five dollars in my wallet if I ever do. I've had it now for 45 years. Human nature will always pass the buck to somebody else. It's nice because it means that if you don't have the spiritual gift of patience, then you don't have to be patient, and nobody can hold you accountable to it. If you don't have the gift of soul winning, that you don't have to win people to Christ, you can do other things, but nobody can ever hold you accountable to it because of the fact that it's not your gift. So how could you be responsible for patience if God didn't give you the gift of patience? That's how human nature works.

I was watching the news this week, and President Trump's wife, who I think is a nice lady, she was heading up a contingency for the prescription drug epidemic, the people are taking prescription drugs and getting addicted to them. She was talking, and I always like to listen to what people say, and she said that the main problem that we have is a lot of people will not come forward and say, "I'm addicted to prescription drugs." And she says, "It's nothing to be ashamed of. It's a sickness, just like if you had the flu or you had pneumonia or you had this, and you need to get treatment and help for the addiction, just like if you were sick with an ailment, because it's a sickness." I looked at that and I thought to myself, that's exactly how the world looks at it. She thinks they don't want to come and get help because they're embarrassed because it's a sickness. I know better. I've been in the ministry for almost 50 years. They don't come and get fixed because they like taking them. They don't want to get it fixed.

But that's where we're at today. "I'm an alcoholic, but it's not my fault because the alcoholism was in my family, so therefore it's a disease, it's a sickness. I'm a drug addict because my mom

took drugs when she was carrying me as a baby, and now I have those drug genes in me." When you take your personal responsibility away from your life by making what the Bible clearly says is sin, you make it a sickness, you can't fix anything. What are you going to do? Go to a psychiatrist and go to a doctor? He's going to give you a pill for your drug addiction. If you're an alcoholic, well, they can give you an abuse that's always good and get drunk and it makes you throw up, that's always fun to watch. Anyway, it's a thing where it's sin, and as long as a man doesn't get the change in his heart, the problem with man is not what he does. The problem is man is in his heart. He's made bad choices to do the wrong thing.

In Christianity, we do the same thing. "Well, that's not my gift, so I don't have to do it." No, you're to add those things to your faith. Winning people to Christ is something that happens in your life as you grow. You build upon the foundation: gold, silver, precious stones. Gold, who He is. Silver, what He did for you. Precious stones, people. You can't know who God is and what He did for you without telling somebody else about it. There's the problem.

James chapter 1, verse 3 and 4, tells us that patience needs to be developed. It's not a gift. It needs to be developed as we grow and we mature. He says,

James 1:3-4

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

In other words, when you add patience to your life, your spiritual life, and God begins to develop that through the work, the ministry that you're doing for God, He will bring things into our lives that will try us. They'll stretch us. They'll pull us. But in time, they will make us, and then the perfect work of patience will be in our lives. Patience isn't something that God just gives you and doesn't give others. When you're faced with a situation in life, and we're all going to be faced with them, some on different levels, but at the end of the day, you have one choice in your life: you're going to run to God or you're going to run away from God. Those are the choices you've got. He wants to perfect patience in your life. Patience has a work that it does in you. It perfects you. A child of God will not have patience because he doesn't have the gift of patience. He will not have patience because he won't develop it and add it to his faith.

Patience is a character quality of Christ. It's called long suffering in Galatians chapter 5, verses 22 through 23. It's not a gift. It's one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God as you develop yourself and you grow up into Him. Ephesians 4:15. Last week, as you grow to be more like Christ every day of your life, and you consciously are looking to put the character qualities of Christ in your life, that you want to grow up not unto Him, but into Him. As you grow and mature in the Word of God and in ministry, then God will develop through that ministry, the ministry with people, those areas in your life that you and I need.

II. Three Areas of Patience

I'm going to talk today, and there are many avenues we could deal with. I pick three major areas about patience that I want to talk about today. Obviously, patience goes down many roads. I'm

going to talk about the three major ones here, but patience will all the way come down to waiting in the drive-through at McDonald's when there's 20 cars in front of you and you're really hungry. Patience will come down to you taking your dog out to go potty when it's raining outside and he's sniffing everything and doing what he's supposed to be doing. I know, but I want to talk about three main ones. You can figure out the rest.

➤ Patience in Our Own Walk with the Lord

The first thing I want to talk about is patience in our own walk, in our own relationship with the Lord. I'd say, based on my experience of dealing with people for many, many, many years, the number one issue that gets us all into trouble will be getting into a hurry and our inability to wait on the Lord. That gets us in trouble more times than anything else that we do.

In my life, many, many years ago, God gave me a great verse found in Psalms that I've always loved. I've always thought it was one of my favorite principles of life. I've never really preached on it. I don't think I've ever even given it to anybody, but it's something in my own personal life that helped me learn to wait on God because I want to tell you, if you go to the dictionary, look up the word impatience, my picture would be there. I had to learn when it came to the ministry and people and the things that we're going to talk about today, I had to learn patience. It's something that I had to add to my faith. I remember years ago, I saw this Psalm, Psalms 123, and it's one of those life-changing Psalms. It just was everything that I could ever want to help me. It says this:

Psalms 123:1-2

1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Do you understand the gravity of that verse? That is one of the most impacting, powerful verses that you will ever have in your life with our eyes waiting upon the Lord. What does that mean? Can you grasp and understand the great concept of that? He's saying that when you have something that isn't happening in your time frame and you have to wait on God, don't just sit and pace and fume and fret over why God's not doing. Wait on God with your eyes. Get in the book. Find the promises and the principles that God has given you. Continue to claim those promises and those principles. Find the patterns by which God does things in life, people's lives. Follow the principles. Read the pattern. Watch the promises. Then with your eyes, wait upon the Lord for Him to come through. One of the greatest concepts you'll ever have because in our lives, God's timing is everything.

We live in such a fast-paced world where we demand everything right now. We want everything now. I've told you many, many times, we've talked about this, how that years ago, back in the 60s, I remember back in Canton, Ohio, I was just 10 years old, the first McDonald's opened up, and hamburgers were 15 cents. It was a place that everybody was going to, and it was claimed fast food, fast food because you didn't have to cook it, fast food because you just went inside and

they had them ready, you picked it up and went from there. But as society progressed and people got more impatient in life, fast food restaurants weren't fast enough. So then we put a fast food drive-through in the fast food restaurant so you get your fast food even faster. Now that doesn't work because tell me, my worst diet is Thursday night after a Bible study. I want my cheeseburgers. I go to that McDonald's down here on No One Row. For whatever reason, on Thursday night, human beings don't work there. There are two chickens and a duck. They got two lines. One line wasn't fast enough. They put it in two lines. Now, how in the world the person sitting in there who is below minimum wage probably is never going to work for aerodynamics, sitting in a little booth with a headphone on, can't see out there, and she's taking orders in two lanes, trying to keep them straight. I pull up to the first one, and first of all, I've given my all to you Thursday night. I'm hungry. The prophet needs a little food. I mean, there was a widow in Elijah's time that had a little room with a little stool and all kinds of food for him. I got to go get my own. I don't mind that. It's fast food. I'm a fast guy. I got dogs tap dancing at home. Got to go out. I go through the fast food lane, and it's backed up because the two chickens and the ducks are in there doing something else. So I wait in line, but more than once, I just drove on up to the window. No, no, no, I do. I just drive on up to the window. Why? Because I'm impatient. Look, I'm a fair guy, but if you're going to call it fast food, then it better be fast food. It's just that simple. Don't say it's fast food, and it's I could go to Arthur Bryant's and drive down and get it and get back and then eat it at home before I get to that thing. And then I get to the speaker, there's two of them. Of course, a lot of people like fast food, so I pull up to the first speaker. There's another one up here, but somebody's blocked out one because they're doing their order. She says, "What do you want?" I says, "Let me ask you, are you the chicken or are you the duck? Because it depends on how I'm going to talk to you." I give my order. Now the person in front of me pulls around, so I pull up, but I'm now I'm in front of the second one. The same person comes on and says, "Can I take your order?" I said, "You want it again? I just gave it to you at mile post 106 down here. You want another one? You want another order?" Oh, no, no, no, no, that's fine. Hey, I found it's a lot faster just to bypass the speakers and get up there. I've done different things. Sometimes I pretend like I'm more deaf than I am, and I try to do sign language, and you don't get it, so I write it down: two cheeseburgers and a Coke. But that was not fast enough. Now you know what they got? You don't even have to leave. You can get an Uber driver bring it to you. How fast you start? Hey, I know where it's going with all these drones. It won't be long that you just call it in and the drone will be over your house with your Big Mac, lay it down your front yard.

People get impatient with things like that. I get impatient with things like that. It amazes me. I don't know. Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another." So go ahead. It amazes me, honestly. I don't. I can be so patient about some things, but other things I just have no patience for. I'm just telling you, but I'm going to tell you the number one issue that we have is we get impatient in things in our life because our society is so geared that everything is fast: fast food, fast this, fast that. You go to the airport where everybody else is getting strip searched, you can get a little deal and run you right through. Yes, everything is fast today. Everything. We live in a world that does not tolerate, has no patience. That's why kids don't save any money today. In my day, my mom and dad saved money. I learned to save money. People don't save money. The kids don't growing up don't save money today. They just they spend it as fast as they get it. They go to

the mall just to see what they don't have. You go to the place where you get on the internet, and you can, I mean, you got the channel where you buy all that stuff. There are people addicted to drugs, there are people that are addicted to alcohol, and there are people that are addicted to prescription drugs, but you know, there are people who are addicted to that channel. They buy stuff that they don't even know they need, don't even need, and it packs up in their house.

When the Bible talks about in Matthew chapter 4, when the devil came to tempt Christ, I always that always amaze me that God's timing in our lives is everything. Now we get in such a hurry, we just bypass God's timing. In Matthew chapter 4, when the devil came to Christ, he tried to get Him to do four things, or three things. When you look at those three things, you'll find that there was nothing wrong with those three things because Christ is going to do every one of those three things at the second coming of Christ. He was trying to get Him to do them now. In other words, the devil sometimes will try to get us to do the right thing at the wrong time. Paul said in Romans 8:28, he says,

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

He says, "But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." A while back, I talked to you about in Habakkuk chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, I talked to you about a vision for your kids. We were going through child training, and it talks about there, it talks about that we're to write the vision, that we are to make it plain, but then we're to wait for it. We don't have any problem writing it and making it plain. Our problem is waiting for God to do in your life what you think has to happen today. Romans 12:7 says we're told to wait on ministry and let it take its course. The older I get, the less in a hurry I get. I've learned some things over the years, and I'm just telling you, I realize that it's all in God's timing. I'll wait on Him with my eyes. I'll know what He wants. I'll know what He's going to do. But God's people today have no patience to wait for the things of God in their lives.

It took me about 20 to 30 years to figure out what my job was versus what God's job is. The reason why we screw up so many times in our lives is because we never figured it out, and we are so busy doing God's job that we don't ever get our job done. I promise you, if you and I will focus on and learn what our job is that God wants us to do, I guarantee you He will do His. 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 5 and 6, and we think that gain is godliness, but yet the Bible says that contentment with godliness is great gain. Being able to wait on God.

You're taught when you go into the ministry, if you go to a Bible college someplace or whatever, what they teach you how to build a church is the first thing you got to have is you got to have a building. So the kid goes out and he, you know, he gets a great group of people, and they're struggling, and they're young, and he has been taught that if you get your people committed to a building program, then that will anchor them in the church, and then that's how you build a church. That is the stupidest advice anybody could ever give you. I'm not going to anchor anybody in a church building, but I will anchor you in the Word of God. If I waste my time in a building, it ain't going to go anywhere. If I put my investment of anchoring you in the book, then

we can do whatever we want to do with that. But that's the way it's at today. We live in a mentality that the bigger the church is, the more grandiose it is, the more the people are going to like it and are going to want to come to it. There's an element of truth in that because people today, most Christians, that's what they want. They think Christianity is a main chandelier in the ballroom. I was taught years ago that real Christianity is never the main chandelier in the ballroom. Real Christianity is the light bulb on the back porch. But nobody wants to go that route anymore.

Now we have our building here, and there have been people come down and look at it, and you can see that at one glance, this is not what they expected. We're here in a place that used to be an antique mall, used to be a place where cars were displayed in it. It's been all kinds of things. When we started our church, we didn't, I've never, I've never been concerned about a building. You know why? Because I had learned when we started this church, which was almost 16 years ago now, I had learned that that wasn't my job. My job is not to find a building. That's God's job. My job is to be equipped to preach and to be ready to go and then say to God, "Okay, I've done my job. What's wrong with you?" We looked for a place to start back then, and we were down here at the little place down the road here that Larry belongs here. What's it called? The Pavilion. We were down there for three or four years, and Larry, who owns all of the buildings around here, just a nice guy, one of the nicest people, loves this church, loves us, supports it. He loves our people ministry. He always is, it's just been so good to us. We were down there, but we had it back then where we just rented it because they had things all the time. So we rented it two hours on Sunday morning and two hours on Thursday night. We didn't have it any other time. We couldn't if we wanted to have an activity, we had to rent it or do something else or go someplace else. So we were there for about, and I was cool with that. We didn't have any place for the kids. Remember we built those old partitions back there for the kids and tried to block the sound out? Didn't work very well, but that's where we were, and I was satisfied with that.

One day, Larry, in fact, it was on an anniversary Sunday, it had to be about the fourth or fifth year we were in existence, Larry called me and he says, "Hey, I want to meet with you next week." And I said, "Okay, that'd be great, Larry." So I come up in a minute, you walk me down here, and I cannot tell you the disarray this place was in. I mean, you look at it now, and it's really nice, but it was terrible. It was just stuff stacked everywhere. It was unbelievable all the way back. I walked down here, and he, I didn't know what he was doing, and Larry said, "You know, I," he said, "I want you to have this down here." He says, "I want you to have a place that is yours." He says, "The rent you're paying up at this place for just the two times you use it," he says, "there's 10,000 square feet here. I'm going to let you have this. I'm not going to raise your rent. I'm not going to, it's you, it's yours. You fix it up however you want to fix it. If there's something breaks, I'll fix it. I'll pay the utilities. I'll do this. I'll do that. It's your place. You do what you want to do with it." So we got our guys together. We moved up here, and this is what we did. We built the kids' things down there. We built this up here. Then about a year and a half ago, Larry called me in again, and he says, "Do you want this place upstairs here where your prayer groups are?" And I said, "Yeah, I said, I'll take that." He says, "Okay." In other words, I didn't, I didn't, I didn't pray for God to give us a building. I didn't pray for the upstairs. I didn't pray for this. I was just doing my job. You know what my job was? My job was to make sure

every time on Thursday and Sunday that I was prepared to give you the Word of God. That's my job. I didn't get sidetracked in looking for a building or wondering about a building or wondering this. I figured that when God wanted to give us the building, He'd give us a building, and God gave us what we wanted.

Now people come down, and in their mindset, this is not much of a church. It's everything to me. See, it isn't anything to you because you don't got anything invested in it. I guarantee you, if you live close to here and the Russians attack and you have to find a bomb shelter, you'll be begging to get in down here, and we'll be like, "No, in the ark, we're closing the door now." We'll let you in, and I'll put about nine guys on here. They'll work you over right up to the point you die of radiation poisoning. But anyway, this is what this is. This is where we are. I wouldn't, if somebody came back and said, "We're going to give you this grand, we want you to have this grand, we want you to have this grand." I'm satisfied right here. You know why? I'll tell you why. Because 100%, I can't say this about anything in my life, but I know for sure in this building, in this church right here where I'm standing and where you're sitting, this is where God wanted us to be, and God gave us this. I ain't trading out for anything.

First thing they do, I was at a church one time, and John Christensen was there too. Remember goofy ball over there? In New Hope. This is the guy that not to gather now. He's a pretty good guy, but this was back in the day, and this guy, he had a nice church, didn't they, John? There's nothing wrong with that church. Had a gymnasium. It was a nice church. But he, here again, the mentality is he wants to build a bigger, grander addition. So, he gets a building. He goes and he gets the property. He makes a deal without talking to anybody, didn't he, John? John was a deacon back then. They kicked John out, and then John came over here. Thank God they kicked you out. I still remember the name you called me on the phone. Remember that day? That was the greatest day of my life that you didn't have anything. You wanted to come to my church. My wife and I said when we left that or started church, and the old pastor started this church, a good man, and my wife always said there was two people we wanted was you two, and God gave us the desires of our heart, and then I got the rest of them. She didn't have the shoes she's got on today back then, but we like them anyhow.

So this guy wants to put him into a building program. He asks every family in the church, was it a thousand or two thousand, John? I can't remember. It was a lot of money. He had every family in that church to go get a thousand dollars to buy the land, and then to make sure he could pressure you into that, he put a big board up there behind his pulpit, and he said, "Praise the Lord," with the names of all the people who gave him a thousand dollars. You know, there are two sides of that coin, didn't everybody? That showed the ones who did it, but it also put pressure on the ones who didn't. He's doing 25 years of life, so we're okay. God took care of that one. But I'm telling you, God gave us this, man. I wouldn't trade this for anything. This God gave us that wasn't looking for it, wasn't asking for it. I realized that my job is to be ready to give out the Word of God. It's God's job to have a place for me to do it. It's the thing where, hey, you know, how much, you know, how many heart attacks preachers are have because they've got their people into a multi-billion building program. I talked to a guy one time who their church had just had just decided they were going to build a new building, and they didn't need one either, but it

was like 80 million dollars. 80 million dollars. And he told me, he said, he boasted, he said, "We took up a special offering today to kick off our drive, and we raised a hundred thousand dollars today." He said that like it was something special. And I looked at it and I said, "Wow, that's great. You only got to do that 800 more times, idiot. Try that every week, every month. If you tried it every year, you'd have that church paid for it 800 years." Oh, golly, don't tell me God didn't have a sense of humor. I just, you know, I came to the point where I realized that, you know what, I have my job to do, God had His, and I just start with what God gave me. Like the loaves and the fishes, God just multiplied it.

God's people today, they have no patience to wait for the things of the Lord. Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verses 1 through 8, tells us that there's a time for every purpose under heaven, and he lists 28 things that there's a timing to. You'll find that when Christ died on the cross, he keeps talking about the fact that "mine hour has not yet come." There's a timing involved, and God's people can't wait on the Lord for anything today. They just can't. They can't wait to find a spouse, so they get themselves in all kinds of problems. They get married way too soon. They can't wait for their children to get to the point because they want their kids saved. This is the funny thing. They want their kids saved so desperately that the first time the kid comes home and says, "I'm going to get saved," and he's three years old, they win him to Christ. They can't wait and follow Romans chapter 7, which is the definitive passage on training your child and winning your child to Christ. They can't wait for that to happen, so the very parent that can't wait for his child to get saved condemns him many times to a lake of fire simply because of the fact that they're impatient. I've seen parents, you know, they can't be patient with their children. Let them be kids. Your kids, male or female, have no right at 14 or 15 looking like a 25 or 26 year old, dressing like it. I've seen teenagers that were 12 and 13, I thought to myself, "Man, where were you at when I was in the sixth grade?" It's just a phrase, okay? They can't be patient to wait for anything in life, and being patient is not a natural thing. It isn't. None of us are just born with patience, not when it comes to the maybe things in life, big things in life. It's something that you have to add. You have to develop. You have to come to the place in your life where you grow into being patient. It's not a natural thing. It's a maturity concept. It's understanding who God is and how He works, and then just wait upon Him with your eyes, keep following the promises and the principles, being patient, knowing that God knows the very desires of our hearts, but it has to be for our profit. It has to be in His timing. So our eyes wait upon the Lord. You stay with the promises. You stay with the principles.

➤ Patience in Building a Church

I'll tell you the second area that is hard, and I add this because in time, some of you will probably do this, and that is in building a church. Let me say, if you ever pastor a church, know this, that it will take all the patience that you have, and that's why when you're in a church that trains men and women, you learn those things. Now we get the idea today that the definition of a church is that mega church concept of 10,000 people, and of course, as it's been said many, many times, just because you get 10,000 people in a building does not mean that it's a church.

It's nothing easy about it. You're going to find that there's going to be setbacks. You're going to find that there's going to be opposition. You're going to find that there's going to be times of

discouragement. There's going to be obstructions that come into your life. The greatest two books that I've ever found that really show you the ministry of what the reality of it is, is the books of Nehemiah and Ezra. You'll find there that when they went back to build Jerusalem and the wall, which is a picture of somebody building a church, the four main opposition that they faced will be the four main opposition that you face. I've helped many a young man that has went out of my ministry over the years. I know that because young pastors, some pastors, young pastors will make some big mistakes because they don't have the experience. I know it was true of me. If I wouldn't have had Mel Samaka back in the day, that when I went out to Kansas City way back in 1976, I would have never made it. I was on the phone with him all the time. I had to have somebody who understood what I didn't yet to fall back on so I wouldn't make any stupid mistakes.

Building a church is like building a house or putting a room addition onto your house. You're going to learn three things when you do that:

4. It's going to take longer than you thought.
5. It's going to be harder than you thought.
6. It's going to cost more than you thought.

The key to it all will be forbearing. The key to it all will be patience, long suffering, following the patterns and the principles, and staying with it and allowing God to build it while you do your job and He does His, being patient with that.

New Year's Eve, we're going to have Jim Lake here to preach for us. Jim Lake, as far as I am concerned, is one of the most incredible individuals that I ever met in my life. I like to have him here to preach whenever I can. Nobody knows the story of Jim. Jim's not a flashy guy. He's not loud. He's a very quiet guy who just does what God's called him to do. But Jim went up to Montpelier, Vermont, after I came to Kansas City. In fact, Jim helped me move out here, and him and I drove out together in the U-Haul, and we, he helped me move out here. We've been best friends forever. After that time, he went to Montpelier, Vermont, to build a church. Montpelier, Vermont, is a vacation spot of New England. It's a very high-class, high-society, very classy place that, along with being in New England, makes it feel to build a church almost impossible. New England is where it all started, and New England is where it all fell apart. It's Bernie Sanders' territory, completely liberal, totally against everything we've got.

Jim Lake has been up there now for almost over 40 years. He's got a church of probably maybe 150, 200 people. That's an incredible thing. I cannot tell you how many guys have went to New England to build a church and didn't make it past a year, two years, three or four years at the max. Jim's been there for over 40 years, and he has anchored down, hunkered down, and he's done a job, and he's got a church planted where nobody could ever to plant one. It's unbelievable. It all comes back to Jim being patient. Jim just took his time. He did his job. He didn't get involved in a lot of goofy things. He just stayed focused on what God had called him to do. He did his job and allowed God to do His, and he's got a great church up there, and he's been an impact and a witness to a lot of pastors up there that are struggling. Jim is absolutely incredible

as far as I'm concerned about building his church in Vermont, and he is the textbook of what it takes and patience. It's easy in Kansas City. Try Vermont. Try it in Massachusetts. It's tough.

It comes down to just simply understanding patience and waiting on God and letting Him, and the rest takes care of itself. You just use the patterns. You stay with the principles. You don't try to make things happen. The job of a pastor, any pastor really, is just basically three things:

7. You learn from the Word of God and the people that God has trained you with.
8. You learn how to build a church.
9. You learn what you're supposed to do, and then you have a biblical plan to do it, and then you just follow the patterns and allow God to do His work while you do yours.

Even in that, there's times you have to adjust and you have to change, but those are the fundamental things that you follow. There's no mass evangelism today. There's no programs that work today. There's no bus ministry today. If the 1960s and the 70s taught us anything, and we never learned from history, but they taught us anything, they taught us that the mega church concept is not a biblical concept. We think it is today. We see the guys with the 20,000 in their tendons or 10,000 or 5,000 or 6,000, and we think because everybody goes there, God must be there. Well, let me just say, the Bible says that that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. I'm telling you, all those mega churches back in the 60s and the 70s, they're nowhere to be found today, and that's a lesson that this generation of pastors have never learned because they don't learn anything from history. God's program has never been a mega church. You just take the people that God sends you and you take care of them. I firmly believe that the problem with the mega church is you can't pastor and take care of that many people, and the principle is God won't give you any more people than you're willing to take care of. The rest of it you make happen. You build a church one family at a time. You build a church one person at a time. One couple at a time. It's never about quantity, but rather about quality. You reproduce what you're doing in others, and in time, you get 80, 90, 150 people that are doing what you're doing, and then it just multiplies itself. It has nothing to do with a building or a program or a rock band or a Christian halftime show or having a cafeteria or gymnasium. You build it through long suffering. You build it through forbearing, and you build it through patience, and you let God do it one person at a time, and you be content with that.

I learned a long time ago that most pastors don't make it into ministry very far because they're always focusing on what they don't have when they never look at what they do have. I always remember what I do have, and I never care about what I don't have because what is have is what God has given me, and I had to learn that lesson the hard way. I didn't just come out knowing that. I had to go through some things in my life that God had to teach me. You build it through the patience and the forbearing and long suffering, and God will not only mature the people that you're ministering to, but He'll mature you through it, and then patience, you'll learn patience, and then patience will take on its perfect work, and God will do something in your life.

➤ Patience in Dealing with People

Now the third thing, boy, this is so true. The next one is for sure that you'll have to, you'll need patience in dealing with people. You build a church one person at a time, that is for absolute sure,

but there will be, there's will be the challenge, will be the challenge, will be people. Bob Jones Senior wasn't too far off when he said, "The more I'm around people, the better I like dogs." A lot of truth to that. People will fail. People will struggle. People will betray you. People will go behind your back. People will lie about you. People will, you know, they'll play you against something or somebody else. It happens all the time. They will try to get it. They will get into something, and it will become a stronghold in their life for the rest of their lives. It's just the way it works. They will get into booze. They'll get into drugs. They'll get into music. They'll get into pornography. They'll get into money. They'll get into worldly possessions, and sometimes multiple or all of the above.

The great example in the Bible are the Christians are like, Christianian like, and Christians are likened unto sheep. Christ is likened unto a sheep, the Lamb, the Lamb of God. But Christians, because Christ is a sheep or a lamb, we're likened unto sheep. But I got to say something to you, in the real world, sheep are the dumbest animals on the planet. They have a tendency for getting lost. They have a tendency to be curious and going places they shouldn't go. They have a tendency to get into trouble. When sheep get sick, you know what they do? They start staying away from the flock by themselves. All in all, they make pretty good Christians. Erroneously, most pastors teach that as pastor, they're the, he's the shepherd. That starts with the Roman Catholic Church many, many years ago, and the Episcopalian people and all that stuff. If you're a pastor, you're not a shepherd. The Bible states that there's only one shepherd, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the shepherd of the flock. I'm your pastor. I'm not a shepherd. I'm not your shepherd. The Lord Jesus Christ is your shepherd. You say, "Well, what are you then?" I'm a sheep dog. I'm the one who nips at your heels when you get away from the flock. I'm the one who barks at you when you get off straight. I'm the one that circles around you, and when you don't do what's right, I nudge you. When you still don't do what's right, then I'll bark at you. When you still don't do what's right, then I'll bite your heels, and if that doesn't work, then I'll bite you someplace else. But I will bite you.

It's a thing where, you know, that's the way it works. When I've got people in my ministry that I've known for 30, 40, 50 years, and they've been in and out all of their lives, they got into something a long time ago, it compounded itself, it got bad, and they're not bad people. They're really not. They're nice people. But they, you know, they just, they, you know, they're, I've known them many of them since they were 15, 16 years old, and they will never have the victory of the Christian life in their life. They go back and forth. They're in, they're out, they're up, they're down. They make every bad choice possible. They'll come back. They'll say, "I want to do what's right." They'll come and see me. "I want to do what's right. I really want it. I know I've screwed up." And I say, "Yeah, I know. We're here for you. We love you." They'll make a run out of it, and six months later, they're gone. Three years from now, they'll be back again. It's almost like if I was a farmer, I could plant my crops by you. You're so predictable. They'll come for six months or a year, and then they're gone. They're gone for two years, and then they're back again, and over and over and over. Then you got to add that they get into a bad marriage to it. They have children, and then the children become a compounding effect, and it becomes a terrible situation. I'm telling you all that to say this: you got to deal with it. It would be nice that if I had a, could just write people off and say, "I don't, I don't want to deal with you." But you cannot take things

like that personal. You can't develop an attitude about it. In my ministry, I have never given up on anybody. You may give up on yourself, but I will never give up on you. I don't care what you've done. I don't care what situation you got yourself into. I only care of where you're at right now and where you want to go from here.

Now, let me pause here and say there's one exception to this. I'm a fair guy, and I, but I've learned some things in the ministry, and you take your garden variety problems that people have and your sin issues that you struggle with, I'm good. I'm here for you forever. You can come in and come out. If it makes you feel better, we'll get the guys and put a revolving door back there, and so they got away in and out. It'll be fine. We're good for you. But I'll tell you one exception to that, and that is when somebody is subversive and goes behind my back. You go behind my back to undermine my ministry or my authority as a pastor by sidestepping me to get what you want. I've had people over the years enter into a little secret relationship with somebody else, and the thing is, you know, "Well, I want you to do it, but don't tell Bob. We don't want him to find out. We don't want him to find out." You're done. I'm not mad at you. I love you, but I've learned that people like that in the long term are going to hurt you. I mean, it's just that simple. I have learned over the years that people who are subversive, who don't respect my authority as pastor, that whether you like that or agree with that or not is immaterial. I'm here till God changes me out, and the bottom line is that's my, my job is to lay down what goes on and who does this and who does that. You may not agree with it, but that's beside the point. It has to be somebody in charge. The buck has to stop someplace. When somebody circumvents that, goes behind my back, brings other people in, we're done. I love you. I'm there for you. I mean, but I, I, I can put up with everything, but I know that that Absalom syndrome, that Jacob deception syndrome will not play in my ministry. I'm the fairest guy you'll ever meet. I love people. I'll do anything for you. I'll give you whatever. My patience for my impatience with McDonald's does not carry over into your world. I have the patience of everything for you, and I'm going to tell you why in a minute. But I, I am, I am more than patient. Those people that are in and out and up and down, they're welcome to come. I'll help them every time. Some of them have been back six or seven or eight times over 20, 30 years, and every time they come back, I meet them at the door. I hug them, and I say, they say, "I'm going to make it this time." I'd say, "I'm with you." And they don't make it. It's okay.

Had a guy a couple of, about seven or eight years ago now, and most of you know the story, but just so you know, he, I've known the guy for many, many, many years, and he got to the place where he got a little group of people that didn't like what was going on here, and so he, he, he got them together, and they had a little meeting, and they basically were going to go out and start their own church. I knew nothing about it at the point in time, and it kind of, I got the word right before the week before they were going to start the church, but I pieced it together pretty quickly. What he did was he called these people together, and basically here was their plan: "Now we're going to leave Old Paths, and we're going to go start a church. So here's the deal. We need to stop going to church regularly. You go every other week. You go every three weeks, and we're going to kindly project this out in the next six months, and by the time we get to six months, none of us are going to be going there, and we're going to go start our own church. And then when Bob says anything, you can just say, 'Well, I haven't been there for quite a while.'" That was the plan. See,

that was the plan. So he did. He took it, and you know what? When I found out about it, what do you think I did? I gave him a pulpit because he didn't have one. Let him take some song books. They didn't have any. Of course, I blacked out all the songs because I didn't take it personal when I saw who he was taking. You know where this is going, do you, honey? I call him my loving affectionate term for him is my Thursday pastor. You say, "Why is that?" Because that's trash day at my house, and all he did was take out the trash. I'm telling you right now that church didn't last four, five, six years. Nobody would come to it because he couldn't preach his way out of a wet paper bag. We got kids in the junior high department knew more Bible than he did. You talk about a false gift, boasting of a false gift, that was it. I tried to help him. I could have, I could have church teamed. I could have yanked his ordination papers. I could have done all kinds of things. I didn't. You know what? Because, hey, the bottom line is simply this: if that's the way you feel, and my, my philosophy has been this way all my ministry when it comes to my church and my people, you can have whoever you can steal. I'm okay with it because if you can steal them, you can have them, and you can have them. He knew the right people to contact. He knew not to contact you or you or you. You're only in. You weren't here yet, but if he would have been, you would have not have contacted you. He wouldn't have contacted Bob. He wouldn't have contacted you because you wouldn't have met the love of your life if you went with him. See the blessings of just keeping your eyes on the Lord. I love you, man. You're my buddy. His church lasted about four or five years. Now nowhere, gone nowhere. It's a thing where I let God take care of those things, but at the same time, I want nothing to do with it. I won't be part of it. Once a person does that to me and goes behind my back, I've had him do it always, all kinds of situations. You know what it is what it is. But in your garden variety of issues that you have, I'm always here for you. I get it. Sometimes it takes a while to get it together. I get that, and God never gave up on the nation of Israel, and you know what? He won't give up on you.

People don't always respond as fast as we would like them to sometimes, do they? We tend to get impatient. Sometimes it takes four or five years to get it together. I get it. I understand. I'm okay with that as long as you're not subversive and you're just struggling and going through some things. I'm fine with that. It's when you start that, "Don't tell Bob that we're going to do this." Well, Bob already knows you're doing it. Now you may ask, given that, how do you, how do you put up with that? I mean, why would it be so much easier just to write them off? I mean, plenty of people out there. Well, I just deal with them like God was patient with me for 19 or 20 years. You look at me standing up here preaching the Bible and giving you the Bible and doing this and doing that. You know, I wasted the first 19, 20 years of my life and to do a thing for God, and God was trying to get a hold of my heart all through that period of time, and I just was in and out, up and down. I was way more out than in. I was worse than anybody that comes in and comes out. I wasn't coming in and coming out and coming back. I just wasn't going at all. You realize, I think of the games that I played with God in my life, the stupid things that I've done, and how not one time in all those fears and all those things, that He was never there for me when I was ready for Him. I just look at people through my own stupidity.

I'll never forget, my example was old Mel Sabaka. He never gave up on me. Mel Sabaka was a youth pastor there, and Gene, if you're listening to this, you usually do, you'll know, you'll know this is what I'm talking about. You know it's true that we quit going to church as a family when I

was still pretty young, and in my high school years, I never went to church, and but I was had been there, and there was on the rules, and every Tuesday night Mel Sabaka was our visitation night where you went out, and Mel Sabaka would send the kids out to me to try to invite me to church. Well, after a while, it just every Tuesday, and I would always give them the answer, "Yeah, I'll be there," but I wasn't going. So after a while, I got so irritated with it that I just, I would when I see him pull up in front, I'd head out the back door and across the field. My mom would say, "He's not here." That seemed to work. I did that for about a month and a half, and then they pulled up up front one time when I come out the back door, and there was Mel standing there, "Where you going? Where you going?" You know what? I look back and think to myself, where I'm at today by the grace of God, where I'm at today, and what God has done for me, and what God has given me, goes back to a man like that who never gave up on me. So if that really meant something to me, how do I ever give up on you? How do I do that? You say, "Well, you don't know the stupid things that I've done." You want to compare notes? It isn't about that. We all do dumb things. It's about God never gives up on you. I can't give up on you simply for the fact that God never gave up on me. I got to be honest with you, some of the best people in this church took a while to get it together. Some of you played volleyball, softball three or four, five, six years before you ever came to church, and it paid off, and it's okay. It's okay. You know why? Because you were worth waiting for. You're the gold. I remember the first time I met Bubba at a birthday party over Waldo's Pizza. What a jerk he was, wasn't you? You were worth waiting for. All of you were worth waiting for. Troy, you were worth waiting for. You were worth waiting for. It's a thing where it's a Steve Bracken, you were worth waiting for. Even though I slammed your head up against Marshall's alley many a time when you were 15 years old, you were worth waiting for. You're all worth waiting for because God in my life waited for me. Sometimes we forget where we came from, and we want people to be so perfect when we weren't so perfect, and we get so impatient because they're just not where I want them to be. Well, for many, many years, we weren't where God wanted us to be. That same patience that God had for you, that forbearing and that long suffering, is what you were to add to your faith as you mature and grow into Him. That's how it works. I don't like some of the things that people do, but you know what? You got to look past that. You got to realize that they're not doing it because that's who they really are. They're doing it because they're caught up in the world, and they're not God has changed somebody's changed their name. I've watched some of you, I watched my people, I've watched you stick with people year after year after year. You invite them to softball and invite them to volleyball. You just were, you were every time, three weeks out, two months out, you call them on the phone. We'll do volleyball. Now we're doing softball. You just stayed with them, stayed with them, stayed with them. You never gave up on them. You had the patience of Job. James 5:11.

The verse says, "By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone." That last part of the verse, that prince there, doctrinally would be obviously Christ in the millennium. This is a tribulation millennial passage here, but for inspiration, it's somebody who is in authority, somebody that you win over who is maybe hardened like a bone, but you win them over in time, persuade them through your patience of allowing God to deal with them. I mean, you're going to find that sometimes there's a hardness to people like a bone, and sometimes they don't want to do what's right, and you can't develop an attitude. You can't write

them off. You can't just simply say, as long as they're just that garden variety of issues and there's no subversiveness there, they're just good people who are screwed up in life. Your persistence, your patience, your forbearing, your long suffering will bring them around and persuade them.

Over the last couple of weeks, we've seen and learned some things now that we can build. We saw first of all in verse 11 how that we're to use words fitly spoken. Then we talked about in verse 12 that we are to develop the ability to hear what God is saying, the obedient ear. Verse 13 told us that we needed to be, once we got those things, a faithful messenger, growing in the fruit of the Spirit, God giving us the gifts of the Spirit as you grow into Him and develop all that God has for you. Then you learn to be patient in three areas:

10. You learn to be patient first of all in your own personal life with God.
11. Second of all, in the ministry that God has given you.
12. Third, with the people that go along with the ministry through forbearing, long-suffering patience, persuading them to Christ, realizing that a soft answer through patience and waiting on God is the way to do it, letting patience in your life do her perfect work, and a soft tongue with patience, forbearing, can break the hardest heart, and people see that love in that consistency in your life.

James 5:8

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

I leave you with Psalms 123:1-2 as I gave you earlier:

Psalms 123:1-2

1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Being patient, waiting on God to do His work in His time, in His time, waiting on Him with our eyes, reading and claiming the promises and the principles, waiting for God to do what He does best until His time comes in when He realizes that it's time for Him to do now what He is going to do. We have been patient. You focus on what your job is. Let God do His job, but through that understanding, without taking it personal, that patience is the key, waiting for people to get where God wants them to be, and maybe they never will, but you never give up on them. They may have given up on themselves, but the thing many times that'll bring them back will be you not giving up on them, staying with them as best you can, loving them, caring for them, as long as they follow the principles, love, love you, love the book, and are willing to, you know, the struggles that they have are going to be the struggles that we all have.