

# Proverbs 22:14-16

October 29, 2023

When the Old Paths boys played, I had them give me my favorite song, "The Camel Train," and they learned that. I am telling you guys, you guys are really good. You guys have got to get one more person, and then you are going to need to learn the old song, "God Made a Way." Just sing it for me one time before I die, and I will be happy.

Last week, we looked at five really good, practical principles for all of us out of Proverbs 22:11-13. I started last week by telling you that, or I told you sometime, I cannot remember what it was, that somebody asked me one time what was the one word that would sum up what we need to do when it comes to the Bible to learn it. I told you that that word was "context." Everything has to have a context.

If somebody would ask me what the one word was that I would boil everything down in the Christian life for it to be successful, pleasing to God, everything that you would ever want it to be for the Lord, it would be an easy one word. It would be the word "principles," learning biblical principles. We saw it last week, five great ones with a lot of sub-principles that went along with it.

We talked about having a pure motive for the things of God based on a pure heart for God. We talked about the great contrast or great concept in the Bible of grace and truth, how to make us God's friend, doing the ministry His way and not the way we think we want to do it. We talked about the preservation of the Word of God, how that the Word of God will preserve you. It will preserve your ministry. It will preserve your life. It will preserve your family. It will preserve everything about you through the power of the Word of God and God keeping you.

We talked about knowing and understanding that once you have that preservation of the Word of God into your life, nothing or no one will ever stop you in doing the work of God. We talked about being bold, never being fearful, but having a boldness in all that we do for the Lord Jesus Christ. Our confidence in ourselves comes from our confidence in the Lord and the Word of God through the principles of the Word of God.

Everything that we do here will come down not only in your life, but the way we structure our church will come down to trying to see everything in life from God's standpoint. Not looking at it from our point of view, but seeing it through God's point of view. That key element will only, only happen because of the principles found in the Word of God.

So far, we have talked about through Proverbs 22 a bountiful eye, looking at the opportunities that God puts before you, seeing the opportunities that God wants to give us. We talked last week about a pure heart which leads to a pure motive in the things we do for God and the great concept, as I have already said, of grace and truth. Having the truth of God, but then having the grace to administer the truth of God. Without a doubt, the key uses in life and the Bible will be based on us getting the principles down, the Word of God.

## I. The Nature of Biblical Principles

*Proverbs 4:7*

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

What it is saying there is that the key to getting God's understanding, the ability to see everything the way God sees it, will come from a principled life. Learning the principles, because within those principles, we find how God sees.

Learning the principles, and I will be very honest with you, and I have told you this many, many times, learning the principles is like any other study that you will ever take through the Word of God. You can take word studies; we have talked about that. You can take character studies; many of you are very good at that. You can study the books of the Bible, study the chapters in the Bible. You can study types within the Bible; that is a great study. Numerology is a great study. You can do topical studies, historical studies, doctrinal studies, prophetic studies, or you can do inspirational studies for your own life.

But learning biblical principles, taking a study of learning biblical principles, is different than any other study that you will ever take within the Bible. When a person comes into this church, we encourage them to get involved in Discipleship One and Discipleship Two, and it is where you start. Those are the entry levels of your relationship with Christ after you get saved. These lessons are the foundational teachings of the Bible, what we believe, your first layer.

*1 Corinthians 3:11*

*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

When you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life. That foundation is Christ, your salvation. The first things you should build on that foundation is the basic understanding of how Christianity works, how your salvation works, how the Bible works, bringing you through those fundamental issues that you need to know.

But when a person wants to learn the principles, it is a whole different level. You will notice that in all of the things that we have here in our church, we do not have a set of lessons on learning principles because you learn the principles will be more than just somebody giving you verses. I am all for that. You learn principles by not store-housing them, and that is what a lot of God's people do. A lot of people, especially in a church like this that teaches so much Bible, there is a tendency for you just to take a lot of stuff but never do anything with it.

You learn principles not by store-housing them, not by getting as many as you can. Most people get the idea that if you get a bunch of principles, that is going to solve all your problems in life, and that is not true. I grew up in Christianity hearing preachers say all the time, "If you read your Bible, the Bible will solve all the problems that you will ever have in life." I heard that all of my life, and one day, as I matured a little bit, I realized that was not exactly true. Now, I am all for the Bible, but reading the Bible will not solve your problems. Applying what you read will solve your problems.

Just store-housing or cataloging principles will not solve your problems. You have to use and apply what you learn. Principles, just like I tell people all the time, we will disciple you, and we

will take you through Discipleship Two. But from time to time, we will get people who want to be discipled, but they do not want to come to church. That does not work. Discipleship One and Two are all tied into what you learn here, and you cannot get one without the other. It is the same way with principles. Principles have to be tied into you putting them into your own life first, and then in different levels, taking them to somebody else. But they have to start with your own personal application.

Somebody who claims to want all the principles but continually, with their family, with their kids, with their marriage, with whatever, continually makes bad choices and bad decisions. Principles are an incredible thing, and principles will come in sets. This is why you cannot put them into just verses. It is like in a high-tech piece of electronic equipment. I do not know anything about that, but I just know this illustration. In a big piece of technical whatever, when something goes wrong and they call in a technician, they have made them now so everything runs on circuit boards. He will put his little thing up there, and he will listen, and he will find out what is bad, and he will just pull out this little panel of circuits and put a new one in, and voila. That whole sophisticated electrical technology is built on individual circuit boards that you put in, and then they all lock together to make it work. That is what principles do. Principles are like circuit boards.

On every circuit board, you may have this circuit board runs A, B, C, and D, but on it, it may have 30 little electrodes or whatever they put in those things that makes it all work. Principles come in sets like the circuit boards. You have a set of circuits for marriage, for remarriage, for divorce. There may be 20-30 principles that go along with that. We talked about it a couple of weeks ago on Thursday night, you have a circuit board, a set of principles for dating. You have one for finding a job. You have one, we came through it for two months, training your children. For every issue in life, there will be a set of principles.

Now, principles come in three formats.

- Direct principles: They are right to you that you can apply to yourself and everybody else.
- Indirect principles: They are things about the generalities in life, like maybe our country or our government or this or that, that are not directly affecting you, but indirectly, you need to know what is going on.
- Personal principles: Those are the ones that God has given you through tough times. Those are the ones that you have that got you through when nothing else got you through, and those are the ones that, let us be honest, they are the most valuable. They are the ones that you would not be here today if you did not have them. Many times, you can share them with somebody that you are going through, but it is a situation where they fall into that pattern.

Principles will be found in different aspects. Sometimes, you will just take one verse out of the Bible, and that is a great principle. There are a bunch of them in Philippians. Then sometimes, you will find a chapter. The whole chapter will be a great principle, like 1 Samuel chapter 3 comes to my mind. Then you will have where maybe a book in the Bible reveals a whole set of principles, and I am thinking of the book of Job and other places.

Principles are absolutely the essentials of the Christian life. Therefore, if there was one word that I could give you today other than the word "context" to learn your Bible, if there is one word that I could give you today that would be everything that you need for the victorious Christian life, it would be "principles." Learning the principles of the Word of God.

## II. Learning Principles vs. Store-housing

Somebody just giving you principles will not really help you. When I taught you principles, and we have coming up next week the People Ministry, you know what that is. A number of years ago, I had got the church to a place where people were coming in, and we were growing, and people wanted to have issues, and I needed to have help, and I wanted to train you, and you reproduce yourself and others. So we started the People Ministry. It was a thing where it was volunteer; anybody could get in it. When you got in it, you realized that it was unlike any other thing you probably ever had been in your life because we go to work, and what do we do?

I began to teach you basically starting in Genesis, walking all the way through the Bible, and we are in Jeremiah, I think, this next week. We have come a ways. I just started pulling out the circuit boards. I showed you in Genesis 27 the circuit board of deception, how to know when somebody deceives you. I pulled out the circuit board in Genesis 3 and showed you how that people will use God in their deception. We just simply walk through every story in the Bible. The thing we did a couple of weeks ago in Genesis 24 about dating, that is just a circuit board that is in a big, big machine of Christianity. When you have problems in dating or your kids starting to date, and hey, I know your moms and dads are calling me. Our little girls are growing up. I looked at my oldest, Maddie, this morning, and I thought, "Who is that?" Some of you moms are calling me on the phone and saying, "I am getting so nervous about them getting, they are going to start dating. What am I going to do?" Do what Jamie does, just drive them around in the car all night long.

You have a circuit board; you have a whole set of principles on everything you need to know about your child dating, male or female. You have a circuit board right there, and we walked through every aspect of it. We talked about dealing with people, remember that one in 1 Kings 3, Solomon and the two harlots? What an incredible set of principles that you follow in dealing with people. We talked about in 2 Samuel 5 that pulled out the circuit board of how to break satanic strongholds in a person's life. We pulled out the circuit board in 1 Kings 18 and saw the great principles on depression. We pulled the circuit board out in 2 Kings 6, and I showed you the principles on the real issues of spiritual warfare. I have showed you before in Luke 8 the principles on how to heal your family. In Exodus 32, I remember pulling that circuit board out and teaching you the principles on leadership, and on and on it went, and on and on it will go.

You learn principles by learning your Bible. You do not just shut down and say, "Oh, give me a bunch of principles." You never learn principles by just feeding somebody, feeding them to you, unless you are working on an already area like the People Ministry or something that you know. Discipleship One, absolutely, sit down, teach them the Bible. Discipleship Two, I get it. Those are entry levels in the Bible. There are seven stages of spiritual growth that we all go through, and Paul talks about those. He talks about babies, brand new Christians. He talks about little

children that are beginning to grow. He talks about children that get a little bit farther down the line, and when you do Discipleship One and Discipleship Two, that is the three elements you are working with. They do not require a lot of principles; they just need some basic, fundamental Bible.

But then he says the next area is growing into young men and then fathers, when you begin to take responsibility for somebody else, and then the elders and the aged. There is where the principles come in. There is where you take those people, like many of you do, and you do not teach them to the babies. You do not teach them to the little children. You do not teach them, and you know what? Some of God's people have been saved for five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, and they never move out of the first three stages. They will always be little babies. They will always be little children. They will always be children. They will never come to the place where they ever, and I am going to show you why that is in just a moment.

But if you have seen in the People Ministry, at some point in your life, you have to quit relying on others to give you your Bible. You really do. I watch you young guys and you young gals coming up who I love so dearly, and I just love you so much. I watch you midline people who have been with me now for seven or eight years, and you have come so far, and you are doing so well, and you work in areas that most God's people could never get into. But it is because of the system that we have put together to bring you through a spiritual growth process. I watch you guys. I watched you when you came in, and you did not know anything, and now I have watched you in a year or two years where now you are really going after the Bible yourself. You have to get to the point at some point in your life where you quit relying on everybody else to teach you the Bible. You still have your church. You still have Bible study. You still have Sunday morning, and they all have their purpose, but you now have begun to do the work of the Word of God in your life.

I like science fiction movies. My favorite ones are the ones that were made back in the 1950s, long before most of you were born. I have got a whole box of DVDs on the 1950s sci-fi movies. I like it because I try to learn from everything, and there is a mindset behind the science fiction movies that was made in the 50s, up and maybe even in the 60s. One of them, and I do not have time to get into all this, but one of them has to do with all the alien stuff, and that was because of what happened in Roswell in 1947. The other one has to do with nuclear radiation because the A-bomb was set off in 1945, so it kicked off a bunch of science fiction movies about mutant everything. I mean, mutant crabs that get to be as big as a house. I mean, dinosaurs frozen in the ice, and suddenly, when the bomb goes off, it melts the polar caps, and this big monster comes out and then eats New York. It is incredible stuff.

My favorite is The Giant Praying Mantis. How many have ever seen that movie? Oh, that is a great movie. That is a great movie. It is one of the, but it tells you how he got so big? Nuclear radiation. If I really thought that was true, I would be in a nuclear chamber getting radiated all my life. It did not work for me; I am still short. But I like those, but some of them, let us be honest, some of them are really goofy. The goofiest one I ever saw, and I did not like the movie. In fact, I did not watch it. I think I watched it once, and I would never watch it again, but it stuck

with me. It was The Little Shop of Horrors. How many have seen that? That is terrible. The budget for that had to be a \$1.99.

It is a story, but it reminds me of so many Christians. See, I get you, this is what you do, I get you laughing, tell you a few little jokes, and then wham, I hit you, you do not even know it. It is a story about this mad scientist who grows this plant, and the plant has to eat people. Female women, yeah, it has to eat, I think it is just women. Yeah, he has got a particular taste bud, but he just eats women. So this guy keeps bringing women down and showing them this, and he pushes them into this plant, and it has got, and the plant says, it has got one line through the whole movie, "Feed me." This big plant, "Feed me."

I thought about that years after when I got plugged into God's. That is the way a lot of God's people are. They will go around their whole Christian life. They will never get into the Bible themselves. They will never do anything, but they will just go around and every time, "Feed me. Give me this, give me that, feed me." I am telling you, most people, they will not do. I talked a couple of weeks ago about change, and I said I deal with a lot of people that want to change, but they never change. The reason why they never change is they want to change, but there is no commitment to change. It is the same way with the principles. People say, "I want to learn principles." I know you do, but the problem is there is no commitment in your life to learn those principles. You just want to warehouse them. You want to get as many as you can get. You want to have your pistol belt full of principle bullets.

Most people, they want to categorize them. They want to put them in a catalog. They want to storehouse them, but they do not have to trust them, but they never get into themselves. When we just keep giving them the Bible without any accountability to it, we do not do them any favors. We just enable them to never grow and get past those first three stages. I will give you a great example of this. I have people all the time, "I really want to learn principles, teach me principles." Let me tell you something. Let me show you my point. I gave you five principles last week. There is not a Bible study that does not go by. There is not a Sunday morning that does not go by. I have been systematically counting them for you because I was going to use this. I am going to give you another seven or eight, nine today. That is not counting the sub-things, and that is not counting the good jokes I gave you free of charge.

Yet you will sit through those sermons. I will tell you, "Here is a principle. Here is a principle," and yet you do nothing with them. Absolutely nothing with them. I told you last week, "Here are five." I am going to give you another probably ten today. Thursday night, I remember I gave you a bunch more. We do nothing with them. You know why? Because if you would write those down and begin to go through your Bible and work them out and put them into the categories and the format that they are, that is a lot of work. It is easier to be the plant in the basement, "Feed me."

Both the People Ministry and Bible Institute are set up for me to teach you, but you have to do the work with what I give you. There is probably no Bible institute in the country, maybe there is, I do not know, that gives you any kind of teaching that does not require a test. Early on, years ago, I used to do that. Then I grew up one day and found out how stupid and worthless that really

was. Because you all know, and I all know, when we were in high school, and some of you are better at this than I am, you had to cram for a test to pass it to get the course, but you do not remember anything about what you learned in that school. In other words, the test was a joke.

I could teach you the Bible, teach you the Bible, give you this test. There were some tests I gave back in the day. It took them six, seven hours to do it. They had to get a room someplace for worthless. What good is it that I give you all this material, and then I am going to test you on it to see if you really got it? You know how I know if you really got it? There will not be any test on a piece of paper. It will be what you do with it down the line in your life. That is the real test. The real test is not that you have given me the right answers on the right thing. The real test is what do you do with it in your life once you get them? What are you doing with it? What are you doing with it? There is no test that has to be involved.

### III. The Commitment to Learning

Last week, I told you that a lot of God's people will only go so far, and that is true. That is a tragic thing, and I hate to see it, and I do everything in my power to help you. You know me. I will give you whatever you need. I want to make available for you everything that I can, and I do that for two reasons. One, I genuinely love you. I want to help you. My people get where you need to be, but I have a selfish ulterior motive I need to tell you, and that is that at the judgment seat of Christ, you will never point your finger at me and say, "He did not give me a shot." You will get more than one shot.

You will find people that will be more than satisfied to live off your spirituality. They will get saved. They are babies. They are a young child. They get into the Bible a little bit. They become like little children, but all their life, they do not want to dig into the Word of God themselves. They want everything fed to them, but they themselves will never dig in the Word of God like many of you have done, and that is why you are growing. You cannot live. I do not know who is discipling you, and I do not know who teaches you Discipleship One or Two. I am sure they are good, whoever they are; they would not be doing it. I do not know who is giving you or helping you wherever you are at in the Bible, but I want to tell you this: at some point in your life, you cannot live on their spirituality forever. You have to develop your own. You have to develop your own principles into your own categories that you use. You have to develop your own abilities to study the Bible, to get into the Word of God.

*Luke 12:48*

*But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes: for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

You know, this ministry is not hard to figure out. I give you a lot of material. I simply require you to do something with what I give you based on that verse. Now, if you do not, okay, I still love you. It is not my problem; it is your deal. In dealing with people or dealing with issues, you always have to use the principles. I say it again, if there was one word that would sum up the

victorious Christian life of you getting through the issues of life that we are all going to have to face, it will be "principles." Learning them will be a lifelong process.

Years ago, like I told you yesterday in People Ministry and Institute, I am a very simple guy. I am not very intelligent. I do not have a high IQ. I think it is around sub-plant life someplace. I have never claimed to be the smartest guy in the world. I do claim to be the fastest one in the slow class. I have to break everything down into basic, simple things for me. When I looked at people's problems, and I have been dealing with people's problems for almost 50 years, man, I have seen every problem there is. Through the years, as I looked at that, I tried to put it into a context for me that I could put these into different levels that I knew how to deal with what I needed to deal with, and I just happened to come up with the idea like the medical world does or a doctor would do. He, or a medic in a combat situation, he will grade out the patients to their severity of who needs the medical help the most and first.

I have watched many of you move up through these levels. I have got some of you that were saved three or four years that are so far ahead of somebody who has been saved five or ten or fifteen years, it is unbelievable. I am not saying they are bad people; they are probably wonderful people. But I am saying that when it comes to the principles and the Bible and the Christian life, you have to be committed to it. You cannot just say, "I want to do it. I am going to do it." Every year, every New Year, I find God's people come up to me and slap me on the back or hug me and say, "This year, I am going to do it." And I say to myself, "Wow, yeah, what makes this year different from the last fifteen?" There is only one thing that will make a difference. You know what it is? Commitment. It is not that you are going to learn the Bible; it is now you are going to be committed to learn the Bible. That means you are going to do whatever you have got to do. It is not that, "Oh, I want to learn principles. I want to be able to work with people. I want to be able to understand all those." It is, "Are you committed to do it?" And that takes a lot of work. Or are you just committed to live off somebody else's spirituality forever? Let them feed me. There you go. You guys have got to get up with this thing. This thing. Our sermon from this point on relies on participation. Okay. You have got to help me. Just try one out of the woodwork to see if you forgot. Life is tough. Okay, you are with me, all right. Good deal.

#### IV. Levels of Spiritual Problems

I broke them down into three little categories for me. I taught you this in People Ministry. I looked at the medical world, and people come in; the Bible says Jesus was a great physician. They have spiritual issues. I have a good doctor that is a good friend of mine. His name is Dr. Beaulieu. He is probably one of the best doctors that I have tried to get Bubba to go to that he will not. Do not take that as pressure, Bubba. But you know what? You need to get to the doctor because I need to have you around for another hundred years. Probably would not hurt Donnie to go either. He is a great doctor, and we have known him for years and years and years.

He is, I went over there about a month ago. I had, I do not think I had the flu, but I just had a really bad whatever I had. So I went to urgent care, which you go in the morning. You know how they, that is a neat little deal. You go in there and be there by eight o'clock, and they will see you. But it is always the nurse practitioner who you get to see. There is nothing wrong with that. She

may not be a full-fledged doctor, but this one is really good. So I go in there, and they take me in a room, and the nurse comes in and checks my blood pressure. She leaves the door open. She goes out, and I hear Dr. Beaulieu down the hall. He says, "Is that Bob Alexander that is in there?" She said, "Yeah." He said, "Bring him down to me. I am going to take care of him." No, that is good. That is good.

He talked before. He said, "You know," he says, "How is your church going?" And I said, "It is going good." He says, "Good." He says, "Yeah," he says, "You know, there is a lot of similarities." This is a doctor now, and I believe he is a saved man. This is a doctor now. He said, "You know, there is a lot of similarities between what you do and what I do." And I said, "Yeah, there really is." And he says, "We get spiritual advice all the time." And he says, "You know, because sometimes," he says, "but there is a real, there is a real parallel between what you do and I do."

So we talked, and one time I went in there, and we are not best friends. We are not drinking buddies or anything, but we are just, I do not drink, but we are just, you know. He said to me, I said to him one time, he said, "Yeah," he says, "I did not." He said, "How was church Sunday?" And I said, "It was good." He says, "Yeah, I did not make it to church this Sunday." And I said, "Oh, okay." So then he sent me over to get some blood work. My cholesterol was a little high. You understand, Bubba? Your cholesterol gets a little high sometime. Okay. How am I doing, hon? Am I putting it to him, huh? Okay, good. I am not going to let off of him. He is going to go. I already told him he is waiting for you to call. Yeah, I said his name is Bubba.

Okay, so he says to me, he says, so he takes me over there, and there is a bunch of people there. He likes to, he likes to put it to me a little bit. So I am in there waiting in line, and he said, "Okay, get your blood work done." And he says, he is walking out, he says, "You lay off the sweets now so you get that cholesterol down," and everybody kind of giggles. And I said, "I will. You make sure you get to church next Sunday too." Everybody laughed. He told me, he says, "There are so many parallels between what we do," and it is true.

So when I look at people's problems, I break them into Level One, Level Two, and Level Three.

- Level One: I call "Bandage and Mercurochrome." People come in with just little ouchies. You fell down and scraped your elbow or your knee, or you chipped a tooth. You do not have any real issues. You are lonely. You have not found what you are looking for. You are just looking for the answers in life. You get here, and you find it, and there is no real work involved. You get the cyborg, you get into volleyball, you get into softball, you get into the prayer groups, you get to make friends. You are good. Off you go. You get plugged in, and nothing is going to hold you back. That is what I call Level One. We will put them to Discipleship One, put them to Discipleship Two, and boy, they find what they wanted, and off they go.
- Level Two: I call "Broken Arms and Appendectomies." It is a little more complicated. Somebody comes in with a broken arm; you do not put Mercurochrome on them and give them an aspirin and say, "Call me in the morning." Now we have life a little more complicated. Now we may have marital problems. We may have a divorce issue going on.

We may have somebody struggling with some issues in life. It may be somebody who has a real battle with cigarettes, or somebody who has a battle with alcohol, or somebody who has a battle with losing their salvation, eternal security, or it just may be bad habits that somebody has developed. Life habits that you picked up over 20 years, and you are having a time with it. Now we begin to use the principles. Now, in a basic, early stage, now we begin to use the principles.

- Level Three: I call "Heart Transplants and Brain Surgery." Now we have some issues. Now we have people that are in deep depression, so deep that they cannot get out of bed in the morning, so deep that they do not want to live anymore. Now we have had people that have had two or three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine bad marriages. They have some severe relationship problems. Now we have people who have abused children, who are in abusive families. I mean, a terrible situation. Fundamentally, these are the satanic strongholds where the things of this life have completely taken over your world, and you cannot break them. This is where we will have the unnatural sin that Romans 1 talks about. This is where we will have people who want to commit suicide. This is where families will be disorganized and completely dysfunctional, and you have got to try to put it all back together.

It is like a trauma surgeon in a hospital. They wheel somebody in. It was just in a ten-car pileup, and they had to life-flight him in, or her. There are multiple contusions, this or that. You do not know what is done inside. Blood is coming out his nose, his eyes, his mouth, his ears. He is unresponsive. His blood pressure is dropping. What do you do? Get a box of Band-Aids? No. You have a whole battery of things that you do to put that guy's condition, as a doctor, into a context that you know how to treat him. That is what you do with principles. You have a whole series of sets of principles that you use, that you have been developing on your own as you have been going through, not having somebody else just feed them to you. But you have been taking them, doing something with them in your own life, in your own family first. Do not tell me you are going to work on a second or third level when your own kids cannot get it together.

Of course, this is where you have to be able to put all of it together. You as the attending physician of somebody's tragedy in their life. I try to tell you as Christians in this church, I cannot speak for anybody else. I want to train you one way. I want to give you everything I can. I want to take you through every scenario I know. I want you to work with me side by side. I want to put you into every scenario, give you the good, the bad, and many times the ugly things that you have got to work with. I will be there to help you, but at the end of the day, what I want is a church full of men and women when it comes to the issues and the problems of life that people have. When everybody else is running out of the building, you are running in because you have the answers. You can look at that scenario, and through the principles, you can diagnose what the problem is. You can see it for what it is, and then you go and you pull out of your first aid kit exactly the principles that you need to give them what they need. That is what we want to do. That is what needs to be done.

You never tell somebody in a problem, and I hear this all the time, you never tell someone with a problem what they need to do. You tell them where they are at, and by the principles, you show them what their options are based on what the Word of God says. So each week, each week, each

week, we begin to catalog principles, and we need to format them into the actual circuit boards that we can put into a person's life when we pull out the one that is burned out and we put in another one that has got the right circuits to it that ties them back to the Word of God.

## V. Proverbs 22:14-16 Explained

Now, let us look at our text today, and you are going to see how that it is going to blend right into what I just said, and this was just my introduction, by the way, and it was quite impressive, I do believe.

*Proverbs 22:14-16*

*The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.*

*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

*He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.*

Now, let us go to the Lord in prayer and ask God's blessing upon it. Jean Geisiger, would you stand up and ask God's blessing on the sermon this morning?

Verse 14 says, "The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein." Now, let us begin to look at the key components of this verse, and again, we are going to look at it from a doctrinal, historical, and a practical application so we get all the right context.

We have seen this woman before. We have been in Proverbs for a while now, but we were formally introduced to her in Proverbs 2, then again in Proverbs 5, and then Proverbs 5:20, and then finally again in Proverbs 7:5, and we have bumped into her throughout our course of the book of Proverbs.

- Doctrinally: We know this to be the counterpart to the Antichrist. His religion, which is found in Revelation 17 and 18.

*Revelation 17:5*

*And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

That is this religion's title. There is a great picture of this in the Bible. There are a number of pictures of it, but the most outstanding one would be in 1 Kings 18, which deals with Ahab and Jezebel. In Old Testament Baal worship, you will always have a female deity up against the counterpart of a male deity, and that is how they all went, and she is called in Jeremiah 44:18, "the queen of heaven." A couple of weeks ago on a Thursday night, we talked about the great goddess Diana over there in Acts 19:35. She was another female deity. History is filled with them. Isis and Osiris, it is endless, it is endless. All pagan religions will have a male-female deity that they will have a joint worship of.

- Historically: This will be a reference to the strange women of Solomon's day that took his heart away from God.

*1 Kings 11:1-4*

*But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;*

*Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.*

*And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*

*For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*

It simply says that King Solomon loved many strange women, and the women are listed for him down here from Moab and the Amorites and the Zidonians and the Hittites. It says in verse 2, "women from all the nations which the Lord said don't have anything to do with." The Bible says that he has in verse 3, he winds up with the score of 1,000 of them. That is quite a collection. It says in verse 4 that it came to pass, but when Solomon was old, that his wife turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. Then it says that he goes after Ashtoreth. Now, that is a female deity. See, that is the goddess of fertility. Ashtoreth is where we get our Easter word from. Then it talks about Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. So he goes after all of these strange women, and whose mouth is a pit of false gods, and as you see in verses 5 and 6, he falls right into it.

This is exactly what will happen in your life and my life and our family and our church when the Word of God becomes of none effect. I had a guy that I have known for quite a while, and he got into a business. My own personal thing was that he probably never should have got into it, but he never asked me, and I found out this last week that he has got to give up the business he has only been in a short time, and it is going to affect a lot of people, and me included. So I went in, and I said, "Hey, pal," I said, "I heard the rumor that you are shutting down this place, and maybe is that true?" And he looked up, and he says, "Yeah," he said, "I am going to have to." And I like this kid; he is a nice kid. He proceeded to give me five reasons why he had to shut down the business that he now was in. I will not go through them, but they were five legitimate reasons. As I sat there and listened to him, and I walked back out, I thought to myself, "Wow, what a great lesson that was for me," because those five reasons that he gave me why he is giving up what he is doing after what, three or four or five months, should have been the same five reasons he looked at before he got into it. He did not follow the principles.

Many times, we have to get into a mess that we would never have to get into if we just looked at the principles before the mess instead of after the mess. You are right, darling, that is true. My life is filled with people who do not want to ask my advice before they do something stupid, before they want my help after the stupidity ever comes out. And I help them. How stupid am I?

I help them. It is my job. I have done stupid things. You do. Anybody here never done a stupid thing? Raise your hand. Your wife would just be ready to elbow you. In fact, she has a list in her purse that she wanted to give me right after church this morning.

What happens is the nation of Israel now begins to go into a slow spiral. The nation lasted actually for another 400 years after God took the kingdom from Solomon, but it is in a demise, and it is a spiral down. It is a slow spiral down. In life for you and for me, when we violate principle after principle after principle, it is a slow spiral down. You do not notice it right away. It does not happen all at one time, and suddenly you wake up one morning, and your life is a mess. That is how it works.

## VI. The Pilot Analogy

I used to do a lot of traveling, and I had a couple of pilots that used to fly me around, little planes. I always enjoyed that, and again, I try to learn from everything. Learning to become a pilot is a lot like learning to become a good Christian. I have never been a pilot. I would never take, I would be dead in a week. I push the limit too much. I know my limitations. They would say, the FAA would say, "You cannot fly it here," and I would say, "Yeah, I can. I will be flying over Chief Stadium." It just would not work for me. They say, "Do not land; it is too rough." I say, "I am coming in." Yeah, I would not do it, but I have a lot of respect for really good pilots.

Being a good Christian is the same process to be good. When you want to be a pilot, the first thing you are going to do is go to ground school. You go to ground school without ever getting in a plane. That is Discipleship One and Discipleship Two here. That is our ground school. I want you to fly with the eagles of God, but you have to start in ground school. Then once you get into ground school, then you go to flight school, and now you get to sit in an airplane. They will show you what all the controls are. You may even get to be in a simulator. But once you go through ground school, and then you get your flight training, and then you really get proficient, then there is a time that you have to solo in that plane. The guy will take you up, and he will fly around, and he will sit next to you in the back seat, and you have got somebody with you. He will show you how to land. You will do takeoffs and touchbacks and land and all that stuff. Then you will go through flight school. That is you going through discipleship and learning from other people with you helping you.

Then there is a day that Bob comes out, and he says, "Look, I have got this guy I want to put you with, and I want you to take him, and I want you to work with him." You know what he is going to do now? He is going to solo. There comes a time in your life as a Christian, you have got to solo. You have got to get out by yourself. You will not be able to look over my shoulder. You know why I do not go to Lincoln? I would love to go to Lincoln. You know I do not go to Lincoln because if I went to Lincoln, you would never learn to solo. You would always be looking over my shoulder. You would be coming to me and say, "Hey, what about this?" I would say, "I am going to go get a cheeseburger. I do not want to talk about it." You have got to learn to solo. You have to learn to solo.

After you solo for a while, now you become pretty confident flying a plane, do you not? But you know what? You are still not a really good pilot. Oh, it is a great parallel because now you may fly places, but you have got to find out you can only fly now when the weather is good. You have got to make sure if you are going point A to point B that there are no storms, there are no clouds, there is nothing like that because you have got to have a clear line of sight because you are a pilot, and you can fly, but you are not a really good pilot because a really good pilot will go to the next level, and he will get instrument rated. He will be able to fly in any weather. You see, you cannot fly without instrument rating in clouds because when you get in there, you lose all sense of perception. You are flying, and you think you are flying straight, you are flying into the ground. You are flying, and you think you are straight, and you are turning. You lose everything around you that gives you any kind of reference, and you have to rely on the instruments that tell you you are right side up, you are going straight, you are turning left, you are turning right, you are banking, you are going to crash, you are dead.

As a Christian, you can only go so far, but there comes a time in your Christian life when you have to get instrument rated. You have to be able to fly through the clouds of this life and the problems in this life when you cannot tell what is up and what is down. A pilot relies on the instruments; you rely on the principles. Same thing. You find all kinds of Christians that can fly. I am looking for ones that are instrument rated, that God can throw you any circumstance where the other Christian does not know if he is right side up or down, but you have a true course because you have learned to use the principles. You are instrument rated. That is what it takes. That is what it takes. Most of God's people are just flying by the seat of their pants.

- Inspirationally: This strange woman here, we know, will be a reference to the Roman Catholic Church. I would suggest, without getting into a lot of that, I would suggest that you just read some great material that is out there. One would be in the eight volumes of Philip Schaff on church history. He has got a volume on the life of Constantine, pretty good. We have back in our bookstore *Babylon Mystery Religion* by Woodrow, exceptional book. Read Daniel 2. Read Daniel 7. Get the works by a guy by the name of Avro Manhattan, who was the world's most foremost authority on the Roman Catholic Church. He was born in Milan, Italy, in 1914, I believe, and he dies around 1990. He writes books called *The Vatican Billion* that deals with the wealth of the Catholic Church. He deals with *The Vatican Holocaust* and how they were tied into the Nazis and the Holocaust with the Jews. He wrote about *The Vatican-Moscow-Washington Alliance*, the collusion that goes on there. He wrote about *The Vatican and World Politics*. He wrote a book on *Catholic Terrorism in Ireland*, the IRA, where Ian Paisley fought, it all took place. He talked about *The Murder in the Vatican*, how that they killed Pope John. He talked about *Catholic Imperialism in the World of Freedom*. He wrote a book on that. He talked about *Latin America and the Vatican*, and he lays out how that the liberation theology that we all know and love today started with Archbishop Romero in El Salvador. I think for me personally, the greatest book that he wrote, we have this back in the bookstore, *Vietnam: Why Did We Go?* You are talking about turning the lights on, my goodness.

The reference here, and the key reference, will be to her mouth. That is very important. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:14 that her mouth is a deep pit. The key word "pit" here in the Bible in Proverbs 30, Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 32:18, 28, all will be a reference to the lake of fire or hell. What it is saying here is that if you follow what this strange woman is saying, you are with her mouth, you are going to wind up in a lake of fire. That is what it is saying.

Along with that, here is a really good, solid principle that is on sin, the sinner, and God, and how He sees them. Proverbs 22:14 says, "Her mouth is a deep pit: and then it says he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein." Now, there is a lot of confusion today in Christianity on how God sees and feels about unsaved people. I know we live in a time that everything has kind of gotten soft in the Bible and Christianity. I get that. Like most things in the Bible, it is completely off base. How many times have I heard a pastor say, or a Christian say it, I have heard him get up, and they say, "Well, you know what? God hates the sin, but He loves the sinner," and all the congregation will say, "Amen." God's people actually think that that is found in the Bible or somebody in the Bible said that. That quote is from Gandhi. It was not from anybody that we know and love as a child of God. You know, no one time in the Bible anywhere is that statement found.

Now, I get it, and I want to explain this to you. John 3:16 says, and I know where you are going, John 3:16 says:

*John 3:16*

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

I get it. I understand that. But have you ever analyzed that verse in the light of the principles in the Word of God? Now, we are all saved this morning. I am going to say probably most of us are, and maybe one or two here just slipped in, but for the most part, we are all saved. Now, I am not saying your salvation is based on this, but I am saying as you grow through the seven stages of spiritual growth in the Bible, you know there are 12 doctrines of salvation. Can anybody tell me today what the doctrine of expiation is found in the Bible? Can anybody tell me what the doctrine of propitiation is found in the Bible? You see, there are 12 fundamental doctrines in the Bible. You just do not look at salvation and look at a verse without putting it into the context and realize that, man, there is a whole bunch in that Bible that helps define how God looks at salvation and how He looks at a sinner, and it is incredible, but most people never do that.

Now, if a man is unsaved or a woman unsaved, as far as God is concerned, John 3:36 says:

*John 3:36*

*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Hey, if a man is unsaved in God's sight, as God sees him, he is already in hell with the door shut and the lock rusted up and the key lost. The Bible says that I am already as a Christian, so are you, seated in heavenly places in God's mind. Just as I am seated in heavenly places on God's

mind, the unsaved man has the wrath of God abiding on him. Okay, so how do you get saved? Here comes the doctrine, the doctrine of propitiation found in 1 John 2, and you better get this. That is why Christ had to come down and die. God is holy. God is light. In Him is no darkness at all. Everything about you and me from Romans 3 and Romans 10, we are an anathema to God. My prayer of repentance needs repentance. We are all sinners in God's sight. All of my righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. How does a holy God look at something as vile and wretched and rotten as me and you and then want to save him? That is the question. Doctrine of propitiation.

Now, I am going to say that a lot today because I practiced all day yesterday saying it so I would not screw it up because I am not very good with big words. Most of the big words I use, I make them up out of my own vocabulary because they mean something to me. You may laugh at it; that is because you do not have my intelligence. When Christ came down and died on the cross, not only was it my payment for sin, but His death was the only way God could look at me as a sinner and love me. In other words, when God looks at an unsaved man, when He looks at an unsaved man, unsaved man to God, He sees him in hell, and God cannot have anything to do with him because he is unholy, and God is holy, and it would violate every principle in the Word of God. So what God had to do through the doctrine of propitiation, Christ came down, died on the cross, and then shed His blood, and when God looked at you and me before we were saved, the only way He could look at you and me and love us and save us was through what His Son did on the cross. That is the doctrine of propitiation. So the death of His Son is more than just a shedding of His blood. Ephesians 1, that great book, says that God took everything that Christ is, everything that God is, all blessings and all praise, and put Him into His Son Christ. So God just did not love the sinner; He can only love him as He sees him through the blood of Christ. Before salvation, He sees me through Christ. After salvation, He puts me into Christ. See how it works? That is called the doctrine of propitiation. That is why the verse says that they are abhorred of the Lord. Completely unknown today: the doctrine of propitiation, the doctrine of adoption, the doctrine of redemption, the doctrine of remission, the doctrine of expiation, all in the Bible.

## VII. Analysis of Proverbs 22:15

Now, look at verse 15.

*Proverbs 22:15*

*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

Now, it is not saying that when your kid does wrong and you cannot control him, put him in a car and drive him far away and leave him off. That is not what it is saying, though many parents probably want to do that.

- Historically: It is Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who is a fool. Rehoboam is a fool who never learns the wisdom of his dad, and he splits the kingdom over there in 1 Kings 12:1-22. He splits the kingdom north and south. Jeroboam takes the southern tribes; he takes the northern tribe. It is a mess, and the foolishness of his heart, departing from the principles of his father

and his wisdom, destroyed the nation of Israel, even though his kingdom lasts for another three or four hundred years. It is in that slow spiral demise down.

- Doctrinally: It will be the nation of Israel, and it will be the nation of Israel who in Exodus 4 is called God's son, and complete foolishness with Israel when it comes to God in the Old Testament. Of course, they have to now go through the Tribulation Period, and you will want to read the Old Testament prophets to see what I am telling you here.
- Inspirationally: It will be you and me as God's child. You know that God, we get out of fellowship with God, and God's hand of chastisement, like it is laid out in Hebrews 12:5-11, God comes down and takes us to the woodshed. Of course, the other application, it is your own children. This verse will form not only the teaching of historical value and a prophetic value, but it is invaluable to the principles of life. You have to deal with your own kids. You have to drive the foolishness out of their heart, and you do it by correction. We just studied it, came through it two months with child training here a while back out of Proverbs 22:6.

## VIII. Analysis of Proverbs 22:16

Now, look at the next verse, verse 16.

*Proverbs 22:16*

*He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.*

- Doctrinally again: This again will be the Antichrist and his system. An empire built on the backs of poor people who have nothing already. Even after the poor person, his loved one, is dead, they still try to exact money out of them to get them out of purgatory. Of course, again, if you want to see a book, Avro Manhattan on Vatican Billions, you ought to read it.
- Inspirationally: It will be the big church concept that we all know and love that we have today in Christianity, but it is all about money, building their empires on the backs of Christians who can or will not see the principle. You will give, you will give till you are bled out. They will ask you. You will go on Sunday morning, you will get 15 minutes of Bible and 30 minutes of "give money," and then Sunday night, the sermon is "give money," and then Wednesday night, "give more money." That is all they care about. You will give, and you will give, and you will be a good-hearted person, and you will think it is right. Then when you have an issue, you have a problem, and we all know this to be true, you will never get to the pastor. He is too busy doing whatever he does. You will get some second and third stringer that you are lucky if he knows the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. To them, it is your money that is important. You do not have a name; you are a giving number. I actually was with a church for a while that they did not call the people by name; they called them by their giving numbers.

The verse says, "He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want." They take and they take from you as long as you give it to them, and then they leave you on the ash heap. If you have problems in your life, they will then blame you for the problems instead of trying to help you. They will never have enough. I remember one time a big, famous preacher that was nationally

known, he is dead now, I will not tell you who he is, but he was a friend with a pastor where I was at, and they were good buddies. This guy was on national television, and he had this great crusade to raise five million dollars, and he was into Christian politics and all that stuff. He was on TV, and you would turn him on and watch him preach on television. Honest to goodness, you would get about 15 minutes of sermon, and you would get 20 minutes where he would just whine how much money he needed, and they have every way you could turn the money in. He finally got his five million dollars, and I remember that we all went to dinner someplace, and I was sitting close to where they were, and I was listening. I was not in the conversation; I was listening. My preacher said, "Well, I heard you got your five million dollars last week." And he said, "Yeah, I did." He said, "Praise the Lord." He said, "Yeah," he said, "You ought to be happy." And then you know what he said? He said, "Yeah, I got that five million. Now I need another five million." It is never enough. It is never enough. You know what is true in your life? If you put your god as money, you will never have enough. You will never have enough. When it comes to the things of the flesh, your flesh will never say, "I have enough." Your flesh will say, "Feed me." You guys are really good. I love the way you say it because that was in the movie. It was not "Feed me"; it was "Feed me." Some of you got it down really good. I learned a long time ago that all the popes were not in the Roman Catholic Church; there are some in the Baptist churches too.

- Worldly scenario: This is a great illustration of the payday loan places that you see, and credit cards. They loan you money at ridiculously high interest rates. You see a payday loan almost on every street corner in Kansas City. They are everywhere. You have got more payday loans than you have got McDonald's. There is something fundamentally wrong with that. You know why that is? Because they work. They make millions and millions of dollars off the backs of poor people who cannot afford it but need the money. So they make, as the proverb says, money off of them, and they are making millions of dollars.

I am going to give you one good principle here. If you do not get anything else, get this: Real Bible-based Christianity will always be about giving to others, not taking from them. That is the key.

## IX. The Commitment to Study

I learned the Bible and its amazing principles back in the day. This is about 1972, long before most of you were born. When I was back in Canton, we had a Thursday night Bible study and Sunday morning, much like we do here. I learned the format of any question from the Bible based on what Mel Sabaka, my father in the Lord back then, did. I was in that for a number of years. In all those years, I never asked a question. My goal was, I wanted to learn the Bible. I really did not know anything about principles at that time like I do now, but I wanted to learn the Bible. I wanted to learn the Bible more than anything else on this planet.

I tried everything I knew where I read about somebody to make quicker to learn things, and I was pretty stupid. I took a speed reading course. I think I told you before, it got to the place where I could read five, six hundred words a minute. I read somewhere where that you had a, when you went to bed at night, it was light sleep and dark sleep, or light sleep and deep sleep.

Somebody said that if you play something while you sleep, that it goes into your subconscious, and you remember it in the morning. So for a month, I put on the book, I wanted the book of Romans, and Dr. David Allen was a great, and so I would go to bed at night, and I would put on one of his tapes. Somebody said, "Did you learn the Bible?" No, but I spent about \$45 on batteries. I did not learn anything that way.

Somebody said, "Well, you have got to read the Bible over and over again." I had a guy in my life, my father in the Lord, who really knew the Bible. He knew more, and he read through the Bible once every 33 days. So I thought that was the key. So for three years, I read through the Bible every 30-some days. I was more messed up at the end of that three years than ever, because my whole spirituality and my life depended on, "Did I get my 30, you have got to read 30 chapters a day, I will shoot me, 50 chapters a day to get through it in 30 days." By the end of that time, my whole spirituality was based on, "Did I get my 50 chapters in or not?" It was stupid.

So then I realized that there was no easy way to learn it. You had to be a workman. So I went to Thursday night Bible study, never asked a question. Everybody else was asking them, and I just laid down every question that they asked, wrote it out, got the answer, and I may have gotten five or six questions every night. I would go on Sunday morning, and he would lay out, he was teaching the Gospel of John. I would lay out everything, and I would go home, and I would lay all those things out, and I had it in my mind that by the next Thursday night, if somebody would ask that same question, I could answer that question because I had taken that week and committed myself to learning what I had gotten that week. I went through the Bible with him and everything that they did, cataloging.

Then as I got a little older, I saw the principles, and I saw how that the things that I was learning fell into the circuit board mindset of coming into sections of principles, and I began to put those down. Everything I learned, I would have never sat through a service like this where somebody laid out seven or eight principles and not had them down. You would not have to teach me principles. You might have to explain to me how they exactly work, but I would not sit around saying, "Feed me," because I realized that I had to develop my own spirituality, and me getting into the Word of God myself and digging it out was just part of getting from the babies, little children, and children to the young men, the fathers, the elders, and the aged. That is the process you have to go through.

Back then, in that day, nobody disciplined me. There was no Discipleship One. There was no Discipleship Two. I built those in 1978, 77, 79 someplace. When I went through it back in the day, there was nobody to disciple anybody. Nobody sat down with me on a weekly basis like they do with you. Hey, I am glad we do. We will continue to do it. But I am telling you, there is a good upside to that, and there is a downside to that because Christians today are so lazy when it comes to the Bible that they will just enjoy your spirituality. They will enjoy you doing all the work in the Bible and never do it themselves. Now, all through life, it will be, "Feed me. Give me this, give me that. Teach me this." After four or five years, you see that nothing has really changed in their life. Their sons and daughters are making stupid choices. Their own life is making stupid choices. They cannot put two and two together spiritually, come up with four if

their life depended on it. You know why? Because it has been a life of "Feed me." They want you to feed them, and they will never learn to feed themselves.

Nobody disciplined me. Nobody brought me through Discipleship Two. The first book I ever got was Peter Ruckman's book on Genesis. The second book I ever got was Peter Ruckman's book on Revelation. He did not have near the books out that he has now. I went through those things and poured out those things. You know why I did that? It is not, I did it for one reason: I was committed to learn that Bible. I got what I could from everybody else, but I understood that I had to have a commitment to study it myself.

## *2 Timothy 2:15*

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

I had to be committed to that. You will never learn anything about God or the Bible just by wanting it. It will take a commitment, and when you commit to something, honestly, you know how it works, other things have to go. There is only so much room for commitment in our lives, and then we get overcommitted. To commit to that means I am changing some things, and I learned it. It came, started from a commitment to learn, and you and your spiritual growth will never move past the baby, the little child, or the children. You will never get into that young man, father, elder, aged, until you are committed to getting into that book and digging it out for yourself without any help. That does not mean that people do not encourage you. You do not still get this, and you just do not get that. It just means that you are getting a lot of things that are helping you dig what you are digging out, not sitting back doing nothing and living off of somebody else's spirituality.

Let me tell you something, you have been in any church that teaches the Bible for three or four years around it, and you do not have a book of principles, you are in the basement with that "feed me" tree. Learning to fly through the situations of life. I want you to fly. Every mother bird wants her baby birds to fly. She will build a nest way out of the way where nothing can get it. I try to keep this church way away from whatever can hurt you. She has those little, little, little birds that she has in there, and they are in little eggs for a while when she protects them. She sits on them. She guards them. When the big birds come around, hey, I have seen a little sparrow take on a hawk. I have seen a little sparrow take on a crow that got too close to her nest. When there are some hawks, I mean, a hawk is ten times bigger and stronger. He is not messing with that little sparrow. That little sparrow is faster. He just goes on his way.

But then that little, those little blue eggs crack open, and those little heads stick out with their mouths up in the air. So then she goes all over the place in my backyard, in your backyard, looking for worms, and she picks those worms up, and she flies up, and those little birds are there, and then she drops those worms in their mouth. I have watched it happen. It is part of the process. It is just like here, I make this little nest, and I put you in there. You hatch out of your egg. Then you are sitting there with your mouth open, and I give you little worms out of the Word of God. But you know what happens? That little bird comes to the point sooner or later where it starts to grow. It starts to move its wings, and Mama puts them out there, and Mama gets

them out there, and at some point, she kicks them off the limb, and they firstly are going to hit the ground. So you know what they do? They have a natural instinct. They start flapping their wings, and suddenly they find out what is going down. Next thing you know, they are flying everywhere. Next thing you know, when they are old enough, and they have little chicks in their nest, and the big hawk comes, they are scaring the hawk away.

I want you to fly. I want you to soar. I want you to be as high and soar for God or everything that He wants you to be. But I am telling you, you cannot just be a pilot. You cannot just fly in fair weather. You just cannot fly when the sun is out. You cannot just fly when you get the weather report, "Well, there are storms moving in." "Oh, I cannot fly in that." You want to say, "Storm moving in? No problem. Get in that cockpit, firing up, get into that thing." When you get into the stuff that you cannot see what is upside down and inside out and right side up, follow your instrumentation. Follow the principles. The principles will bring you through every storm of life. Without them, you will crash and burn.

We will hold up there. I appreciate everything God has given us here. I love you very much. I hope it was a blessing to you today, and do not forget now.