

Proverbs 22:17-21

Sunday 3/4/2018

Today we are going to look at what I think personally is one of the great complete sections in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a very unique book. Sometimes, if you remember how we have studied it, we go through just one verse at a time and focus on that. We have done that a lot, where we have just taken one verse for the whole day. Sometimes we will maybe go through two or three verses and talk about that. Each one will have a particular different aspect that we want to look at.

Sometimes we have looked at verses that I told you were what I call contrasting verses. The first part of the verse will be something positive, then the second part will be something that is negative. But then sometimes in the book of Proverbs, you will find a complete set of verses—four, five, six verses—that will be toward the same subject, and they will be very powerful. They will be very pointed and things that really will help us.

I want to read today for you Proverbs chapter 22, and we are going to be in verse 17, and then we are going to come on down through it here.

Proverbs 22:17-21

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

To me, this has always been a very powerful, personal proverb. There are several in the book of Proverbs that I would classify as my favorite. Another one that I really like, and we talked about it when we first started Proverbs, was found over in Proverbs 2:1-5. In that one, I showed you the six things that if we do them, the Bible says that we will find the knowledge of God. Truthfully, the key to all of our lives is to find out the knowledge of God and make it close to our hearts. There are places in Proverbs where it just really lays itself out in passages like this. Here is another one today that is built around the Word of God that God has given us, and it is quite incredible, a very personal proverb, and a very powerful one. I just love places like this in the Bible.

I. The Preserving Power of God's Word

These five verses will deal with the same context that we have been dealing with here the last couple of weeks, and that is how the Word of God was preserved for you. It was preserved for you so it could preserve you and your family and all the things of your life, your ministry, and all

of the things that are important to us. It shows how the Word of God will impact our lives if we will allow it to.

It has been said, and it is true, that the Bible impacted and changed the world. There is no truer statement than that. Nothing has impacted and changed the world more than the Word of God. But along with that, I want you to understand the only way that the Bible impacted and changed the world was because the Bible impacted and changed man. The heart of man was changed, and the world was changed. That is so true and a very key thing you want to learn this morning. Wherever you are at in life, it will never change until the Word of God changes you. When it impacts you, it will impact your family, it will impact your marriage, it will impact your job, it will impact everything in your life. That is the great message that comes out of all of this today.

This passage that we are going to look at, just kind of laying it out before we get into each verse, will highlight seven key areas of the Word of God in our life that we will look at and talk about today.

1. First off, it talks about the words of the wise in verse 17. Everybody in life listens to somebody. I have never met a person in my life who goes through their whole life and just figures things out themselves. They will read other people's books. Obviously, when you go to school, you get taught, you get trained. Everything about life for us is learning, much of it from what somebody else tells us. The real case or the real issue is, are they the words of the wise? That is the most important thing.
2. The next thing he will talk about coming through here are excellent things. There are some excellent things that God has for you and for me.
3. The third thing we will look at is counsel. Who you listen to, what you take from them to do with in your life.
4. The fourth thing, found in verse 20, will be the word knowledge. What you know, what you believe in, what you hold to.
5. The fifth thing, in verse 21, will be the words of truth.
6. As we go down through verse 21 here, it is not just the words of truth, but he says this, and this is the sixth thing: He says the words of truth that are certain. Are you certain that you have the word of truth in your life? That is the number one absolute most important key in your whole life. Are you certain with what you have? Are you certain where you are going in life is the right direction? Are you certain where you are at with your own relationship with God? Are you certain based on the words that God has given us, the words of truth that are certain?
7. And then finally, the seventh thing, verse 21, is that all of this is to prepare us that we have the truth to give to people who are looking for it.

Within these five verses, you will find the simple key reason for learning the Bible and getting it down. Why? Why are we doing what we do? Why do we have Bible Institute? Why do we have Youth and New Year People Ministry? Why do we have Thursday Night Bible Study? Why do we meet on Sunday morning? Why do you get the Shifle, one and two? Why? Of course, the answer to that is because God has called you. If you are a saved man or woman this morning, God has a calling for you. The Bible says all things work together for our good to them who are

the called according to His purpose. God has a purpose in life, and He wants His purpose to become your purpose, so He saves you, then He calls you to that purpose. What we do with the Bible, the calling of God in our life, being called to God's purpose, depends on what you do with the Word of God.

I know everybody would agree probably on this this morning, and what I am about to say, and that is that we live in a world of uncertainty. We really do. There is absolutely nothing for sure that we can believe or trust in in the world today. It is one of the most horrendous, uncertain times probably in the history of the world. Yet when it comes to the Word of God, it is the only sure thing that you and I have. This is why we preach it. This is why we teach it. This is why we put everything that we do within the confines of the Word of God.

As you just kind of scan through the Bible, we talk about sure things and what is sure in life in a world where there is nothing sure. You will find that just a brief scan of the Bible talks about six things that you can be sure of.

- He talks about in Proverbs 11:18 that there is a sure reward for the righteous.
- He said in Isaiah 28:16 that we could have a sure foundation. Of course, that sure foundation is the day you got saved, 1 Corinthians 3:11. No other foundation can be laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- Isaiah 32:18 says that we can have a quiet and a sure dwelling. That is your home. That is your family. That says that your family, in a world where kids are dying and going to hell and parents are losing their kids left and right, it says that you can have a sure and quiet dwelling. Of course, we talked about that in the process in Proverbs 22:6.
- Daniel 2:45 talks about that we can have a sure interpretation of the Word of God. Daniel is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. He interprets the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and gives them the sure meaning of those dreams. The Holy Spirit of God will interpret the Word of God for you through the book, and you get a sure interpretation of that.
- 2 Peter 1:19-20 talks about the sure Word of Prophecy, that you have a Bible that is absolutely, you can trust in and everything in it.
- Then finally, 2 Peter 1:10 talks about the fact that we have a sure calling. If you are saved here this morning, you can be sure not only of these other five things, but you can be sure of this: You can be sure God has called you. You may never answer the call. You may do nothing with it, but I am sure this morning if you are saved that He has called you for His purpose.

Yet in most cases, and I find this to be true, in most cases the very things that God tells us that are vital and important will be the very things that we ignore. I have seen it all my life. Now, I put you guys for the most part in a special classification. You are not like most Christians. You do something; the majority of you will do something with the Word of God. The majority of you have allowed the Word of God to change your life and impact your life. I have no arguments with you, I really do not. But I am preaching the book of Proverbs, so if it fits in your world, that is fine. But in most cases, many of you, most of you, are already doing what you need to do. But it is so true that the very things that God says are so important are the things that we just kind of

ignore. I know that you are here and you are learning, and you are in a process of learning, and if you learn these things, then you will make these things important to you.

The Bible says that in the Word of God there are seven things the Bible says that we are not to be ignorant of as God's people. Yet, those are the seven things that you could not find a church probably other than maybe here that even knew what those seven things are. The Bible says there are seven things after salvation we are to add to our faith, and yet we never do it. Most of God's people have no clue. The Bible talks about seven things a Christian has to prove. The average Christian, do you know how important that is? The average Christian does not even have an understanding of that. The Bible talks about seven things that God hates. Here is a good one: The seven things that God hates in many cases are the very things that God's people love. Yet the Bible says there are seven things that God loves, and again, to the majority of God's people, those are the things that they hate. It is no wonder, understanding this and realizing that this is where we are at today, it is no wonder that we are in the mess that we are in. The real tragedy or joke within the body of Christ, God's people, for many of them, is they have no clue of what I just said.

I am over there in Acts 17:23. Paul says he walked by the Athenians, and they are in their temple. He said, "I heard their devotions, and there was a sign that said, 'To the great unknown God.'" I want to tell you something that is true in our lives today as God's people. I believe that most of God's people are probably saved. I believe that they are going to go to heaven. I believe that they have some kind of relationship with God. But I also believe that they do not have any understanding of who God really is and what He expects of them, or they would not find themselves in these situations that we are in.

II. Bowing Down to the Words of the Wise

Let us begin in verse 17, and we want to work our way through this. I want to help you today. You may be here in some deep trials and some deep troubles. You may be here that your marriage is on the rocks, or you are in a very bad relationship. Or in your own personal life, you are just struggling. You may be struggling with your children. You may be struggling with your own personal issues. I want you to see out of this as we walk our way through these verses. I want to show you some great things about how the Word of God will change your life, how it will impact your life. Very frankly, this could be the beginning of the day of your life when things begin to turn around if you will just follow what God says.

Now He says in verse 17:

Proverbs 22:17

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

First of all, I want to look at the phrase "bow down." If you are ever going to get anything from God, you are going to have to humble yourself before the Word of God. To bow down would suggest a position of your attitude, a heart of humility toward God and His Word, submitting yourself totally to it. Back in Proverbs 2:1-5, I told you that was a great personal passage for me

too, and it talks about the six things that you have to do to get the knowledge of God. One of the things there in Proverbs 2:2 says to learn the book, we have to incline our ear unto wisdom. You have to get down where it is at.

When it comes to learning the Bible, when it comes to making your calling sure, the dumber you are, the better off you are. You want to come to the place where you just trust God at face value without trying to figure out, reason out, and come to all these great conclusions that you can figure out. You just trust Him by faith. It is never your aptitude that develops your altitude with God, but rather it is your attitude. When you come to God, and you come to God with a bowed-down spirit, if you are ever going to get this book down and it is going to impact your life, it is going to be based on the position of your heart about it. That will be everything. Every time you come to that book, you have to come to it like you do not know anything. The more I have been in it for 47 years, I can write volumes about the things that I do not know, and every time I open it up, it just shows me how much I do not know about it.

When it comes to that book, and I am receiving it, you have to receive it as the Word of God that will work in you and change you and impact you.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

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

If the Bible is going to impact our lives, if the Bible is going to change who we are, then we have to allow it from the inside to effectually work in us. That is a great question. What exactly does that mean? How does the Word of God, it is a book, how does the Word of God work in you? I am going to answer that question as we go through here today.

When it comes to you and me learning that book and hearing the words of the wise, you have to be willing to dump and throw away anything that you believe that does not line up with the book. That is the number one problem that people have that stops the work of a book impacting their lives. They want to change. They do not like the situation they are in. They do not like all the things that are going on, but they are not willing to get rid of everything they have to get rid of so a book can come in and do its work and change them. The Bible says, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" You cannot. You cannot have one foot with God and one foot with the world. You cannot work that way. You have to come to the place in your life where you realize that you have to get everything out of your life if you are going to let the Word of God change you. Most people will only go so far with that.

I deal with young men and young ladies too, but the majority of young men who really want to learn the Bible. They are all famous, not all of them, but many of them, some of them are famous for falling into this trap. When it comes to learning the Bible, you have to stay with the established truth of the Word of God. Guys will come here and they will say, "I want to learn the Bible," and I always tell them, "Look, do not come here if you think you are going to come in

with some grandiose idea about the Bible that you found over here and bring it in and change everything. You are coming here to learn the Word of God."

I thought about this. I know we have Bible Institute, we had people in ministry yesterday, and we have Thursday night Bible study, and I use the phrase a lot of times about teaching you the Bible, but I thought about that. I really do not teach you the Bible. If you want to put it in a fundamental way, it is. We do not teach you the Bible here. What we do is show you how the Bible goes together, and once you get the Bible together, the Bible itself will teach you. That is the way it works.

The words of the wise, when it comes to learning the Bible, you have to start with established truth. You have to have a sure interpretation. Paul said over there in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The words of the wise. What are the words of the wise that he talks about? I will tell you what it is. It is the unbroken chain of established truth that goes all the way back through the true church of Jesus Christ.

I talked Thursday night, and we were talking about some things, and I took you back to Haggai 2:3, and I showed you what the real problem is today with the generation of young men and young ladies for the last two or three generations, and it is the fact that Haggai 2:3 says that they have no comparison of the real thing. You grow up in churches that are way out of whack. You hear preachers that are way out of whack, and because you never heard the real thing, you think that is what it is supposed to be.

I use the example of eating out of a garbage can all your life. If your mom and dad every time you had a meal took you out to the neighbor's garbage can, and that is all you ate, and you never knew anything different, you would grow up thinking that depending on what particular day you went and who the neighbor, what they threw away, that was a great place to eat.

One of the things that happened during the Crusades was when the Crusaders came back, they realized they had been told that the life that they lived, which was a terrible life, the life that they lived, they thought was the only life that was out there. They were told that everybody else out there was terrible, and what they had was the best, and what they had was the worst. But when they went to the Crusades and they saw the other countries, and they saw silk, and they saw this, and they saw the great things here, they came back disillusioned because they realized that there was something that compared it to. God's people today do not know what a real revival is. God's people today do not even know the definition of revival. God's people today do not know what a real church is. They do not know what real preaching is. The words of the wise will be an unbroken chain of established truth, and that is the problem today.

III. Application and Divine Fitting

Look at the last part of verse 17: "and apply thine heart unto my knowledge." I have said it many, many times: Without applying what you learn here, it is a waste of time. It does not do you any good to catalog verses, catalog principles, get your notebooks filled up with a thousand different verses and principles and stories and examples. It does not do you any good if you are not going

to take those things and apply it. We have talked the last couple weeks about being committed to change, and the fact is that everybody wants to change, but the problem is they are not committed to change.

Commitment will always be action. It will be the application. It will be you taking what you learn, and I want to change, so I am going to apply it to myself, and I am going to be committed, and that commitment will be action.

- You get committed to change yourself. That is an action.
- Your marriage, that is an action.
- Your family, that is an action.
- You get committed to learn the Bible, that is an action.
- You get a commitment to be able to be all that God wants you to be. That is an action.
- You get committed to make the calling of God sure in your life. That is an action.

Look at verse 18:

Proverbs 22:18

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

The Word of God providing a pleasant life: "For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee." My, my, what a novel idea. What a novel idea to have the pleasant life of God compared to the Christian life today that is filled with drama, filled with stress, filled with strife, filled with heartache, filled with busted families, busted marriages, busted relationships, and all the issues that plague God's people. God's people just go through life putting a painted smile on their face like the clowns at the circus, and they just endure life. But the Bible says that with the Word of God, you do not just endure life, and life is going to have its issues, but you are going to learn to enjoy the enduring, and even in that, it will always be pleasant.

I know life can be hard. This is why some of God's people only go so far. I have talked about that before. They will come, they will get into a church, they will begin to grow, they will get the disciples, they will get the discipleship too, but someplace along the line, they are going to draw the line, and they are not going to go any farther. They are not going to go any farther because now they get to that point where they have to look inside themselves and be honest, and they really have to be able to be committed to change some things to go to the next level. Most of God's people are not there.

God, the Lord, gave us the Bible so we could have a problem-free life to fulfill His calling. That is what He wanted. His desire was to walk with us through our fellowship, through every valley, every issue, every heartache, everything that we had to go through, because He never wanted those things to cloud up and overwhelm us to the point that we lose sight of the calling. That is exactly what we have done. We are saved, we are on our way to heaven, but the calling of God is the farthest thing from us. Do you know why? We have got our lives so complicated. We have got our lives so problematic. We have got our lives so filled up with so much drama, so many issues. Where God gave us the Word, and most of the time it is by our own doing, God gave us a

Bible to bring us through and give us everything that we needed that we could live that pleasant life that He is talking about.

What does the devil do? He will take the things that we do because we do not follow the Bible, and he will compound the effect in our lives, and it will become so complicated that all of our lives will never get to the real issue that God saved us for, and that was the calling that He has for you according to His purpose. But it all goes back to verse 17, bowing down our ear to the words of the wise and then applying them.

Look at the last part of verse 18: "they shall withal be fitted in thy lips." Wow, what a great concept that is. God will take the Word of God that you have hid in your heart, Psalms 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee," and the principles that you have applied in your life, and He will hand-fit the words that He wants you to say and give to you in every circumstance and situation you find yourself in.

Let me tell you how that works. I do not know very much about computers. For years and years and years, they tried to get me to work with a computer. I have one, but I am very basic with it. As long as I can find all the science fiction and war movies on YouTube, that is about as far as I am going to go with them. But I remember one time I had a gal that was in my church, and she was a computer bug. This was like 25 years ago, and she brought in a laptop. Back then, the laptops were huge. She brought in a laptop to me, and she says, "I just want you to play with this because I want to teach you how to use a computer." I remember I opened it up, called her on the phone, "How do you turn it off right there?" "Okay, I got it on." The screen came up, and she said, "Just type in something that you want to know about." So I did. I do not remember what, but I typed it in. It was like, wow. It was like the screen blinked off two or three times, and all of a sudden, floating up on the screen was everything I ever wanted to know about that subject. I said to myself, "That is quite incredible." So I typed something else in. Why did it not come up again?

Years later, I thought about that. I know somebody obviously programmed all that stuff into wherever they program it so you can access it with the computer. I thought to myself, "Boy, that is exactly, that is exactly what God does or wants to do with us with the Word of God." He wants you to take the principles of the Word of God and program your heart with it. He wants you to hide that word in your heart. He wants you to program your life around that book. Then when you have an issue that comes up in your life, all you have got to do is just type in what that issue is, and guess what? Just like on the screen, in your own mind and your own heart, all those principles float up. That is how you make your decision. That is how you live your life.

For some reason, and I kind of understand why, we want to make the Christian life so complicated. We want to make our relationship with God so distant and so hard and so far from it that we never get there. The Bible says that God is going, we are all going to stand before God someday, and we are going to give an account of the judgment seat of Christ if we are saved. He is going to judge us and hold us accountable with the book that He gave us. Do you actually think that He is going to make that book so hard that we can never figure it out? Again, He is

going to hold us accountable for a book that you had to have a college degree to figure it out?
No, no, no, no.

One time when Wycliffe was getting ready to put out his English translation, he was standing before a bunch of theologians, and they were kind of against what he was doing. He looked out the window and he saw a plow boy in the field, plowing the fields. He looked over to those guys and he said, "Gentlemen, someday that plow boy will know the Word of God better than all the great minds in England." That came true when God gave you the King James 1611 Authorized Version, written in fourth-grade language. Did you not all enjoy the fourth grade? Fourth-grade language. 85% of the words outside the names are one-syllable words. "He that hath the son hath life. He that hath not the son of God hath not life." What is hard about that?

"They shall be fitted in thy lips." Proverbs 16:1 says:

Proverbs 16:1

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

You put the Word of God into principles and program your life like that girl programmed that computer, and when you have an issue in life and hit the right buttons, God will take the principles and fit them to your lips to give them exactly what they need to hear. You prepare your heart with the words of the wise by bowing down and applying it, God hand-fits the words to your mouth. It is just that simple.

IV. Trust in the Lord Through Revealed Truth

Now look at verse 19. This is another powerful principle.

Proverbs 22:19

That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

What a great principle. He is saying that our trust in the Lord, your trust day by day, walking by faith and not by sight, your faith in walking with God and your trust in Him. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." That trust. What a great principle. It says that our trust in the Lord, it will not be based on your IQ. It will not be based on where you went to school. It will not be based on the Greek or the Hebrew or some unknown language that nobody speaks anymore. It says that the trust of the Lord will be based on the things that God has made known to us through our study, His Word, the things God has given you.

Now you will look around here, some of you folks, and you will find that the majority of our people, not everybody, but the majority of them have what we call a wide margin. Yesterday in people ministry, we were in jail. Absolutely incredible what is being done in churches with the Bible to destroy people. Unbelievable. He says in Jeremiah 23:18, where we started yesterday:

Jeremiah 23:18

For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word?

You see, it is one thing to be in the counsel of the Lord, get the right counsel. But then you have to perceive it. Once you perceive it and you understand what you have, then you hear it. Once you hear it, then you mark it. You say, "That is a principle I need. I need that." I said this, and I know this is not true, but it could be. I mean, it would work well, I would think. That at the judgment seat of Christ, when we all stand before God, if God really wanted to find out where we were all at with that book, I know we all got our pat answers, and I know, I have got it, I know many, many times, I know how it is probably going to go. But if He wanted to, all He would have to do is have you walk up with your Bible and say, "Let me look at it and see the notes that you marked in it." It is a good thing that we are in eternity because if He got some of people's Bibles, it would take Him that long to get through all the notes. Others, He would just flip through it and give it back.

You see, it comes to the fact when you have the counsel of the Lord and you perceive what it is, the Word of God, not the word of man, then you hear it, and when you hear it, you mark it. What a great principle. My trust in the Lord is not based on anything other than the things that He has revealed to me. My personal relationship with Him, it shows me I can trust Him. Does that not ever put a lot of answers to a lot of issues in life? Notes in your Bible, the books and the principles.

I want you to see there, He says, read it again, "That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day." Look what He says at the end, "even to thee." That is a personal comment to you. I joke with people all the time. I am kind of joking. I always say to them when it comes to the Bible, "I feel really sorry for you that when God wrote the Bible, He really did not write it to you. He wrote it to me." I tell people all the time, I said, "I am really sorry that when Christ died on the cross, He did not really die for you, He died for me. When He was hanging on the cross, He had my name on His lips. I wish your name would have been on it, but it was not. Mine was." When the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, or God was giving the revelation to God, He had one person in His mind that He was writing that book to. It was not you. It was me.

My point is this: Every one of you ought to claim that same argument. You ought to be standing up right now saying, "You are wrong, Bob, He wrote it to me." And then you ought to stand up and say, "He wrote it to me." And you said, "No," and knock her on the floor and say, "No, He wrote it to me." You stand up, you stand up to him, and said, "Sit down." You stand up to him, you stand up to her, you stand up to her, Bubba, you stand up to her, she will slap you, and you will say, "You are right, honey, He wrote it to you." I know how it works.

But He did not write the Bible to you. He wrote it to me. Do you know what fun we can have with that? The truth of the matter is, bottom line is, He wrote it to all of us, but He says "even to thee." How personal do you take that book to you? Do you actually in your mind think He just wrote it to everybody, and you just happen to fall into the category? Or in your mind, do you have that personal relationship with Him that you really believe He wrote it to you? I believe He

wrote it to you. I will tell you this, just to make myself out of the hole I have dug myself in. I believe He wrote it to you more than a lot of you believe He wrote it to you. That was good, was it not? It was.

"Even to thee," He wrote it to you. When He hung on the cross and He died, He had your name on His lips. He thought of you. When He wrote the Word of God, He wrote it so you would have what you needed to have a great life, free of all the drama, free of all the heartache, busted relationships, and all that goes along with it. He wrote it to you, and I am telling you something, wherever you are at, whatever you are dealing with, whatever mess you are in, He still wrote it to you, and you can start today to claim what He wrote to you. Some of us just got a head start on you. It does not mean you cannot catch up and beat us. I mean, I have been studying the Word of God for 47 years. He got a good start on all of you, but there are some of you here that have caught up with me with it. I like that. That is just the way it is supposed to be. Fitted to thy lips and the things that we have, "even to thee," the personal aspect of the Word of God.

V. Excellent Things, Counsel, and Knowledge

Then look at verse 20. This really goes along with 19.

Proverbs 22:20

Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

Oh, yes you have. You better you have, Lord. Excellent things. Excellent things in counsel. Excellent things in knowledge. Counsel and knowledge. Counsel is what God gives you when you have a decision to make. Knowledge is the principles that you have to make the right decisions when He gives you the counsel.

Today, we as God's people live, as I have said earlier, in one of the most confusing times in history. We really do. I have never seen God's people in a more confused state. Yet God has provided for us some excellent things, excellent things, and has given us counsel and knowledge to live our life by, to clearly see our way. Yet the mindset of Christianity today is much like the nation of Israel right before they went into their captivity. He said one time back in Hosea 8:12:

Hosea 8:12

I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

People got to the place in their life that the very most powerful things that God had given them that they held for hundreds of years, now it was a strange thing. Without a doubt, it is no great mystery that the door of revelation of God's Word to man today for the most part has been shut. Revelation 3:20. So you have the contrast between the church of the open door, Philadelphia, and the church of the closed door, Laodicea. The great doctrines and teaching of the Bible that were standard, they were established truth for what? Two thousand years of Christianity has now been cast aside.

Just 120, 30, 40 years ago, that is not that long. The things that were taught by John Darby. Anybody know who John Darby was? He is called the father of modern dispensationalism. We

all know who Clarence Larkin is because we have his books back there. How about Dean Burgon? How about Dean Burgon who took a stand on the Textus Receptus? This idea, propagated by these goofy Baptist churches or the ones that have took Baptist off their name, that the King James Bible is not the King James Bible anymore because we found some new truth now that says, "You are out of your mind." Dean Burgon in 1880 did the work on the Greek text. Nobody has ever refuted it. Nobody has ever challenged it. But the great things, the excellent things, counted as strange things.

Robert Dick Wilson. What an incredible guy. Professor of Semitic Languages at Princeton Theological Seminary. He knew 45 languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Every language the Bible was written in up to 900 A.D. He wrote the greatest work on the authority of the Word of God of where it was that you ever saw in 1880, right at the same time that Westcott and Hort were doing their damage to it. Who knows anything about him today?

David Gregory. I had a guy a couple of weeks ago challenge on Bible study night about the 7,000-year deal, and he is obviously not a dispensationalist. He wrote this great thing, sent it to me. The greatest new things that God ever created were coffee and a delete button on your computer. This guy went on and on and on. It wore me out. I thought to myself, he never heard of David Gregory, who was the math professor at Oxford in 1710. He never heard of George Wilson in 1887, who did a work on the seven-day concept of the thousand years that went over 1,055 pages that went 685,000 words. In all these years, nobody has even challenged it. He never read anything about that.

These are the men who established truth. These are the men who brought from the 1800s into the 20th century. They are responsible for bringing what is lost today. They brought the Bible to us. They brought it through them and a hundred and other guys maybe. A hundred and twenty years ago, a hundred and fifty years ago, everybody that was a Christian believed these things. Everybody believed in the 7,000 years of creation. Everybody believed the King James Bible. Everybody believed the rapture. Everybody believed the pre-millennial. Everybody believed the fall of Satan. Everybody believed all of these things. Now, in just a hundred and twenty short years, we have taken those great, excellent things that are the foundation of the Bible. Now they are strange to us.

Now you have idiot stick Baptist preachers that get up in their pulpit and say there is no rapture. People dumber than them are the people listening to them. And they say, "Amen." You have got to give up, and they say, "Well, we, the millennium now is a spiritual thing," or "We do not believe the King James Bible anymore." The great things, the excellent things, in just a hundred and thirty, forty short years have now become strange things.

Our government is the same way. One hundred and fifty, sixty years ago, our government embraced the concept of God and everything about God when they started to book the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence together. When Thomas Jefferson brought the first draft, they said, "No, there is not enough references to God. Put more in. We can never forget as a nation what God has done for us." Well, we have come a long way, baby. Every time the Congress or the Senate now starts their session, they will have a clergyman. They will have a

reverend. I remember guys that I knew that were big-time preachers, they would get an invitation through their senator or congressman. They thought it was the greatest thing in the world. "I am going to get to go before Congress and open the session in prayer. I am going to get to go before the Senate and pray for them." Yeah, right up to the point where they got a letter saying, "You have to submit your prayer to us first. We have to approve what you are saying, and under no circumstances in your prayer can you make a reference to Jesus Christ." What do you have to pray about?

You know what I would do? I would agree to it, and then I would blow that out of the water when I got there. I would be in jail. I would do it. And then I would preach my message from the letter from hell. I would do it. Jesus would be proud. In 1952, President Truman back then said we should have a national day of prayer. And he did. In 1988, President Reagan established the first day of prayer in the first something in May. In June 2007, Obama made the statement that Americans are no longer a Christian nation. It is on tape. In 2008, he canceled the national day of prayer. He did not want to offend anybody. But in 2009, on September 25th, he opened up the White House to all the Muslims, and they had a national day of prayer at the White House. The great things that made this country great are now strange things in this country.

Do not you be too hard on the government. Do not be hard on them at all because I am going to tell you something. The things that God wrote to you as a Christian and gave to the Christian church, which were fundamental established truth, is strange today. We wonder why we have the problems we have. You have got to read the book. We probably have it in a bookstore back here by Dr. Ruckman, *The Death of Biblical Doctrine*.

I have been in the ministry 47 plus years, and I will tell you this. I made a lot of stupid mistakes. I will be the first one to tell you, but I will tell you this. In 47 plus years of my ministry, I never changed one thing that I ever believed or ever preached. Some of you have been with me. Penny has been with me for 120 years. Looks good for your age, Penny. She was 40 when I met her. You can go back. Some of them got them. John probably got them. Some of you older got them. You can go back to 1976, 1980, find some of my stuff on cassette. If you can find a cassette player, and you know what? I have not changed one thing that I believe. I have not changed one thing that I have taught. Do you know why that is? Because truth is truth, and it never changes. We change when we do not believe the truth anymore. I have stayed with it for one reason. It is established truth with a record going right back to where they first called Christians in Antioch, the words of the wise. See, I have a comparison of what is real versus what is phony. The excellent things of counsel and the knowledge that will work for you that will never change.

We live in a Christianity because the world is changing. We think we need to change Christianity to go along with it. Do you realize that Jesus never changed one thing that He ever believed to reach somebody? He never met somebody that did not believe what He said and said, "Well, let me rephrase that." Did He? Did He ever find some scribe or Pharisee that was against who He was, and He said, "Well, you know what?" He said, "We can agree to disagree." Did He? He said, "It is My way or the highway." Truth is truth. Take it or leave it. That does not mean you have to be, you cannot be nice about it, but you have got to stand for it.

I met one of the biggest guys in my life. He was a Christian, and he looked like he was a mean guy, and I asked him, I said, "Man, are you, is there any tender side to you?" And he said, "There sure is, Bob." And I saw how tender he was. He says, "If any guy ever broke in my house and I had to shoot him, but he is laying on the floor while a cop run away, I would get down there and try to win him to Christ." I believe it. Not my style of soul winning, but I understand where you are coming from. That it is established truth, the excellent things of counsel to give you a sure reward, a sure foundation, a sure interpretation, a sure calling based on a more sure word of prophecy.

VI. The Certainty of Truth and Sharing It

Look at verse 21:

Proverbs 22:21

That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

Now the first thing I want you to see in verse 21, and this is a pretty powerful thing, "that I might make thee to know." None of us, the first time we ever found God or met God or got a hold of the Bible, none of us loved it. We all fought it. I remember the first time I went to church, I thought to myself, "I am sitting in the back because those crazy Baptists started getting me down front." I know a lot of you came to this church the first time. You were skeptical. We were a Baptist church. You thought we were like the group over there in Topeka. We are not. The first time you met God, you probably did not care about Him. Maybe you do not care about Him now. The first time somebody gave you a Bible, and you came there, you said, "Wow, that is really great. But I have got so much going on. I do not know if I can really commit that much to learn the Bible that way." Look at you now. What a fool you are. What a fool I am.

Do you know what God did? God played the greatest, dirtiest trick on you. He could ever play on mankind. Do you know what He did? He made you do it. He made you do it. He put things in your life that you could not handle. He put things in circumstances in your life that were out of your control, and He made us come to that book. Do you know what happened somewhere along the process? Praise God. Glory to God. You do not have to make you anymore. Come now because you want to. You perceive and you hear and you mark it. Wow.

"Thou mightest make me know the certainty of the words of truth." Well, I guess that answers the question of all the new translations of the Bible that all say something different. No certainty in that. Now listen to me. As a Christian, you can know with a certainty, with an absolute certainty, what truth is. We live in a world where there is no certainty and there is no truth. Yet God has provided for us an absolute standard of truth, a sure word in an unsure world.

I am going to tell you, and I am just telling you, Peter will hate you for it. I have learned something over the years. People who are not sure of anything will always have an issue with those who are sure about everything. I am just telling you. If you are going to move on in this thing and become all that, you better learn these things. You live in a world of neo-

evangelicalism that says and puts out, and it is spread everywhere, that there is no absolute truth. We get it all the time. "You are a cult." "Guy said, 'I think you are a cult.'" "What do you think of that?" I said, "I think you are an idiot. What do you think of that?" You did not even know what a cult was. You did not even know what we believed. "Well, you think you are, here we hear it all now. Well, you think your church is the only one that is doing right." Of course, that is not true. That is not true at all. What we believe and what we have here, we just stand on what we believe. Of course, that is not true.

I tell them, and they say, "Well, you think your church is the only one." I said, "No, no, no, no. That is not true. You misunderstood. We are just better than the circus that you are going to." "Well, Bob thinks he knows more about the Bible than anybody else." That is so not true. You need to quit talking to Barb Christie. That is so not true. There are plenty of people around who know it a lot better than I do. You could fill volumes of what I do not know about the Bible. I have never said that. I have never claimed that. All I ever said, little man, is that I know it better than you. Anytime, anywhere, any place, on any day. That is all. Honestly.

Do you know why people will not like you? Do you know why people will not like me? You are nice people. I mean, I know we get our idiots here, but we have a special church we send all them to. Honestly. Do you know why people do not like you? They will not like me. I am a nice guy. Where do you find nicer people than you? Come on. You have never heard anybody. I have never heard anybody. You try to help people. Your lives are filled this week with spending time with people, teaching them the Word of God. You do not hurt anybody, but do you know what the real issue is? You and I have some excellent things from God that you are 100% certain of. And they do not have it. People will always not appreciate people who have a certainty about life.

You know what is true. You will have a sister, you will have a brother-in-law, you will have a brother, you will have a family member, that they think they know everything. And you have no opinion whatsoever. I am not going there. You have no opinion whatsoever. And they will say, and you will say something that is true, and they will say, "That is not true." And you know it is true. Then if you ever, you need to learn to stop right there. Just let it go. Because a prophet has no honor in his own country, you are not going to get anywhere. But if you want to really get into it, then you take them and show them where it is really true and show them. Do you know what happened? Now they are mad at you. "Why are you mad at me?" "Because I am right and you are wrong." Because people do not like people who know for certain when they do not know for certain. And they do not appreciate you showing them what is certain when they do not want to believe what is certain. That is just the fact of life.

I am telling you, you and I have some excellent things from God that we are 100% sure of. You see, I know what Dean Burgon taught. I know what Dick Wilson laid out. I know what Clarence Larkin believed. I know what George Wilson. I know what these guys laid out. I understand it. I am certain before I speak. I have my Bible, the certainty of the words of truth, and I have a comparison. I lived through those times. I watched Christianity turn its back on the greatest book the world has ever seen. It is not that we are better than anybody else. It is not that we are smarter than anybody else. It is not that we think that we are better than anybody else. It is not

that I think I know the Bible better than anybody, or you think you know the Bible better, or that our church is better. It is not that at all. It is a simple little proverb: In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king. You are blind, and I have got one eye.

They adopted a little border collie, or the border collie adopted us about three years ago on Thanksgiving Day. She is the sweetest little thing on the planet. But she has got one eye. Some of the vets said that they thought when she was a baby puppy that they got fighting, and she lost her eye. She is a beautiful dog. I cannot imagine what she would be like if she had two brown eyes. She has just one. The vet wanted to get one of those contacts, false eyes, and put it in there to make it look real, but it was \$16,000. I did not think it was worth doing that. That dog with one eye, she is better than my other two dogs with two eyes. I am not kidding you.

I will take Buddy, my big male lab, and there will be cats and dogs running up and down the street. He does not care. He is looking around, yawning, does his business, coming back in. I will take Daisy out. Daisy is so spastic, that is a little female lab. We have got 20 dogs in our house. Come on over. I will take the Daisy, a little blonde lab out. She is so hyper. She just runs around looking. She is smelling everything. She is smelling so much she is missing what is going on around her. She just runs out, does her business, and runs back in. I will take Izzy out. That is the border collie. One-eyed Izzy. Reminds me of a girl I dated in school. She has got one eye.

I will take her out at night. I took her out about a week and a half ago. I live, there are three houses down to the end of the block. So I am about 150 yards maybe from the end, and across the street. I am standing down there, and all of a sudden, she is on point. It is dark. It is 10 o'clock. Under the streetlight, I see this raccoon going across the deal. She saw it. I never saw it. A vet told me one time, he says, "Usually, one-eyed dogs that have one eye, master of the obvious, it is like anybody. You lose one ear or an arm, and you have to compensate with the other one." So he says that dogs that lose an eye, through the process of time, the other eye becomes more useful to them, in many cases, more than a dog with two eyes, because that one eye is all they have got. I believe that. She never told me that, but I believe that, just by how she is and what she can see.

My point is this. We are all sinners. Did you ever not notice over there in Matthew, we talked about a couple weeks ago, when it talked about the light of the eye, it did not say eyes. It said if the light to be in thee be light, eye, eye, single. Matthew 6:22-23. Do you know why? Because we are all sinners, and we are all in a world where we are all blinded in one eye. The problem is that God's people in Christianity are totally blind when it comes to the Word of God. But in the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king, because you can see more with that one eye, once you put that eye into the Word of God, than anybody can see with two eyes that cannot see the Word of God. That is how it works.

Look at the last part of verse 21: "that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee." Here is the bottom line, and here is the real reason for all of this in verses 17 through 20. Getting through the calling of God in your life, in my life, through a sure Word of God. Getting the book down. A book that is the words of the wise. A book with excellent things in it. A

book that is pleasant to keep you and your family and your life. A book that you can trust, because it is a book with a certainty of the words of truth. In a world where there is no truth.

There are people out there today, I want to tell you something. There are people out there today who need and want and are looking for the truth. I do not care how black it is. I do not care how bad. I know I paint Christianity in a mess, and it is in a mess, but I am also going to tell you. In the middle of that mess, there are people who still want the truth. You are going to run into them. God is going to prepare your heart, prepare their heart, and put you together. There are going to be people that you work with that are struggling, that are hurting, that the moment they see the truth, they will say, "That is it." There will be people who are wandering from place to place and church to church that cannot find any relevance of truth. The moment they meet you, they are going to see in your life a commitment to change. That is all it is going to take. Not only do they want it, not only do they need it, not only are they looking for it, but when they get it, they will do something with it.

VII. Ten Reasons to Love the Word of God

Out of this passage, your ten great principles about you and the Word of God, and I want to leave you with this. Ten reasons why scholars, why Christians, why the church, why the world hates the Word of God because it is the final authority. Ten reasons why they all hate it, and ten reasons why you and I ought to love it.

8. First of all, the words, the words, the words of the Bible. John 14:23: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." It is not about the fundamentals. The Bible is not teaching the fundamentals. It is the written words to you. Verse 19, "even to thee," it is personal. The words of the Bible, not the message, not the fundamentals, not some abstract teaching, He wrote the words to you, every one of them.
9. Second thing, these words are given by God Himself, and they are the absolute final authority. He said one time, if you took all the literature that had been written in the history of man when he began to write things down, they said you could put it in a square that would cover the state of Nebraska, and then he said you could pack it on top of that, and it would reach out past the moon, which is 250,000 miles. That is the amount of books and literature and pamphlets and paper and things that are put out by man since man began to find a big pen. If we could get all of that writing, if we could get all of those books, and we could actually put them in that pile, and it would go out past the moon, I want you to know something, we could judge every one of those books written by one book. This one, the words of the wise, the infallible words of God, these words that God gave to us Himself as an absolute final authority.
10. The third thing, these words are here for me to have today. They are not some manuscripts or some originals or some mystical book that you have got to study two dead languages for 40 years to figure out. He brought the Word of God supernaturally right to where you are at. He put it in a fourth-grade English that everybody could understand it. He made it come through what Wycliffe said, that someday that plow boy would know more than all the Bible, or than all the scholars in England. You have that, "even to thee."

11. Oh, here is the frying pan. Woo, here it comes, number four. These written words are revealed to some people to the exclusion of other people. God will not give it to everybody. He will not give it to everybody because the base of you getting is your attitude of heart and how you humble yourself and how you bring yourself bow down before Him.
12. The fifth one, God Himself is the author of these words. He wrote it to you.
13. The sixth one, these words are revealed so the believer can have absolute confidence in God and the calling that God has given him. There is no doubt in my mind what God has called me to do with my life. I have made a lot of mistakes in life, done a lot of stupid things, as we all have. But at the end of the day, I can stand before you today knowing that I know exactly what the calling in my life is because God gave me a sure word that gave me a sure interpretation that gave me a sure calling through a sure word of prophecy.
14. The seventh thing, the believer is given these words so when asked upon, he can speak with a certainty of authority that what he is saying is right no matter what somebody thinks about it.
15. The eighth thing, these words will give the believer a perfect trust. Boy, we need that today. We live in a world where you cannot trust anything, where what you believe today will change tomorrow. There has to be some absolute standard. I do not understand, especially God's people, why they cannot see that. We live in a world that completely changes almost day by day. We can see the changes year by year, and yet we as Christians are willing to see that, understand that, and then we are willing to accept the Bible that changes every other year. I do not get it. The reason why we do not have a perfect trust in God is because we do not have a perfect book to get that perfect trust to us.
16. The ninth thing, these words will affect your heart and change everything about you for the better. These words will affect your heart. It will change everything about you if you apply them.
17. The tenth thing, but the believing ear must first humble himself that he has the greatest book the world has ever seen. If he does not, he will never get a thing from it, nor will he learn it.

As you can see, this is one of the most powerful passages found. This is why I love it. This is why I like this one, like the one in Proverbs 2. Now you can see why people will be at odds with that book. Now you can see why people will be at odds with this book and any church that follows it, any Christian that loves it and applies it, anybody who believes it to be the infallible, inspired, perfect Word of God, our final authority over all things in faith and practice. You will find out and see how quickly people are against the very Word of God that God has given you. Proverbs and places like this will surely put the Christian world into a perfect context for you. It will show you where we are really at. It will also show you where we are going to stay because there will never be a greater time in the history of the world to be a lighthouse for God. Even though it may be a rear-guard action until the Lord comes back, we will hold the ground, and we will keep putting the Word out and ask God to send us every young man and every young woman who wants to get in the trenches with us and hold the line until the Lord comes back.