

# Proverbs 23:15-18

Sunday 5/13/2018

We will be looking at Proverbs 23:15-18 today. This section of verses is probably one of the most insightful Bible concepts in all of the Bible that deals with our relationship with the Lord. Once we get saved, the ultimate goal should be to build a working, very intimate relationship with the Lord. We have various things around here that help you do that. We have our discipleship program where people will take you and teach you the basic fundamentals of the Bible. A lot of people come out of other churches or other religions, and this is all strange and foreign to them. Maybe not so much on Sunday morning, because we do not get into the deep things as much as we do on Thursday night. But even at that, we have things for you here that people will take you and walk you through the Bible and help you figure it out. We have a discipleship program, which is really the next level, and we will help you with that.

Your relationship with God, once you get saved, is the most important thing in your world, the most important relationship that you will ever build. I want to read for you today, verses 15, 16, 17, and 18. We are going to take it verse by verse, and I think you will find some great principles here that will help you.

Here is what he says in verse 15:

*Proverbs 23:15-18*

*My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.*

*Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.*

*Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.*

*For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.*

## I. Understanding Bible Structure

When we started the book of Proverbs, way back then, you will remember I gave you a simple little outline, a breakdown of the book of Proverbs. I have told you this many, many times: every book in the Bible will have a natural outline that God has built into it, a natural breakdown to it that God naturally divides up for us. Years ago when we started our church, one of the things that we did, and I must confess to you, I was not looking long-range; I was just doing what I thought I needed to do for where we were. But the value of it now has been on the website for so many years, and I cannot tell you the emails I get from people who are going through it. I actually went through every book of the Bible on a Sunday and gave you the breakdown. I gave you how it breaks down in the natural way that God has displayed it and laid it out.

You and I learning the Bible will simply be determined by how we get it divided up. You are going to rightly divide it like the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15:

*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.*

Or you are going to wrongly divide it. Every heresy, every cult, everything that somebody teaches about the Bible today that is wrong comes from wrongly dividing it.

You will find that every book is unique to itself. Some books of the Bible will divide themselves up around one or two chapters. The book of Revelation is a great example of that. The book of Revelation breaks down around chapter 4 and chapter 19. If you get those two chapters and you see the three segment parts of that, the book becomes very easy. The book of Acts is the same way. The book of Acts is probably held up by people as one of the hardest books in the Bible to figure out. It is not really. You just get the division: Acts chapter 7 and Acts chapter 20. You build the book around those two chapters and divide it up, and you are home free with it.

Now, it does not work that way for all books. Some are a little different. Take the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah has 52 chapters in it, and it is a large book. But when you want to break it down, you will find that Jeremiah is simply broken down into three sermons or three sections that he preaches to three different people groups. When you get that down, it is easy. Some go chapter by chapter, like Matthew and Romans. We have been through those books before, but each book will be unique to itself. You get it rightly divided, and it will teach you and lay out the book for you.

When I come to a book in the Bible, and I have been in the Bible for a few years now, I have spent 40-plus years laying all these things out. An old guy gave them to me years and years ago before I ever moved to Kansas City. He showed me this and gave it to me. It was what the old guys were teaching and how they were laying out the Bible. I never forgot it. I took what he gave me and expanded on it. For the last 40 years of my life, it has been the way that I approach the Bible. In fact, when I come to any book in the Bible, I always approach it from three aspects. I always ask myself three things. I do not care how many times I have been through the Bible. I do not care how well I think I know the book that I am looking at. I will ask myself three things. I have ingrained it in myself because it is the only way to really rightly divide it.

1. Who is he writing this to? Because that is vital. That is very important.
2. What is the context of this book in relationship to what I am looking for?
3. What is the natural breakdown of this book? How does it lay itself out?

You get those three working for you in the Bible, and you will figure out the Bible.

## II. The Three Sections of Proverbs

You will remember that when we started Proverbs, I told you that Proverbs were divided into three sections.

4. The first section is Proverbs 1-7.
5. The second section is Proverbs 8-30.
6. The third section is a single chapter by itself, Proverbs 31.

I showed you how that in Proverbs 1-7, he focuses on and almost starts every chapter with the opening, "My son." Throughout that, I think eight times in seven chapters, he makes a reference to "My son." What he is doing there, he is telling you before you ever get into the book of Proverbs particularly, he is telling you, "These are what you look for. This is what you want to accomplish. This is what you want to put in your life. This is what you want to do, My son," over and over and over again.

Then you get into Proverbs 8-30. These will be the Proverbs themselves. I think that is very special to me and probably for you too, but I cannot speak for you, because 1 Kings 4:32 says that Solomon wrote over 3,000 Proverbs. We do not have anywhere near 3,000 in Proverbs 8-30. So what that tells me is out of all 3,000, God handpicked what He wanted me to have. That makes that special to me. Then I start to look at it and go after it from that aspect.

Then Proverbs 31 is the final chapter, and that is the end result. It is the end result of the first seven chapters of you getting the instructions from God as a heavenly Father to His Son, and then getting the Proverbs themselves and applying them to your life. The end result will be found in Proverbs 31, which is the virtuous woman. Everything in there is a beautiful picture of you and me as a Christian in our relationship with Christ.

No matter what book or where you are at in the Bible, they will always be based on Proverbs 23:12:

*Proverbs 23:12*

*Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.*

There is the real key: not just hearing what the Word of God says, but applying it and taking it and listening to it. The importance of the application of the truth of God's Word in our lives.

Remember last week we had a good session, and I talked about the three applications of Scripture. It shows you how to break that down. It shows you how you could get into the Bible and begin to figure it out. I showed you that the Bible has:

7. A doctrinal application. That is what it specifically teaches.
8. An inspirational application for what it means to you and applies to you.
9. A historical application as to real time, what it actually played out in history.

I showed you how to see those three things in a very easy format.

### III. God's Rejoicing

We are going to begin now in Proverbs 23:15. I want to read verse 15, and then we will begin to work our way through it. Here is what it says:

*Proverbs 23:15*

*My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.*

The verse is saying that God, when you get wisdom of God in your heart, it makes God rejoice. He is happy about that. I do not know what you know about the Bible or how much time you spend studying the Bible. In the Bible, there are a number of things that it says that God rejoices over. I remember one time I found that concept, and I just started going through all the things that God rejoices over. I am going to tell you why in a moment.

In Luke 15:6-7, it says:

*Luke 15:6-7*

*And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.*

*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*

The Bible says there that God rejoices over somebody getting saved. Doctrinally, that is Israel going back to last week, but in a practical way, that is the people we win to Christ. When you win somebody to Christ, there is rejoicing in heaven. So God rejoices over that.

In Psalms 126:1-6, it says this:

*Psalms 126:1-6*

*When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*

*Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.*

*The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*

*Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.*

*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

That is God rejoicing over the restoration of the nation of Israel. That is God restoring Israel to her former glory, and all the people on the earth, the heathen, saying, "The Lord hath done great things for them," and Israel is rejoicing. Again, doctrinally that is Israel. In your songbook here, I think it is page 420, you have a song, "Bringing in the Sheaves." It is based on this verse right here, and inspirationally it is us rejoicing because we bring people in, bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the harvest, and all of that. But doctrinally as you look at it, it is God rejoicing over His people, the nation of Israel, being restored.

Luke 15:24 says:

*Luke 15:24*

*For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

That is rejoicing over a backslider coming back to God, getting out of fellowship. It happens in every church, happens in Christianity. Israel as a nation backslid with God and then got right. In this church, you have people who get out of fellowship with God. They backslide. The word "backslide" is not a New Testament term; it is an Old Testament term, but you know what it means. It means instead of going forward, you slide backwards. You get out of fellowship with God. The greatest example of that is in Luke 15 with the prodigal son. So they rejoice when you and I get out of fellowship and then we get right with God and get back into things. That is the way it works.

In John 16:20, he says, "Now that is a rejoicing at the second coming of Christ." God coming back to deliver Israel. Israel is going through the tribulation period, and the world is rejoicing. Sometimes you and I will go through great tribulations in life, and the world will laugh at us and rejoice at what you are going through. But you know as well as I do that it only endures for a while because God is going to take your sorrow and turn it into joy. That is worth rejoicing about.

In Revelation 18:18-20, he says:

*Revelation 18:18-20*

*And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!*

*And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.*

*Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.*

That is a rejoicing in Revelation 18 on the destruction of Babylon the Great. They are rejoicing over it.

Number six, and I just picked some of the best ones. This is my favorite, hands down. I love this one. Luke 10:21. He is dealing with the scribes and the Pharisees who have rejected his teaching for their own man-made doctrine. It says this:

*Luke 10:21*

*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

He is rejoicing over the fact that God hid his Bible from the Bible-scoffer crowd. He is rejoicing over the fact that the people who reject his word, King James 1611, Authorized Version, the people who dump his book, the people who tell you that that Bible is not relevant to you, the people who get up in the pulpit every Sunday and talk about everything about nothing in the

Bible, and know nothing about the Bible themselves, God rejoices over the fact He shut the door to revelation to them. They get nothing. So they have to get it out of somebody else's book. I appreciate that. Doctrinally, obviously, that is the scribes and the Pharisees. But I have news for you, the scribes and the Pharisees did not die out in Jesus' time. They are around today. The same ones who hated Jesus and his word back then, who feigned being religious with God, are the same ones today who feign it, but want to take that Bible from you and destroy from you the greatest book that God ever gave man. God says, "I rejoice in my spirit. I am rejoicing because they are stupid, and I am not giving them nothing."

The seventh one, Revelation 19:6-7:

*Revelation 19:6-7*

*And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

That is a rejoicing in Revelation 19:6-7 of the day we have the marriage supper of the Lamb. It is going to be rejoicing. So there are a number of things in the Bible that the Bible says the Lord rejoices over.

That is a great thing for me. I do not know how it is for you, but that is a great test. When you look at those things and catalog those things, then you have to ask yourself a question: "Do I rejoice in the same thing that God rejoices in?" That is going to be a telling statement of where you are at with the Lord. In the Bible, the Bible lists seven things that God hates. Then the Bible lists seven things that God loves. I found out just dealing in the ministry for many years and dealing with God's people, most of the things that God hates are the things God's people love. And most of the things that God's people love are the things that God hates. It is a great little test for all of us. Do you love the things that God loves, and do you hate the things that God hates, or is it vice versa? Here in Proverbs 23:15, we see God rejoicing when you and I get his wisdom into our hearts. That does not sound like a big thing, does it? But it is a big thing because this is where a real relationship with God is at.

We have our own mindset of a relationship with God. We all do. Most of it is not based on the Bible. We hear bits and pieces here, we hear this, we hear that, and we formulate our own mindset of what it really means to have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, I am here to tell you, a real relationship with God is right here. I want to talk to you about it this morning: you and Him on the same page.

#### IV. True Worship and Prayer

The verse starts out by saying, "My son," that shows you the uniqueness of our relationship with Christ, a Father-Son relationship. With that, when you have the right relationship with God, you have what I call a God-consciousness 24/7. This means that as a child of God, you are aware of God in everything in your life, whether it is good or whether it is bad. We have a tendency to put

God into good things in our life and then shut Him out of the bad things of life. The truth of the matter is, He goes with you all through the day, and everything you do and see, you are taking God with you.

Two of the most messed up concepts in Christianity today, and there are a lot of them, but two of the most messed up, screwed up concepts in the Bible today, are the aspect of worship and prayer. We have gotten so far from the Bible definition of it. These two, let me just tell you, these two are the key to your relationship with God. You do not get these two right, and I do not care how big your church is. I do not care how many services you have. I do not care what you do. You do not get these two defined and right in your life in the Bible, you are out of luck. That is where we are at today.

We get the idea that, I see it all the time, you drive down the street, and there is a church marquee, and it says, "10 o'clock Worship Service." Now I understand that, but I want to tell you something, I think that is very misleading. I never want you to think ever that you have a worship service. We worship God in our service this morning, but that is like the idea of America as a Christian nation. There is no such thing as a Christian nation. There are Christians who live in a nation, but there is no Christian nation. Worship is never designated just a service, but when you say that, then people get the idea that there is a service, that worship has to do with going to church and heading to service. I hear people all the time. They will talk about the fact that we are going to worship God with our singing. I understand that, and certainly there are times when you sing the right songs and the right music, that you can worship God. But we get the idea that you have to have music, that it is a service and it is a song time, and that is where you worship God. I have heard pastors get up there, "We are going to worship God now with our tithes and our offerings." Now that is a little trick play up the middle. That is to get you to think that if you do not give, you are not going to worship. So we use those little things. Of course, I get it. I understand it. I have pastors that text me or call me or send me messages, and they will say, "Praying for your worship service in the morning." Well, I get it. I understand it, and I appreciate it. You do not know much about your Bible, but I do appreciate it.

Now you take the aspect of prayer. Prayer is really laid out as, again, one of the most misunderstood subjects in all of the Bible. I am going to say something you are probably not going to like it. Probably not going to believe it. The real concept of prayer is not found in the New Testament. I know. I know. I get it. That is where we all go. But if you want the real fundamental definition of prayer, you are going to find it in Exodus 27 and Leviticus 10 and other places in the Old Testament. I get it. It just seems like every once in a while in churches, I have had them off and on in my whole life, you get these spiritual Pharisees. I have got to tell you, worship and prayer are two of the key aspects of your relationship with Christ. But they also are two of the most dangerous things in Christianity because this is where the spiritual Pharisees live. This is where men and women live who know nothing about the Bible, who care nothing about the Bible, but they want to project themselves as spiritual. So they think that talking about worshiping God and, "Oh, I am a prayer warrior," really sets them up as somebody that is really spiritual with God.

Many churches, and I am not fighting anybody, many churches on Saturday morning, they will have a six o'clock, seven o'clock prayer meeting at the church for all the men. We do not have that. Now, I am not in a fight with somebody that does, but here is my thinking on it. When I lay this out, you will get it. So just hold your anger for a moment. You have worked all week long. I am not going to drag you out of bed on Saturday morning to have a prayer meeting. Now, I am not putting down prayer. You will see where I am going in a moment.

Years ago, we had a guy. I do not even think he is probably going to church anywhere now. He came up to the pastor where I was in a church there. He said he wanted a key to the church. The pastor asked him why he wanted a key. He said, "Because I want to come in the church at 5:30 every morning and pray." Now, that sounds really good. I am not arguing with it. If you have got insomnia and that is what you want to do at 5:30 in the morning, okay. But too many people take prayer and they make prayer the position of your body, or the place you do it. Like God is listening better at 5:30 in the morning. Like if we all get here at 7 o'clock on Saturday morning, God is going to say, "Man, they got up early, so am I." Prayer never has anything to do with the position of your body or where you are at. Prayer has to do with your attitude of heart. It has to do with where your heart is with Him. But our spiritual Pharisee crowd, they want to make it, they want to make it. I had a guy one time tell us that our prayer group on Sunday morning was not a really biblical prayer group. You know why? Because the idea was that you have to have corporate prayer. The guys, you have to have time where you really lay out and pray. Let me tell you something. I have had them say, "Why do not you have a prayer meeting with everybody before?" I will tell you why. I will tell you why I do not. Because that Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:17:

*1 Thessalonians 5:17*

*Pray without ceasing.*

That Bible says in Ephesians 6:18:

*Ephesians 6:18*

*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

If you have not come to this church this morning, prayed up, having a prayer meeting is not going to help you. But that is where we are at today. Those two things are the most misunderstood things on this planet. We think that we have got to have a special place. We think we have got to have a special prayer language. I have seen guys play volleyball or basketball or softball. I have seen them talk about hunting and fishing and boating and doing all these things. Then you call them up to pray, and it is, "Oh, merciful God of the universe. Oh, omnipotent Potentate of all of eternity. Hear your humble servant." Is that how you talked on the ball field? If you have got to have a different language to talk with God than you do with your friends, then He is not your friend. But that is where we are at today.

You know why we are there? Because pastors have led their people to believe that prayer and worship have something to do with a lot of things instead of understanding that your prayer and

worship is based on your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, where you are at. You can be driving down the street and have the greatest prayer time you ever had in your life. You can be out there fishing, hunting quail, hunting coyotes, whatever you want to do, and have the greatest time with the Lord you ever had. Because prayer has nothing to do, as worship has nothing to do. Prayer is never something that you do. Now you have got to get that in your head. I am not saying you cannot do these things. But that is not the fundamental definition. Worship and prayer are never something you do, but rather it is something that you are. You do not have a worship service. You do not worship God with your tithes and offering. You do not worship God in music. You live in a state of worship 24/7 in your relationship with Him. Until you get that right in your mind, you are never going to have a real relationship with Him.

When you go back to those Old Testament passages and you look at the fundamental place where prayer has to start, you will find out to your shock and amazement that probably 99.9% of the prayers offered to God's people never leave the room. I cannot help that. I did not write the Bible. I just preach it. I do not have a prayer meeting. That Bible says, "Pray without ceasing." You never stop praying. And, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication." You do not have a time you pray. Though you may have a time when we pray before we preach, or we may call a prayer meeting because somebody is going through some trouble. I get it. But the idea is fundamentally, you better understand praise and worship and put it in the right context. Both are inward areas of our life that should be going on 24/7. God-consciousness, wherever you go, whatever you do, whatever you look at, whatever thoughts come through your mind, it is you and God talking about it. You and God laying it out.

This Pharisee syndrome. You have got to see Matthew 23 when he dealt with the Pharisees. You know what the Pharisees loved to do? Same thing the Pharisees of our day. They love to be seen of men praying. "I am praying now." Two of the greatest examples in the Bible are Mary and Martha. Mary is at the feet of Jesus, worshipping Him, giving of herself. You know what Martha is doing? Martha is busy doing everything and then going to the Lord, "You are not watching what I am doing." The Lord says, "Yeah, I am watching." He said, "Mary, Martha, you are troubled by many, many things." Or she was too. How super spiritually we like to appear. Showing our relationship and displaying our relationship with God by our oratory in prayer or calling and saying, "Real prayer is we have got to do this. If you do not do it my way, then you are not really praying right." I have been in this business a while. I have seen them all in my ministry like that. I will say they all have one thing in common: they all have no real Bible-based relationship with God. They are just like the scribes and the Pharisees of Jesus' time. It is all show. In most cases, most of them have some really deep-seated problems.

If you really want to get this down about Proverbs and prayer, two of the greatest examples of you and my Christian life and our relationship with God and our God-consciousness are found in two of the greatest men in the Bible, Abraham and Moses. You realize that those two men are the only two men in the Bible that the Bible says were God's friends. He said in Isaiah 41:8 about Abraham:

*Isaiah 41:8*

*But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*

He said about Moses in Exodus 33:11 that:

*Exodus 33:11*

*And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.*

Do you ever look at their lives? The only two men in the Bible that God called His friend. I would think that if you and I really wanted to be God's friend, we would spend a little time looking at their lives. They are a model for worship and prayer. The Bible says that we have to worship God in John 4:24:

*John 4:24*

*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Your spirit in God's truth. That means if you do not have the truth of God, you do not have any worship. God went with them through the good times and the bad times. He was a friend that sticks closer than a brother. In the Old Testament, God came down and He fellowshiped with them. He spent time alone with them. He guided them. He directed them, and yes, He even corrected them and chastised them. Now you and I have it better than that. Because He lives inside you and me. First Corinthians 6:19 says:

*1 Corinthians 6:19*

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

We have access to the throne 24/7. Christ in you, the hope of glory. But the only way to have all of that is for you and me to get God's heart and make it our heart. When we do that, He rejoices. If you have got the wisdom of God in your heart this morning and you are operating by the principles of the Word of God, and you have got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in your heart, and you and God are walking together, I will tell you, He is rejoicing in that this morning. And you ought to be too.

## V. The Wisdom of Right Choices

Getting God's heart and His wisdom has many blessings with it. I could stay up here all day and talk about it. But most of all, getting God's heart and God's wisdom will give us the blessing of the ability to make wise choices based on a wise heart, based on God's wisdom and understanding. These are our very best choices. Many of you are parents today. You tell me all the time, I love hearing it. You pull me aside all the time how proud you are of your kids when they make right choices. You will tell me, "Well, there is a crowd at school that is really bad, but my kids have chosen to stay away from that." You tell me because you are proud of that. I want to tell you, not only are there some kids you ought to stay away from in school, some kids in

churches ought to stay away from too. Their choice was a choice, and you see them walk away and do the right thing. They witness at school where everybody else does not. You are proud of that. They will come home and tell you about who they witnessed to at school today or how they saw so-and-so and they told them about the Lord. They will take a stand for the Word of God. I think that was Jayden, that was Jay Frank Norris. How could you not be proud of that? He could have been anything. They had a thing in the school where you pretended you were somebody, and people came by and they pushed a little button, and you told them what they were going to do, and you mimicked the guy. He could have been anybody. He could have been a race car driver. He could have been an army guy. He could have been General George Patton. He could have been a ball player. He could have been anything. He chose to be Jay Frank Norris. In a public school, dressed like Norris, cut his hair like Norris, and when they asked him about it, he let them have it.

I think parents get proud of their kids, and you should. You tell me about it all the time how proud you are of them. "Well, we went to a funeral, and it was a Catholic funeral or a Lutheran funeral or a Methodist funeral, and my kids sat there, and on the way home, they pointed out everything wrong with what was in the Bible that makes you happy." They will go to a wedding, do the same thing. They will go to some church, a false church, that does not teach the Bible. They will listen to the guy, and they will pick up on it and have a whole thing outlined for you on the way home, and you are happy. You are happy because you finally begin to see at 15, 16, 17, 18 all you did to train them when they were four, five, six, and seven, and you rejoice. You rejoice because they are making the right choices. God is the same way. God rejoices. He rejoices when we stop making boneheaded choices. He rejoices when we start using all the things that He gives us. The Bible says, "My heart shall rejoice, even mine." God is speaking. He rejoices in the fact that you start having a relationship with Him, that the things that you have with Him are more important than the things that are in the world.

## VI. Short-Term vs. Long-Term Outlook

Look at Proverbs 23:16:

*Proverbs 23:16*

*Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.*

Now, look at the word "my reins." It is like the rein of a bridle on a horse that leads him one way or the other to go. That is a reference to the Holy Spirit of God in your life, who is your rein, your will, the Holy Spirit of God over your will. The Bible says in John 16:13:

*John 16:13*

*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Talking about the Holy Spirit of God. God's rein in your life. It is very similar to the word "reign," like a king on the throne, and it comes back to the fact that in your life and my life, who

is reigning on the throne? Where God the Father will rejoice over you getting a wise heart, His heart, His mind, the Holy Spirit will rejoice over what you have in your heart and how it manifests itself in the words that you speak. Taking what is in your heart and letting it manifest itself outward based on what is inward.

I think for me personally, one of the greatest passages anywhere in the Bible on my relationship with Christ and understanding what I do and what I say is found in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. It is probably one of the greatest verses anywhere in the Bible, a set of verses that really gives insight into what we say and what we do and knowing and understanding it. He says in verse 14:

*2 Corinthians 2:14-16*

*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:*

*To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

You know what he is saying? Back in the Old Testament, Christ had not come yet, and He had not died. In the Old Testament, they were actually giving animal sacrifices. When you go back and look at those sacrifices, you will find that there is a pattern to that that portrays in pictures what Christ is going to do on Calvary. You are going to find that the sacrificial animals had to have some prerequisites. There had to be some things that they could not be. They had to be a male. They had to have no blemishes on them. They had to in that shape be a picture of Christ without blemish. They took them and they killed them and they put them on that altar, and then they burnt the sacrifice. When the fire came up and consumed that sacrifice, the Bible says that burning of innocent flesh went into the nostrils of God, and it appeased God for their sin. It could not pay for it. Only Christ's blood could do that. That is why He is called the Lamb of God. That is why on the cross He said, "I thirst." That is why the Bible says in the Old Testament His bowels were boiled, and He was burned black with heat. He was the sacrifice. In the Old Testament, when they burnt that sacrificial animal, the fire, the smoke, God was there, and He smelled that innocent flesh dying, burning, and it reminded Him of what was to come with His Son. He appeased temporarily the sins of the people in the nation of Israel.

In the New Testament, Christ came and became our sacrifice. On the sixth and the ninth hour, He paid the price. He went through all of that. He became our sacrifice. He died and He goes through all the agony just as an animal dying on that altar. The Bible says that today you want the victory. You want to rejoice and please God when you speak of Christ. When the rein in you is the Holy Spirit of God and you have got God's heart, when you speak to someone about Christ, it fills that sweet savor, and God smells it, and it reminds Him of His precious Son and the price that He paid on Calvary's cross. The Bible says, and this is where we get all messed up, the Bible says it does not matter if the person you are talking to gets saved or he does not. He says, "We are a sweet savor in those that live and those that die." It does not matter; that is between them and God. God is not pleased whether they get saved or not. He wants them to get

saved, but at the end of the day, when you speak of Christ, what causes us to triumph in everything is the fact that we, by talking about Christ, were a sweet savor and an offering to God. God is not interested in what the results are in that sense. He is interested in what you said about His Son. What a great verse, and that causes us to triumph in all things.

I have known preachers that preach, and nobody got saved, and they were depressed and despondent for the next 20 years. They could not even face it. They felt like they were some kind of failure. I have never felt that way. The bottom line is my job is not to get anybody saved. My job is to give you the truth, and I believe what the Bible says, "If I lift up Christ, all men will be drawn unto Him." So when I get in that pulpit, I only have one thing I am caring about, and that is I want to be a sweet savor and an offering to God. I want Him to smell that sacrifice, and I want to please Him. Whether I want you to get saved, I pray for you to get saved. I tell you to get saved. I admonish you to get saved, but it is up to you. That is what he says. He says, "To one we are a savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life, and who is sufficient for these things?" What he is saying here is, "Who can figure all that out?"

Then he says in 2 Corinthians 2:17:

*2 Corinthians 2:17*

*For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

When we talk about Him, we manifest the savor of knowledge in every place, and just like the Old Testament, God smells that sacrifice of His Son. That is my job. That is my job as a pastor to lift up Christ, and the Holy Spirit of God rejoices in what comes out of our mouth.

Now look at Proverbs 23:17-18:

*Proverbs 23:17-18*

*Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.*

*For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.*

These two verses are one of the greatest principles that set up the teaching that I have given you many years ago, and we talk about all the time, the aspect of short-term versus long-term. In most Christians and pastors, it is absolutely oblivious to it. As a pastor, as a preacher, the principle of short-term and long-term should be at the heart of every message that I ever preach. Getting you to see that some of the short-term decisions that you make are going to have long-lasting disastrous consequences. As a Christian, it should be at the heart of every decision you will make. Short-term it looks great, but long-term it is a disaster and could cost you everything that God had for you.

In Proverbs 23:17, it talks about the envy of sinners or the world, and what they do will all be short-term. They will never see the long-term of it or the consequences of a short-term for them, and you see it in everything. The commercials that you see for booze and beer and all of that. It is always shrouded in a party time. It is always young kids at the beach. It is always a bunch of

places filled with people, and "Oh, Captain, Captain, Hi Captain, Hi Captain," and it is just a joyous time. All the captains, everybody is a captain. "Now we are all going to get drunk. What a great time we are having." Or how about this? "This Bud's for you," particularly for you because you are special. "Heineken, good friends, good times, lower brow." Of course, when you get off work, before the real drinking starts, you have got to have happy hour. It is all portrayed. Over here in a Bible study, it is all portrayed. It is a wonderful thing. It never shows you the end result. It never shows you the long-term disasters of a failed marriage or your kids becoming alcoholics or you becoming an alcoholic. Losing everything in your life to booze. Completely destroying everything you are and everything that God never showed you that.

I watch all the kids. I live by Raytown, and I watch the kids. The first thing they do when they get out of school is light up a cigarette, walking home. I know it is cool. It is cool. Everybody does it. I never drank in my life, and I never smoked in my life. I better tell you, like everybody else, I tried it. Just tried it one time. I could never get the hang of it. I have got to be honest with you. I am not envying sinners, but I always was envious of somebody who could blow smoke rings. I think that is the neatest, coolest thing on the planet. I never could get my mouth right. I have taught myself to do lots of things. I have taught myself to call turkeys with a little turkey call, and I swallowed three of them before I got it down. I realized it was just about getting your mouth and your jaws all right, and I can call turkey with the best of them. I mean, I get it. When you are hunting turkeys, it is kind of a sadistic thing because it is mating season, and you are pretending you are a hen with a nightie and a little negligee on over here in the bushes. This male turkey, it is time to have little turkeys. He is gobbling not because he is saying, "Hey," he is gobbling because he says, "Hey, they do not have the internet to get on the website. They are going to do it this way." They are out there. I always thought, I did it for a while. I do not do it anymore. One of the reasons, I just felt bad. I mean, here is a turkey coming around the bush thinking he is going to find the sweetest thing in his life, and he gets the 12 gauge right in the face. Come on. But I got the calls down. When they start coming, sometimes they will hang up; they are not sure. What you do is you give a couple yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp. They will gobble back. Now you know they are interested. Very good. Then you will get a couple more, and then they will start coming in, and they will hang up. So then you have got to revert to some of the secret calls. You have got to do a cluck. A cluck is sometimes called a purr, and it says, "Purr, purr, purr." That means you know she is interested. I have had them hung up there, and they have never, once they get to that point and you have tried to bring it all in, and you are done every day, and they get hung up there just at a gun range, I have never had this call fail. It is my own technique, and it is, you get down low, cup the thing in your hand, and it is like this: "Hey, stupid, I am over here behind this bush." Works every time. Then you shoot them.

I am not sure what that had to do with anything I am talking about this morning, but I will just tell you what. Oh, I know what it was. I have taught myself to do it. I could never teach myself to smoke. I remember the first time, and I watched these guys when I was in the army. They come out their nose. In their mouth, out their nose. How does that go? I could not figure it out. It was amazing to me. Then I saw it out there. You were coming out there. I cannot even blow a bubble with bubble gum, let alone smoke rings. So I am sitting there, and so I said, "This looks good. I am in the army. I am going to be like the guys." I already figured out how to go to the PX and

drink beer without ever drinking beer. You get a beer can, preferably because you cannot see how much is in it that way. You do not drink it. Then you go to the restroom a little bit. Pretty soon the can is empty. "I will take another one. Boy, that is a good beer." Never drank it. The taste was terrible. I do not, and when I tried to smoke a cigarette, I got off one place and lit that thing up. I just thought you swallowed it down, and it came out your nose. Trust me, it does not work that way. Trust me, guys. It does not work that way. I died.

After I got saved, I came to the conclusion of reading the Bible that the only people who actually have smoke in their lungs are people in hell. I ask myself, "Why would a child of God want to imitate a person in hell?" Because in hell, the smoke of their torment might ascend them forever and ever, and they never get that out of their lungs. But I am telling you, it is cool. They do not show you. Remember that commercial on TV about the older woman, and she had a hand on her nose because she could not talk. Before she goes out, she snaps on her face because she has got no nose. She snaps her jaw in because she has no teeth. My mom did this long before when I was, and then she puts her plug in and puts the thing up so she can talk. She said, "Smoking caused this to me. Now I am ready to go out." Yeah, with Freddy Krueger maybe. They do that. So you say, "Hey, this is cool." Yeah, "Well, could you hand me my snap-on face now?"

Now they went way beyond it. Now they have vapor. That is the big thing now. All the kids are vaping. "Yeah, I vape. I went out with a guy last night, and we vaped." I will tell you, I am so proud of you, I do not know what to say. Now I have got to ask you, be honest. What profit is there in smoking? You do not have to answer because I am just telling you there is none, and I think vaping is even worse. You may get a little high with a cigarette the first time around, but after a while, you get addicted to it. But you take vaping. What is the purpose of that? Why does some young kid want to vape? Why would he do that? I will tell you why. Proverbs 23:17, you are envying the world, and you want to be like them. You are not envying Moses or you are not envying Abraham to have a relationship to be God's friend. You are doing what the verse says here, "Let not thine heart envy sinners." You are envying them, so you want to be like them. The envy of every sinner will be the short-term that looks good now, but wait until the long-term gets here.

I would say, based on my experience, that every tragic mistake that is made that costs us dearly will simply be based on only looking at the short-term and envying what the world has because it takes a wise heart with good reins that the Holy Spirit of God can rein you in to see both. Every child of God on planet earth should make their short-term decisions based on a long-term outlook of the judgment seat of Christ.

Proverbs 23:17 says, "But be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." You see, you cannot have a real relationship with God and the Holy Spirit without seeing and understanding this verse, and then the awesomeness of who He is and the power that He has. The power and purpose for your life, fearing Him in that sense. In the Bible, another messed up concept is the idea of our liberty in Christ. Again, completely messed up on it. Most Christians think that our liberty in Christ is a license for you to do whatever you want to do and justify it because you are not under the law, and that is how it is used today. "Do whatever you want now, you are saved. I

have heard them tell me that. I can do whatever I want, I am saved, it is okay, do not judge me." But the Bible definition of that liberty is something else.

When do they want to get rid of the Bible? 1 Corinthians 10:23 says:

*1 Corinthians 10:23*

*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*

Sure, I am not under the law, I am under grace, but then it says, "not all things are expedient." Expedient means not all things are wise. Then he says, "All things are lawful for me." Now here comes the definition, "but all things edify not." Notice how the word "expedient" is defined by the word "edify." In other words, I can do whatever I want to do as long as it edifies me in Christ's sake. That is the New Testament Bible-based understanding of the word liberty.

Then 1 Corinthians 6:12 says:

*1 Corinthians 6:12*

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

Just like 1 Corinthians 10. Now watch. The Bible lays itself out. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Yeah, you can do whatever you want to do. You are not under the Old Testament law, but there are some things that you can do if you do not have the reigning restraint of the Holy Spirit of God and the wisdom of God to understand it, it is going to get control over you. He is saying it may, "all things may be lawful, but all things are not wise because they do not edify me. So some things may be lawful, but in time they will control me." But when I have a wise heart and a good rein, I will understand what to stay away from, and God will rejoice because we make the right choices. Stay away from the world, and sometimes today, unfortunately, stay away from some churches.

There is a great illustration of this that many of you military guys will understand, and that is understanding the term liberty. The U.S. Navy uses the term when they get to go out on their own off ship; they call it liberty. You are on a ship all week long, you are out to sea or whatever, you come in, and you get weekend liberty. On that liberty, you do not have any officers you have got to report to. You do not have any duty. You are on your own, and you can go do whatever you want to do, whoever you want to do it with. But when you get back on the ship on Monday morning, you will give an account of that weekend of liberty if you got into trouble. I mean, you may have gotten out of the bar at 2 a.m. on Saturday morning, but the SPs will be waiting for you at the ship when you come back on Monday morning, and you will give an account of your liberty while you were gone. The judgment seat of Christ will be waiting for us, and at the end of our Christian life, we will give an account of our liberty. Liberty in Christ was never intended for us to do what we want to do, but rather the liberty to do whatever God wanted me to do that will edify me and make Him rejoice. That is how it works.

## VII. The End of Man

Look at Proverbs 23:18:

*Proverbs 23:18*

*For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.*

Here is where we separate the sheep from the goats, the men from the boys, and everybody in between. The reason why you who are here who have wisdom, and there are many of you who have been in the Bible now, you have got it put together, you have a good handle on it, you really are doing good with it, and the reason why you who have wisdom will never get into some of the stupid stuff that those who do not have wisdom, you will never do it, is simple. It is because you look long-term, and you see that whatever they are going into is a dead-end street. You will look at something, you will say, "No value in it for me." You will look at it and say, "No profit in it for the Lord. Wrong investment." You will look at it and say, "No future there." You look at it and say, "That is a dead-end relationship; it will not go anywhere." The man and woman who has a wise heart and a good solid rein will never envy any sin or sinner with what they have. You know why? Because he knows how it is going to play out at the end. They have got wisdom. They see that all this show, all this show and tell, all this great stuff, at the end it is going to come to a disaster.

I have seen Christians, known Christians, who have all the money in the world, all the things in the world, have everything in life you could ever want, and you look at their houses, you look at their cars, you look at their lifestyle, and the average person would say, "Man, I would just love to have that. Boy, they have got it made in the shade." But you know what? When it comes to the Word of God, they could not get something out of it with a flashlight and a searchlight. You think I am going to envy that versus the book that God will give you? It is the riches of the world versus the true riches. For the sinner, lost in his foolish ways, in time he will have all his expectations destroyed, and he will be cut off, and it will come to an end. He is left with nothing but his broken dreams and his shattered life. They are left with an emptiness and the brokenness of having lost all that they could have been for the Lord. I have seen it 10,000 times in over the 40-some years of ministry. I have seen the money, the possessions, the fame, the big houses, the fancy lifestyles, and at the end of his life, they are absolutely empty. They lose their kids, they lose their marriage, they lose everything that they thought was something, and it comes crashing down at the end. There are people who could write you and me a thirty-thousand-dollar check today and give it to you and never miss it. But spiritually, they could not cash a 15-cent check because they are spiritually bankrupt. Are we going to envy that? I am going to envy that? I am going to say, "Gee, I want to be like you."

But the wise in heart, see there will be no end. There will be no end to his expectations because he has God's wisdom in his heart, and his future is as solid and bright as the promises that God gives him and as the principles that he follows. There are things that I have learned in my life watching. I have made a lot of mistakes, did a lot of stupid things. That is why I never fault anybody else for the dumb things that you did. Mine could write a book on them. But I have

learned some things, and fundamentally Proverbs 23:18, where it says, "For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." Breaking that down where we can all grasp it, I have learned some things, and here is what I have learned:

*I have learned that life without God's wisdom is a hopeless end.*

*But I have also learned that life with God's wisdom in your heart is endless hope. It will endure forever.*

When you got saved, God intended three things to change about you. I cannot speak to who is saved or who is not, but I would say that if a person is truly saved, these things ought to be evident because when we got saved, God changed three things.

10. The first thing He changed was the inner man. You are no longer who you once were. You are now a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away, all things become new. You do not think the same way, you do not look at things the same way, you do not go the same places, you do not do the same things. You know why? Because there was an inner change in man.
11. The second thing that God intended, once the inner man got changed, then the outer man got changed. Now everybody sees outwardly what took place inwardly. When we baptize people up here, baptism obviously does not save you in any way, shape, or form. But it is a public profession. When we put them under the water, it is a picture of Christ coming down and going under death and coming back up in the resurrection, buried in the likeness of His death, raised in the likeness of His resurrection. What it is, it is a public expression publicly to everybody out here, outwardly what has actually taken place inwardly. So the inner man will change, and then of course the outer man will change. You will now not do the same things you used to do.
12. But the third thing God intended for it to do was to change the inner man, the outer man, but then to change the end of man. Now your life has purpose. Now there is no reason for you to wind up as a disaster in your Christian life. There is not a reason for you to lose your family, your kids, your marriage. There is not a reason for you to lose anything because the promises and the wisdom of God are an endless hope. It is as bright as the promises in the Word of God. It will give you everything that you need if you allow that wisdom of God to come into your heart and let God rejoice in it.

When you rejoice with somebody, not only do you want to be happy for them and with them, but in my case, it makes me want to get closer to them. It makes me see what made them happy, how I can keep that perpetuated and make them happy. That is what God does. When you start to put the wisdom of God in your heart and He rejoices, He gets closer to you. You get closer to Him. He starts drawing you in, and you start talking to Him and laying things out, and He starts to talk back to you like Abraham and the Lord all the way back through there. You know how God talked with him and how Moses and him talked, and how Moses, he was up there on that mountain, and him and God talked, and when Moses came down, his face shined because he had been with God. I am going to tell you something, when you and I are with God and we have that relationship, your face needs to shine, and everybody will see it.

I close, he says in Psalms 1:1-4:

*Psalms 1:1-4*

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

*But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

*The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

I want you to notice that there is a season to our fruit bearing. There will come a time in your life and my life where we will not be able to bear fruit. Apple trees do not bear fruit in February. There will come a winter time of your life and my life when we get to the point where we cannot do it anymore. So he says, "that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither." There is your family, there are your kids. We call it a family tree, a tree with roots, with leaves, with your kids. You will bring forth your fruit in your season, and your leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever you do, it shall prosper. Then he simply says in verse 4, "The ungodly are not so." What a contrast.

It takes you and me building a relationship with God that is God-conscious. It takes, "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." It takes, "Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things." It takes that relationship with God on that intimate basis of God-consciousness that He goes everywhere with you. That you are conscious, that your prayer is constant. Your worship is constant. Everything that you do, every aspect of that intimacy of the worship and the prayer is based on not who is with you, not where you are at, not what time of day, not what kind of prayer it is. Just simply based on the wisdom of God in your heart and you and Him as His friend. We sing the song, a great song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Many times I wonder what kind of friend Jesus has in us. So that is the real key. He is waiting to be your friend. Most of God's people are oblivious to wanting to be His, but it takes the wisdom of God in your heart and then starting that rejoicing process between you and God that you build it on.

We will hold up there. Let us have a word of prayer. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you. Thank you for all you do for us today. Bless the rest of this day as we take our moms out and be there with them and enjoy them and let us be respectful and thank them for all that they have done for us and all that they have sacrificed. Truly, Father, we thank you for being for us, how good you are. Thank you for putting up with us. Thank you for enduring us. Thank you, Father, for loving us. Thank you, Father, for being our friend, and we just love you now and praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. You are dismissed.