

Proverbs 23:24-25

Sunday 6/3/2018

Remember, I was in for a treat today when I got out of my car. There was Bob pulling out that big fiddle. He tried to tell me it was his Bible, but I knew that wasn't true. That's because Bob doesn't carry a Bible. You know why? It's all in here with him. How did I do, Bob?

Go get everybody. Turn back to Proverbs 23. I didn't plan it this way, but we've kind of developed a little series here out of Proverbs 23 about what it means to have the right kind of relationship with God, one that truly is a true relationship. We have defined a lot of things in the last two or three weeks about building a proper relationship and a walk with Christ based on the Word of God, based on truth. We have defined a lot of key elements, and we'll continue to use those today, and probably define some more.

But I want to take you today and talk about, in your relationship with God, what is the final analysis? What is the bottom line? When I deal with the Bible or subjects in the Bible, I always have a rule that I follow, and that is that I always break the principle, the concept, the verse down to its lowest common denominator. That means you can't get any more out of it. A lot of times, a lot of preachers, a lot of people, they'll give you a verse, but they won't work it all the way to the end of the meaning of the verse and lay it out, and that's okay. I get that. But for me, I want the bottom line in everything, and if I know what the bottom line is, I can pretty much deal with whatever situation is. I want to talk today about the bottom line in your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The Laodicean Church Period

We are a young church, young in the sense that we have so many young couples and so many young singles that will become young couples any moment now, and it's a great thing. Last week, we saw the detailed picture of the time period of Christianity that we live in, and we know now that we are living in the Laodicean church period. That church period starts around 1900 and moves up into the time that we live in. The Philadelphian is in the 1600s.

We know now that, putting it in practical terms, it's a church period that is a spoiled brat. They think that everybody owes them something. It's defined for you in Revelation 3:14-22. It was a church that came into power, into being in its philosophy, around 1900, and it continued up to the time that we're living today. It's the last period, if you look at our chart over there, it's the last period before the rapture of the church. It's a very weak church. It's a very much of a whining church about everything that they don't have, and yet they won't lift a finger. They won't do anything to change the spiritual temperature of where they're at.

The Bible says Laodicea means "rights of the people" or "justice of the people," and it's a church of entitlement. It's a church like many, many Christians who believe that Christianity owes them something, that the churches owe them something, that they just go to church, and God is going to just give them and make them into a strong Christian. They think that everybody owes them something, and that is spread right into the family unit today in Christianity, and it's basically destroyed it. We've all seen parents with kids that are just like that. It doesn't matter how the

parents, and I've dealt with this all in my ministry, no matter how the parents want to live in denial, or they want to blame their failed parenting on everybody or everything else in life. It's the parents who, in the bottom analysis, produce that kind of child.

It doesn't matter whether it's a church or whether it's a family, whether it's a mom and a dad or a pastor. You have to take responsibility for the failures and the mindset that we produce not only in our churches today, but in our families. The mindset of no accountability or no responsibility. It's always somebody else's fault. Somebody did this, and this is the way that I am. "I'm an alcoholic because alcoholism is not a sin. It's a sickness now, and I have that sickness. It was in my family's genes, so therefore I'm going to grow up to be an alcoholic." Or drugs. Everything we do today in this world is to try to pass the blame and accountability and responsibility to somebody else.

The problem is that you have to operate by truth. You have to operate by reality. We have no structure today in families. We have no structure today in churches. I'm a firm believer, and I have a number of things that I follow in the idea of being a leader. I rise and fall on one of the greatest principles that I follow myself, and I hold everybody accountable to it that wants to be a leader. That is simply this: everything rises and falls on your leadership. The fact that a pastor or a parent will blame somebody else for their failure of parenting or pastoring.

You'll remember that I laid out the book of Colossians, and I gave you a little subtitle for Colossians: "Insight Into Our Insanity." How that Colossians actually shows us the mindset behind the Laodicean church period. Laodicea is found five times. Thursday night I showed you in Bible study, somebody asked the question, how that the seven churches that Paul wrote to line up to the seven churches that John writes to. I showed you Colossians. I showed you that the three short chapters all focus on issues that we have.

- Chapter one, he talks about who Christ is again, because the church today has no idea who the real Christ of the Bible is.
- In chapter two, he tells us what the issues that we're up against today, what has replaced in Christianity the pure Word of God. I gave you those.
- Then in chapter three and four, I gave you our response to it. How we today should fight that by in our church and your family, in your life, stay true to the Word of God.

II. Church History and Doctrinal Issues

Church history is an incredible thing that everybody needs to go through in our Bible Institute. Not this year, not next year, but in the last year, we will go through church history. I'll lay it out for you as best I can. But in church history, which the foundation is found in Revelation 1-3, you will find that the seven periods of church history, and there are seven actual periods of time in history that the church goes through in the Bible. You can see it on the chart over there where I adapted across the Bible lists those time periods. That's the way you study church history.

The first church was Ephesus. The second one was Smyrna. The third one was Pergamos. The fourth one was Thyatira. The fifth one was Sardis. The sixth one was Philadelphia. The last one, ours, is Laodicea. I showed you how that each of them represent a period in church history.

- Ephesus: about Acts 20, around 66 AD up to around 180.
- Smyrna: picks up around that 180 time period and goes up to 325 AD or thereabout.
- Pergamos: picks up around 325 and goes up to the beginning of the Dark Ages in 500 AD.
- Thyatira: picks up at the middle of the Dark Ages and goes all the way up to around 1000.
- Sardis: from 1000 to 1500 at the beginning of the Reformation.
- Philadelphia: 1600 to 1900 with the production of the King James Bible. We've talked about the greatest period of time in church history.
- Laodicea: us, where you and I are at today.

All of this. And yet most people see that and understand that. But the big issue today is doctrine: what the Bible teaches. Most Christians are not very good students of their own church history. They have failed to see that in each one of those periods of church history, the church, the true church, just like you and me, the body of Christ, the church was faced with a doctrinal issue that they had to deal with. Something came up in a major way, in a doctrinal way, that challenged the very beliefs that they had. Every period of church history had to face that issue, settle that issue, and then move on.

The Ephesus went back there in the early part. You know what it was? It was the resurrection. Christ wasn't out of that tomb 20 minutes before everybody around him was saying he really didn't come out. They said that his body was stolen by some of his disciples. One of the theories that you find the liberals believe today is that Jesus just passed out on the cross. When they put him in that tomb, you know how a cave is, it's kind of cool and damp. He laid on that cool stone and it revived him. Then he just got up and went on his way. The first doctrinal issue that they had to deal with was, did he really come out of that tomb? You know that's the fundamental baseline of all Christianity? Because I got some news for you: if he didn't come out of that tomb today, we are all dead in our sins and we're on our way to a lake of fire.

The second one in Smyrna, around 200 AD to 325, was the virgin birth. Was Christ really the Son of God? You have the great controversy between Athanasius and Arianism. The Council of Nicaea in 325 was called to settle the issue of the deity of Christ. Now, there were no real Christians involved in that because the real Christians already knew that he was God. But that was the issue that they were challenged with.

In the Pergamos Church period, around 325 up to 500, the issue that they were faced with was baptismal regeneration. The rise of the Roman Catholic Church under Constantine and all those things. He brings salvation into the church as he begins to be started, the Roman Catholic Church. The great issue that real Christians had to battle and fight was if you getting baptized will wash away your sins.

The fourth one was Thyatira. Thyatira, now they have to deal with the new doctrine of Amillennialism and Postmillennialism. Augustine had written his works. He was a great Roman Catholic theologian, held up today even by many, many Christians as a great theologian. I suspect he probably is the best theologian in the lake of fire this morning. He believed in baptismal regeneration. He's the one that denied the visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ, called premillennialism, and came up with the idea of what we have today in Amillennialism and Postmillennialism. The church had to be faced with that.

In the fifth period, the Sardis period, right up to the Reformation, the issue was predestination. Did God really pick some people to go to heaven and some people to go to hell? Is it really true that "Jesus loves me, sorry about you"? Is that really the doctrine there? Of course, the church had to fight that and stand up for the truth in that.

The Philadelphia Church age, around 1500 to 1900, the issue was eternal security. Is the fact that you are now saved, the fact that you are born again, are you eternally really sealed unto the day of redemption, or can you lose your salvation? Every period in church history. Now we take those doctrines for granted today, don't we? I mean, those are the Baptist distinctives we talk about. We just take those for granted that they've always been around, here they are, we believe it. The truth of the matter is the very church that you and I are part of, the Bible believers down through history, every period of church history was faced with one of the great doctrines that you and I take for granted today, and then in the face of the opposition, had to take their stand.

Now I brought you up to Philadelphia. You know what the doctrinal issue is with Laodicea? Did God really know what he was doing when he wrote a Bible? Do you have the Word of God? Do you have the absolute perfect Word of God in your hand this morning that you can get the exact words of God? That's our issue. I get criticized all the time. "Well, you make too much of that." No, you're wrong. You don't make enough issue about it because that's the issue of our day. Now you may be a wimp and a whiner someplace and go out and say, "Well, you know what, not me. I will stand with my forefathers on their doctrines. This one is mine." Excuse me if I get a little passion. I forgot my meds this morning.

You will find a great contrast between the last two churches. It's a sermon unto itself because the Philadelphia church, Philadelphia means brotherly love. The Philadelphia church from 1600 to 1900, this is where the Bible goes around the world four or five times. You want to talk about great missionaries? That's the time period. You want to talk about great preachers? That's the time period. You want to talk about a time when three quarters of the world through England and the United States had come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? That's the time period.

In Revelation 3:7, he tells them,

In Revelation 3:7, he tells them,

> I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

The reason why he set before them an open door is they kept his word. Contrast that to our church, Laodicea, which comes on the scene around 1900 or so. When you get into Revelation 3:20, you find that that is the church of the closed door. He says in Revelation 3:20 about our church, who has failed to hold up the doctrine that we were challenged with:

Revelation 3:20

> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Jesus Christ today, based on the Word of God, don't take the ravings of a mad old man, based on the Word of God, the Bible says that today in the Laodicean church, Jesus Christ is put out of his own church, knocking on the door wanting to get back in.

III. The End Result of a Real Relationship with God

Now today, we will move on and we will look at the end result of a real relationship with God. We're going to get to the lowest common denominator today based on truth, having the right relationship with Christ and fundamentally at the end of the day. I know there's a lot of blessings and a lot of key things that come along with the relationship with God. I'm going to scrape them all off and take it right down based on the verse of what you got.

It says in Proverbs 23:24-25:

Proverbs 23:24-25

> The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

> Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

Let's go to the Word of God today and ask God's blessing upon it. John Gowan, would you stand up and ask the blessing on the message today for me, sir? Amen.

As I said, we have been talking about our walk with the Lord in the last couple of weeks. Today I want to talk about the real joy of that walk, the real rejoicing in that walk. Now, I know there's a lot of things that we get excited about and have joy in, and I get it. I understand. I'm not taking away from any of that. I'm bringing it down to the final analysis.

Philippians 1:6. Somebody asked a question Thursday night about something I had said in Philippians, and I walked you through those 10 verses. The first one I gave you is Philippians 1:6:

Philippians 1:6

> *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

I asked you today, what does that mean? What is that good work? Somebody said, "Well, that means that he began a good work in me and I'm going to, he's going to perform that work until the rapture of the church and I'll be around when the rapture comes." Okay, let me ask you a question. How does that verse work for somebody who lived in 1500? How does that verse work for somebody who lived in 1800? I mean, the verse says that he began a good work in you and he's going to perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. If you die 300 years before the day of Jesus Christ, how does that verse work? I'm going to give you the answer to that today. You're going to learn something today. You probably won't like me at the end of the sermon, but we're going to learn something today. It's all right. I got all the friends I can afford at this time of my life anyhow.

Now, I want you to notice first of all, the context. It's a reference to a father and a mother rejoicing over their child that God gave them. Let's read those two verses again and then we're going to begin to work through it.

Proverbs 23:24-25

> *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.*

> *Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.*

Now, doctrinally, let's kind of get those out of the way first. This will be obviously the nation of Israel. We know that the book of Proverbs is written foremost to the nation of Israel. God's son, Exodus 4, as a nation. The whole book is built around God trying to get that nation, his son, to be wise and make the right choices. We know how that works. The mother there in that story will be the city of Jerusalem. Historically, this will be Solomon's own son, Rehoboam, who forsook the wisdom of his father and played the fool. The mother here would be Bathsheba.

But I want to focus on the inspirational application because there will be three key applications to this verse. There will be times in the Bible where you will find dual applications. This will be one of them. As we look at it, as far as a father and a mother, we're going to talk about it in relationship to our own children first. That's going to be number one. Then I got a couple of other ones we're going to look at.

IV. The Joy of Raising Righteous Children

This is for a Christian dad and a Christian mom. We want to look at it today. I want to tell you something: nothing will make parents happier or prouder than their children growing up side by side with them in the ministry. There's nothing greater than that. God's plan to reach the world, whether you know it or not, was families. God never intended it to be great evangelists or great preachers. You'll find the greatest evangelist that ever lived was the Apostle Paul. You know what he did? He started churches and those churches began to produce families because God's plan for

reaching the world is families. My family and your family and every family who claims to be saved. That's God's plan.

Within that family, God intended that family to have an unbroken line of truth through that family. That it start with mom and dad. Then it goes through the daughters and the sons and then goes through the grandchildren. It just moves on down the line. Now, obviously, that being true, you can now see how you have to be very careful with who you yoke yourself up to because the wrong husband or the wrong wife can destroy that whole concept. You may have a relationship with God and you may be saved. But the end final analysis is how far is that chain going to go before it's broken? That's the key.

I want to tell you, over the years, I have seen a lot of failed parenting. I've seen every mistake a mom and dad could make. I must confess to you today, I am no perfect father and I have made my own many mistakes. I never want to stand up here and say, "Look at me as the model being a father." That's not true. I have seen every mistake a dad and a mom have made, and I have made my share. In the back of my Bible, I have listed five steps to failed parenting. I take them to me. I've never even taught those to you because they're me. But I watch this thing and all the years of dealing with hundreds, no, thousands of people. I've choreographed it all and watched it and came down and said to myself, these are the five major steps of failed parenting. I've watched it unfold.

It's like a slow-moving cancer. It stays dormant in your kids in those four, five, six, seven, eight years. It's hard to detect. It's hard to tell if it's just being a kid or just tough. But as the kids get older, you can clearly see that there's something wrong. Of course, there were warning signs, but you ignored the principles. Now at 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, when the child should be standing by your side and doing the ministry, they're not. And yet the parents, have I seen this? The parents always want to play the game, "Oh, everything is fine. Oh, we're always, it's wonderful. Everything is good." They will project a phony Christianity that actually has produced a phony child.

Now, I've watched, you're listening to somebody that's been in the ministry almost half a century. I've seen all kinds of issues. Troy McKinney, how old are you, Troy? 56? You were 12 when I first met you. Steve Bracken, I don't know where he's at, he's probably shooting somebody in a parking lot. He was 14. I mean, that's how long I've been in this thing. I was in it before I met those guys. So there's a lot of things I don't know anything about. My car breaks down, I'm ready to sell it. Kenny told me one time it's got a short circuit. My question was, how much does it cost to make that longer? I'm the guy when I was living by myself, when my mom remarried and moved out, I had to call the Maytag guy because they don't do anything anyhow because the wash machine wouldn't work. I went down and put the clothes in, put the soap in, and pushed the button. Wouldn't start. I had to pay \$40 to be taught and trained that you had to close the lid before you pushed the button.

I locked my car keys in my car one day. I had to call the Jimmy fix-it guy, get it for your car and rip you off in the process. He was at my house, had one of those long things, put it down the window, in 10 seconds it cost me \$40. Two weeks later, yeah, all the dumbos in life are not elephants, I want to tell you that. I did it again. I called him, same guy came out. Yes, I am a little

embarrassed at this point in time. I'm a grown man, I used to guard facilities, and here I am two times, and he's a professional, opened it up. I said, "How much?" He says, "\$30." I said, "It was \$40 last time." He said, "Yeah, we give a discount for being stupid." I needed that. He said, "He shouldn't have said that to you." Well, maybe, but I never locked my keys in my car again. Every time I get out of my thing, I say, "Okay, stupid, where are they?"

Now the blame game begins. Now it starts to be everybody else's problem for my child. They start making excuses for their child, but you watch this, in reality, they're making excuses for themselves. "Well, my kids went through some really bad situations in life." You mean worse than Job? "Well, they went to a church and the church really did them wrong." Really? Ever go to a restaurant, get a bad meal, did you quit eating out? "Well, there were people in the church that really didn't do them right and treated them bad and now they won't go back to church again." When you get a job and the boss or your work co-workers don't treat you right, are you going to quit and never go to work again? I mean, we blame everything on everybody else instead of taking your responsibility ourselves. They have to shift the spotlight and place the blame on somebody else because they just can't ever handle responsibility that I messed up and screwed up and my kid is in the mess they're in because I didn't do what's right.

You know what? That is so ridiculously stupid. There's something always you can do to fix it. You know what gets me about politicians? Whenever they get in a jam, they always try to lie their way out of it. I just wish one time a politician would get up and say, "For the people, I screwed up. I messed up. I own this. I take responsibility for it. I ask you to forgive me. I'm human like everybody else. That's no excuse. I am sorry." Why does it have to be a thousand excuses and you wind up getting caught in the end anyhow?

Listen, I have seen in my own church and my ministry for years and years and years parents who have lost their kids, and yet I want to tell you, I have the utmost respect for them. They saw their failure, they accepted their responsibility in it, they came to me and we put together a plan together to try to get that situation where it needed to be. We work together. You know, in the Bible there's a concept of blamelessness. Most people don't understand the Bible definition of blamelessness. The Bible definition of blameless is not that you go through life never doing anything wrong to be blamed. The concept of blamelessness is when you do do something wrong, you take ownership of it, make it right, and then you move on with life and you're blameless.

I've watched over my life, and you and I know, we have met up in my office how many times helping you with your kid. Boy, when we meet parents, you know, do I put good plans together for your children? You betcha I do. But it all starts not with my plan, it all starts with mom and dad being honest. I've watched so many of you do what is right, and I respect you incredibly this morning. I've watched some of you moms and some of you dads turn that thing around, and all I can say for you is you are a hero to me, and maybe your kids don't see it yet, but someday you'll be a hero to them.

Then there will be those who I absolutely have no respect for. Do you love them? Oh, absolutely. Do you pray for them every day and I would help them in a New York second. What is a New

York second? I hear it all the time, it sounds neat. Is a second faster in New York than it is here? It is? Why? You seem to have the authority on it. Enlighten me, Caleb. Caleb's a good Bible name. Caleb. Joshua needs some help here. Now what is it? Time zone. Okay. Yeah, that's good. No, what I love about you, you're so much like me. When I get in a jam and I don't want to do, I lie too. That's the art of the ministry, faking your way through anything.

It's tough for a parent to come to grips with the fact that it's not your child that's the issue. It's you. It's you. Many times it's an arrogance of your pride. Many times they're just afraid. Many times they just don't have the courage to turn around and deal with their child. After a while the child takes control and you're working for them. Ever see a little kid at a store with a mom when he's eight or four or five years old and he doesn't get the toy that he wants? The temper tantrum he throws? I've seen parents, honestly, if I hear, if I'm at Walmart, and Walmart is a great hunting ground for kids that want to throw tantrums. I love Walmart. Not only to get a best deal, but I listen down the aisles. I try to talk to the manager and have him, you know how they put, you know, "There's a sale going on in aisle in blue light special in aisle five." I want him to say, "There's a real fight going on with a kid and his mother in aisle six." I'd be down there. I learn from those things. I'll just stand over there.

Then, at some point, if I see, I'll get the Gate spirit. You know, all the Gates, the barbecue place, the Gate spirit, "May I help you?" You know that. I remember one time, it was a mall that had poles like this. It wasn't completely covered. It was open in the middle, and there were poles holding the sides up. This woman, and I was, this woman walking down the thing, her kid was just throwing everything, he wanted something, didn't get it. So every pole the kid would wrap around there and scream and yell, and she would be coming on, "You know, come on." She'd break him through, he'd come around, he'd get to the next pole and hang on, and he said, "Come on, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on." And he'd get to the next pole all the way down there. I just followed. I thought to myself, you know, that's how God gets a lot of Christians home to heaven. One pole, whining at a time.

Now I could have helped that woman out in 30 seconds, fix that kid for life. But you know why you never could? Because the problem wasn't the kid, the problem was a parent that'll let him hang on to the pole. Maybe she had something with poles. I don't know, I'm not going to get into that. But it's not the child that's the issue. You'll never reach out for help. You'll never get honest. I'll tell you why you won't, at least come to me, because in the world of Christianity, and you people who work with people, you know, people today want to treat their symptoms but they don't really want to solve the problem. I don't treat symptoms. I solve problems. The bulk of Christianity today just want to treat the symptoms so they can feel better.

You know what happens. We all do it. I do it. I know you do it. You all do it. Especially all you older guys, you all do it because men are men. You go to the doctor, you don't feel good. He gives you a prescription. You just take them until you start to feel better. Don't you, Bubba? That's why you look so sickly this morning. That's what we do. We just want to get enough so we can feel better. But we never want to take all the medicine to really solve the problem. I'll tell you that idea of solving problems versus symptoms is a very real principle.

The verse says,

Proverbs 23:24

> The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

I want to tell you, nothing on this planet will take the place of a righteous child standing shoulder to shoulder with mom and dad in the ministry. It's the final analysis of what your walk with God should produce. Now parents can be proud of a lot of things with their kids, and rightly so. They should be. You get a kid that excels in sports. Man, be proud of that. I'm telling you, man, they can hit the ball or run or play soccer or play basketball. Hey, I'm all for it, man. I'll tell you what, I think those things are great. I think they build a lot of things. Your school academics, getting on the honor roll. I would be proud of any kid that made the honor roll. It was always my envy in life to be on the honor roll. I think it's great. I look at some of you kids that you do do everything and you have a straight A average. Now you know you're cheating. College scholarships. I mean, hey, you do good in school and do good in sports or academics or golf or tennis or whatever it is. And you get a scholarship for it. I got a scholarship. I was in high school, my best sport was the hand grenade throw, and I got a scholarship to the U.S. Army and all the hand grenades I could eat. I think it's great. Military service. Oh boy. Get a great job. Oh man, you deserve it.

Listen to me. That's all good. Listen to me. As good as all those things are, they will fail in comparison to your child loving and serving God in your church by your side. I mean, we started when we went through the child thing a while back, we started you going through it with your family. I still have you come to me and say, "Man, that was the greatest thing. We're still doing it." Mom and dad and the family sitting down and one day a week going through that Bible together. Seeing you out there ministering side by side on the street like this afternoon. Mom and dad will be up here and restart, and the kids will be on Will's team down there. I mean, it's incredible. It just really is. Or how about this, watching your child begin to disciple their first person. Listen and give their first testimony. Listen and give their first devotion.

You know, I never say much about this. I really don't for a couple of reasons, but it's none of your business. But I thank God every day and rejoice above measure that my kids are by my side in the ministry and all that I do. I'm far from the perfect father. I'm telling you. I got what I got for two reasons. One of them, I'll tell you, just the blessings of the book. I'll tell you, my daughters Kelly and Jamie, they can be a handful. I'm waiting for an amen from both of you. They can be something. I thank God every day and every day for the sons I got. Notice I didn't say son-in-law. They're my son. That doesn't mean there's incest in our family. That means that they are my, they're like my own son. I couldn't do what I do without them. I just couldn't. I don't ever say anything about it. I don't get up here and brag on them because I don't want to put them in a bad light. But this is, remember Thursday night I told you about the book of Philippians, how it was a more intimate book because it, well, this is my more intimate sermon. So I'll tell you some things. I love Danny and Woody. I wouldn't trade everything in the world. You know what I've learned? I've learned that that book will carry you through when you fail. And yet I thank God every day that they're in ministry with me.

But I want to tell you something else too. I couldn't do what I do without them. But I want to tell you right now, I'm not taking any false credit. 100 percent of what they are goes to my wife. Not me. I'll just tell you, and I'll give you guys some advice if I might. I know you're not asking for it. But if you're really honest with yourself this morning and you've got good solid kids, it's because of your wife, not because of you. The quicker you learn that great truth, the better off you're going to be in life. "Well, I'm the spiritual leader of my family." Yeah. And when you fail, it'll be the wife who picks up and carries it through for you. Idiot.

A mother will, in the early years, she will make those kids or she will break those kids. She will train them to stand for God or she will enable them to be worthless. The world is so clear on that. I mean, they interview some hot shot quarterback and the first thing he says is, "Hi, Mom." Doesn't say anything to his dad. "Hi, Mom. Hi, Mom." I mean, it's just, it's just that case. There are more men and women, men and women in the ministry today and on the mission field today and serving God today because of praying mothers and grandmothers than all the fathers on the planet. On the battlefield of Normandy or the battlefield of the Battle of the Bulge or at Khe Sanh or wherever it was, when a young Marine or a young Army guy got hit bad and he's laying there on the beach or laying there in the jungle with his intestines hanging out and he's going to die and he's screaming for help. It's "Mother, Mother, Mother." Never "Dad." Never "Dad." The quicker you guys learn that, the better off you're going to be.

Verse 24 says,

Proverbs 23:24

> The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

You know, over the years, I've had, and you get this in the ministry, I've had parents over the years rag on me because they didn't think that I took care of their kid the way I should have. Kid didn't work out, didn't happen, so they blame me for it. I'll be honest with you, I'm just going to lay my cards on the table. You know what? I can only work with what you give me. When you have spent all your life enabling that kid and making that kid into something and giving them everything and never, never holding them accountable, and then they get to be 17, 18, 19, and 20, and your world's falling apart and you want to bring them to me, the magic man with a potion that's going to fix it all, you're out of your mind. I can't undo.

In the last year, I've seen situations, and I'm not going to bring them up, I've seen situations where we had gals and guys come into this church whose parents were absolutely worthless. They were the most despicable parents on the planet as far as I am concerned. I've watched this church love those kids, bring those kids in. I've watched you ladies work with them. I've watched you guys work with them. I watched you disciple them. I watched you do everything with them that you did, and you know what? At the end of the day, you got the sharp stick in the eye and they're with the despicable parents today. Now you know why that is? Because the very best we have, the very best that we can do, cannot overcome the influence of a parent in their life. Whether it be good or whether it be bad, you better learn that. I can only work with what you bring me. You bring me something that's absolutely busted and broke and you expect me to put a

Cadillac together for you. The spiritual temperature of your walk with God, listen to me, will be your children. There's a way to fix it. There always is. There's never a time that there's not something that you can do to do right. The problem is you won't do it.

V. The Joy of Spiritual Children

Now the second point of my message, and I want this one to be an encouragement to you. It will be the joy that you have in watching the spiritual children that God gives you. People you disciple, the people you counsel, the people that you work with. You know, in a family there's no greater joy than you do in a family. In a family there's no greater joy than giving birth. We ought to know that around here. Giving birth to a new baby and then everybody watching that baby grow up. I mean it gets to be six or seven years old and takes its first baby step. It probably does it before that. But you know what I mean. You get to about three or four and it starts to take its, you know it's wobbling and you say, "Come on, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on." Call grandma, call the uncles, call everybody, call Trump, call everybody. "They walked, they walked, they walked, he walked, she walked, they walked." Pray, "Wow, wow, it's the greatest day." Get pictures, get video. And when you go over for dinner you got to watch those stupid videos. I have watched more three-year-olds falling down, going to steps and then I'm gonna say, "Isn't that great, isn't that great, isn't that great." We eat now, is there any food in this thing?

Then how about the first little words? "He said daddy." "No he didn't." "He said you're ugly." "No, I heard him. He said daddy." "No he said, he said he regurgitated." No, he said that you want those first words and you're so proud. Why? Because they