

# Proverbs 24:6

Sunday 7/8/2018

If you have your Bibles this morning, we are back to Proverbs chapter 24. Last week, we looked at the opening five verses and we saw the process, a very good look at the process of spiritual growth. It basically, in a fundamental way, comes down to two different aspects. One, we saw it last week, building your own house, your spiritual body. And then through that process, allowing God to establish you. God will establish you in two ways: He will establish you in His Word, and then He will establish you in His work. Of course, His work will be a New Testament local church based on the Bible principles of what a church is.

We talked about staying away from the negative, non-biblical things in the world that will impact your life, and then through the association with people who simply will make you better, help you get where you want to get. Proverbs 27:17 has a great verse. It talks about iron sharpening iron:

*Proverbs 27:17*

*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

It is a verse that we built our prayer groups on when we started to have everybody meet together. Obviously, we did it for the prayer request and the prayer time and the teaching of the Word of God, but more than that, or adjacent to that, it was to help you be better, to help each other work through issues, to build a camaraderie, to build a relationship with people that would make each other better.

As a child of God, we are commanded to study. He says to study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. He says that in 2 Timothy 2:15. It is a very important process. But I showed you last week out of the verses that how also a lost man, or even a saved man that is out of fellowship with God, he will study to bring about a destruction, not only in his own life, but whoever he associates with. We saw that great principle many, many times in Psalms 1:1-3, where you actually see the progression laid out for you of how that process works.

Lastly, last week, I told you that the man of understanding, this is Proverbs 24:5, he increases his strength.

*Proverbs 24:5*

*A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.*

You never stop growing spiritually. There should never be a time in your life when you do not press forward to learn more, to get more, to be all that God wants you to be. Obviously, God's wisdom and understanding is endless, and it certainly is. So our learning and our growth also should be endless. Over in Ephesians 4:15, he talks about us growing up into Christ, being like Christ. Your daily growth should continue every day of your life till the day you wake up and the Lord comes back for you, when you are just like Him.

Today, I want to talk to you about one verse, the next verse, verse 6, and it is a great verse. It is one of those verses that needs to be preached by itself. This verse, along with what we looked at last week, I kind of separated it out from the first five because it has such a powerful message to it. It is Proverbs 24:6, and here is what it says:

*Proverbs 24:6*

*For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

## I. The Church Triumphant and the Church Militant

I have told you many times that New Testament Christianity, or the church, is broken down into two concepts. When you want to study the church, or what the church is, or what it is all about, you start with these two concepts. I have told you many, many times, in fact we talked about it several times in Institute and also on Sunday morning, but the first one is the church triumphant, and that will be the spiritual body. When you got saved, you were put into the body of Christ. That is Christ's church. That is the spiritual, real church that the Bible talks about. The real church is not a building. It is not something that can be made with hands. The real church that Jesus drives is a spiritual body that you are put into the moment you get saved. Nobody can touch you in that. Nothing can hurt you in that. You have the victory in Christ Jesus right now this morning in your life based on the church triumphant. That is why it is called the church triumphant. When you recognize that, when you key into that, that is why you already have the victory. You may lose some battles in life, but I read the last book in the Bible. I want to tell you something: we may lose some battles, but bless God, you are going to win the war. In fact, the war has already been won.

Now, you have the church triumphant. The second aspect is the church militant. That is in this local New Testament church. That is you and me slugging out the ministry. That is you and me facing the obstacles of what is out there that you and I have to stand firm and fight the good fight to get the work done for the Lord Jesus Christ. There are two aspects to it. In the church triumphant, there is only victory. In the church militant, there should be only victory, but unfortunately there are a lot of defeats there. It is because people will not plug into the church triumphant and they will not look at things the way that they should.

All down through the Bible and all down through the history of the church, the church has been portrayed as an army, the church militant. Now I know what I am about to say and what I have already said is not popular today in most churches. Most churches are conscientious objectors to a spiritual warfare. Most churches, most Christians, and I say this with love in my heart, there is no malice in me, this is just the truth and the facts today. Most Christians could not fight a good spiritual warfare if their life depended on it. It is the fact that the idea of war, the idea of being in a fight. We have such a mamsy-pamsy Christianity today. Men and women with no steel in their backbone, no gravel in their guts. They cannot take a stand. They cannot lead their families right. How in the world are they going to lead a ministry or a church right?

All through the Bible, Revelation 19:11 says:

*Revelation 19:11*

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

And the armies that were in heaven followed after Him. That is the second coming of Christ. You do not believe you are in the army? Get off that white horse. I am going to come up to you up there and I am going to get off that white horse. Revelation 19. Look at Joel. Most of the minor prophets and even the major prophets. But in Joel chapter 2, there is an avenging army coming down. Song of Solomon 6:4 talks about you and me as the church as an army with banners coming back. Judges chapter 5 is an incredible chapter. All through the Bible, all through the Bible.

## II. Qualities of a Soldier for Christ

We as soldiers, as a church militant, we have a military structure in Christianity. I am sorry that the church you go to, I am sorry that you have been raised in a Christianity that did not tell you that. The very songs that are hymnal, the old songs they used to sing, are all military songs: "Hold the Fort for I Am Coming," "Am I a Soldier of the Cross," "Onward Christian Soldiers," and "I Am to Sound the Battle Cry." Now you have those nightclub Christian songs. What they talk about, "I love him. Oh, I love him. He touched my heart and I love him. And I love everybody because he loved me and he loved me because I love him because God is love and God's love is in me. Therefore I will love you." "Am I a soldier of the cross? Through bloody seas I have waged. Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war with the cross of Jesus going on before." Which would you rather have? "Love you, I love you."

We have a captain. You know that? The Bible says in Hebrews 2:10 that Jesus Christ is the captain of my salvation. He is my captain. We are told in 2 Timothy 2:4 that He has chosen you and me, if you are saved this morning, to be a soldier for Jesus Christ. He tells us in 2 Timothy 2:3 that because we have been chosen to be a soldier, that we as a soldier need to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He says in 1 Timothy 1:18 that I am to war a good warfare.

Years ago, back in the 1800s, William Booth, who was a general, started an organization called the Salvation Army. Back in the day, it was a military Christian church militant formation. They all wore uniforms and they had ranks in there. He took the concept of the church militant to the extreme. For a long time, they were an army. They marched in parades with big banners with crosses on them and told the story of Christ. They stood on the street corner and played their instruments down in the sections of town where the derelicts were, wherever the lost were. If William Booth came back today and walked through the first church in the Salvation Army, he would have a heart attack before he got past the first ashtray. It is a mess today. It is a rabble. It is not even an army anymore. And Christianity is not either.

I have been around soldiers all my life. Military men have a very unique quality about them. We gravitate in this church to men who are military or military-minded, and women too. A real professional soldier will have four basic qualities about him that I think are invaluable.

1. Self-discipline. He will be self-motivated. We talk about courage. We talk about being strong and courageous. You know where courage comes from? Courage starts with your self-discipline. Courage starts with you disciplining your emotions so that when something comes into your life that would scare the average person, you stand up to it and you stand because you have got the courage, and the self-discipline and the self-motivation is what gets you through.
2. The mindset of self-sacrifice. They realize that a real soldier, I know you have soldiers that do not want to be in and all that. When I was in, you had the Vietnam War and half the guys wanted to get out, and they hated it, and people were going to Canada. I am not talking about guys like that. I am talking about real soldiers. They understand the concept of self-sacrifice. A real soldier will know that his life in the grand scheme of war, he is expendable. But he will understand that the way he may be expendable, the mission never will be. They will take the idea that, and that does not mean you foolishly give your life, do something stupid to get killed. We always follow the philosophy that wars are not won by you giving your life for your country. Wars are won by you making the other guy give his life for his.
3. Strict adherence to the chain of command. In the military, you lead from the top down. Good leadership is a must. You have good leaders, you have a good squad, or you have a good platoon, or you have a good company. You get a bad leader and you get a lot of guys killed. The greatest chapter in the Bible on principles of leadership is found in Exodus chapter 32. It is without a doubt the definitive, paramount chapter in the Bible on training leaders. I am always looking to train leaders. I see people in my church, people that I meet. I will comb every aisle, every chair looking for anybody who has a speck of ability to be a leader. If you can take your dog out and lead him to go to the bathroom and bring him back safely, I am interested in you. I have something to work with. Building leaders is what I do. Building leaders is what I understand. Building leadership is an art form. I learned it not because I am so brilliant or bright or intelligent. I learned it because in my life I associated with great leaders.
4. Honor. He lives by a code of honor. He with his fellow soldiers will put his life in their hands and ask them to put their life into his hands with no fear of ever letting you fall through. One of the great military organizations of the past, their motto was, "My honor is loyalty."

As God's people, I am telling you, these are the same four qualities that will make you a great soldier for Jesus Christ. I have a job to do for the Lord. God saved me for a purpose. I know what that job is and I know what that purpose is and I know how to do it. I also know to do what I want to accomplish in my life in the church that God has provided for me and the mission that God has given me, I know, I understand fully and completely. I get it. It takes a certain kind of person to do the job that I want done.

I have said this many times, this church is not for everybody. I have made no bones about that and I understand that. I totally get it. I am looking in these last days for a certain kind of man and woman. It is okay. If somebody comes here and they do not think they can fit in, it does not make them a bad person. In most cases, they are fine. They will find some place to go and they will settle in and they will just be okay. It is where they are at. But I have learned that if you are going to do the job for me, it is going to take a very special cut of person because I am not

satisfied of just being the ordinary. All my life, whatever I have done, I went through Mach 5 with my hair on fire. I never was satisfied with a status quo. In the world, if everybody is walking this way and all humanity is walking this way, in the big circle of life, if they are walking this way, I can guarantee you one thing, I will be walking this way. I will go against everything that is the status quo because I realize that to do the job for the Lord Jesus Christ, it takes a special individual in these days anyhow.

The thing where we are no different, or we should not be, from the way they train the elite, the Special Forces, the Rangers, or the Seals, or the British SAS, or the Marine Recon. You will get 200 guys to try out and maybe only 20 or 30 of them will make it. When you go to SEAL school and BUD/S training, they have this big bell and when you cannot take it anymore, and boy, they put it to you, and when they cannot take it anymore, you go up and you ring the bell and you are out. It does not mean, they will tell you, it does not mean you are a bad soldier. It does not mean you are not qualified in what you do. It just means for what we want to do and where we want to go and what we want to accomplish, you are not what we are looking for.

The old song says, "100 men will test today but only three win the Green Beret." There is a process of going through and learning. You will always have an Army, you will always have a Navy, you will always have a Marine Corps, you will always have an Air Force, you will always have the Coast Guard. In the military, they call those kind of soldiers, and it is not a derogatory mark, it is just a true statement, they call them citizen soldiers. They are citizen soldiers because they came out of society, they do what they do, and then they go back to society as a citizen. That is not a bad thing. I mean, I have all the respect in the world for the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps. This is not a slam against them at all. But you are going to find that in every military organization within the world, I do not care what country you pick, you are always going to have those who want to be the best of the best. You are not satisfied with a status quo either.

All the way back in 1755 when we were fighting the French and Indian War, and we were on the British side back then, and the British were the goofiest people in warfare, but that is the way warfare was back then. They had rules in warfare and they all, we called them Red Coats because they all wore Red Coats. How much you stand out on a battlefield wearing a Red Coat? They were called Red Coats and when they fought up against another Army, they all lined up in rows from maybe one row here of 5,000 guys and another row 7,500 yards away of 5,000 guys and they stood there and just shot at each other. "You shoot me, I will shoot you and whoever runs out of ammunition first will live." The Germans did the same thing. They had a saying, "If it rains, the war will be held in the auditorium."

There was a guy who saw the fallacy of that whose name was Richard Rogers, and in 1775, a long time ago, he started what was known down to history as Roger's Rangers. He realized that wearing a Red Coat was goofy so he dressed all his guys in forest green so he could blend in with the trees. The British had a thing that, it was great to be an officer in the British Army because one of the rules were if you are an officer, you cannot get shot. "Do not shoot the officers. They are gentlemen. Shoot all the peons out there. But do not shoot the guys on the horses or the guys with the sword, do not shoot them." Every once in a while, one of them got killed, just by accident, but the rules were do not shoot the officers. Now the officers would ride

back and forth and they would get out of the way, and their little peons would slug it out and die by the hundreds and by the thousands and they would go home, have their little tea and crumpets and all that stuff because you could not shoot an officer.

Rogers changed all that. His mindset was, "We want to disorganize the Army. Shoot the officers first." Boy, what a surprising day that was the first time Rogers Rangers showed up. You lost your officer corps in about 15 minutes. Because the Army was trained to follow the officers in strict discipline and they never allowed the enlisted people to be part of that little group, you kill all the officers, who is giving the order? It all falls apart. In 1775 he did that.

Down through history they were called Rogers Rangers, an elite group. In World War II, you had a guy by the name of Bill Donovan who started what we know back then as the OSS. It turned into the CIA later. He was a covert guy and he did incredible things. You had a guy by the name of William Darby in World War II who patterned and studied Rogers Rangers and he developed the Darby's Rangers of World War II. You had Colonel Fredericks who had a desire for an elite organization above the Army, above the regular corps. He established with the Canadian Army a joint group called the First Special Service Force.

Along with that in World War II, you had the regular soldiers that were great guys. You could not have won the war without them. This is not a criticism against them. But you had guys who wanted to be better. They joined the 101st Airborne. They joined the 82nd Airborne. They joined the 517th in the Pacific. They joined the 11th. They were crucial times, they were a crucial time like the Battle of the Bulge when Bastogne, the little town in Belgium, had five roads going into it and the Germans launched a surprise counterattack in December right before Christmas in 1944. They completely caught the Americans off guard and the front line troops that were holding the line all panicked and ran. They dropped their weapons, they went and they had to put in the 82nd Airborne and the 101st Airborne. The 101st Airborne was in Bastogne. Completely surrounded. Coldest winter in Europe. Some of them only had one clip of seven or eight rounds of ammunition. No food, no nothing. Completely surrounded by the German Army who wanted Bastogne. If Bastogne would have fallen, there is a good chance they would have taken Antwerp, Belgium and we lost the war. Those troops that were there, they were not prepared for it. They saw, they heard the tanks rumbling and the shells coming in and they ran and they had to truck in the 82nd and the 101st Airborne. The 101st got stuck right in the middle of Bastogne.

This is where General McAuliffe, the divisional commander for the 101st, he was surrounded and the Germans came in and offered him a surrender thing. "If you surrender your troops, we will let you live." He looked at it and wrote on it and sent back to your commander, "Nuts." The German says, "What does 'Nutsen' mean?" One guy in charge of the SS, kind of like Goebbels. He did not give up. They had news guys there and they came up to Dick Winters, who was a famous guy and I met him a couple of times and he was a great guy, he is dead now. I think he might have been a Christian. They came up to him and they said, "Do not you know?" Now he was Easy Company's commander of the 101st Airborne, a very elite group. They are surrounded in Bastogne. And he said, "Do not you know you are surrounded? Do not you know that you are surrounded? And what are you guys going to do?" He looked at that guy and he says, "We are paratroopers. We are supposed to be surrounded."

Somebody will say to you in Christianity, "Do not you know it is a tough world out there? Do not you know the world and the flesh and the devil is going to try to kick your rear end? Do not you know they are going to come after you?" And your response is, "I am a child of God, I am a soldier of the cross. I am supposed to be surrounded." Instead, we throw down our weapon and run for it. I do not need those kind of guys. I do not need those kind of women. I need women in this church who are the sweetest, prettiest, most beautiful little things and creatures that walk this planet who will bite you like a junkyard dog if you get on their wrong side. They will smile. They will be kind and pleasant. And you will say, "I think the KJV Bible has got a bunch of mistakes in it. I think your guys are a cult." And she will tear you apart. She will say to you, "You want to learn 25 pounds of ugly fat?" "Well, yeah, who would?" "Cut your head off."

Back in the 80s and the 90s, they had what they called in the 82nd Airborne a rapid deployment battalion. The battalion is 400 to 600 guys, depending on your strength. Their job was they could be dropped anywhere in the world, anywhere in the world, in 24 hours or less in any situation that arose. I have always wanted my men and women in this church just like that. I always wanted to train you that God could take you and drop you into any situation that you would be able to handle it, that God had enough confidence in you, that you had enough confidence in God and yourself and the Bible, that God could drop you in any scenario, anywhere around the world, in your job, in your neighborhood, with your friends, anywhere. And God could just put you right down in the middle of that without a parachute. And you just pick it up and handle it. That is what I am looking for. That is what I want.

I am tired of the mamsy-pamsy Christianity. I am tired of the Christians who are always whining and complaining about everything. I am sick and tired of God's people just being such a defeatist attitude. To be like that, it takes a special kind of discipline, self-discipline, commitment. Most of God's people, they are great people. They really are. But to be honest, they are satisfied with where they are at. They are saved. They are on their way to heaven. They are muddling through life, and they are satisfied with that. They have just enough of Bible to get them through their day. Oh, I know. They have their little daily breads. Oh, I know. They have which have turned into their daily crumbs. I get it. They have all the little things, all the little niceties that all the little God's people have. They go to church, and they hear a nice platonic service. They have a nice band. Somebody is singing. Everything is sweet. Everything is kind. Somebody gets up and talks about salvation all the time or talks about this. He will never get down to the basics of real Christian warfare. God's people are satisfied today. They are satisfied with the status quo. I am going to tell you something. No disrespect to you. I love you. This is not a slam against you, but you will not fit in this church. I do not want it to be bad for you, and I do not want it to be bad for me, but mostly for you. Because I am not looking for the standard status quo here. I am looking for a young man or a young lady or a mom or dad, somebody who will pick up their weapon, get on their post, and stand there and watch.

Back in 2 Samuel 23, I am going to preach this the last night at camp, and it has the great chapter on David's mighty men of valor. David, I mean, they had an army. Israel had a great army, just like we did. But within that army, there were certain men who went way beyond what was asked of them. They went way beyond what was called on them to do. When you read down there,

some of the feats and some of the things that they did are unbelievable. One guy took on 900 guys and killed every one of them. Now I know what the scholars say, "The scribal error made an error with bleary-eyed that night and took nine and had a couple zeroes." No, no, one guy, one guy with the power of God took on 900 guys and defeated them. There will be times in your Christian life when the odds will be 900 to one. Whether you stand or not, whatever you stand or whatever you do will depend on the self-discipline you have allowed God to build into you to be a good soldier to endure hardness for Jesus Christ.

That one guy was fighting those guys. He had a sword in his hand, a picture of the Word of God. He is slashing them and cutting them. After 900 guys, his muscles in his hand cramped so badly around that sword that he could not drop it. He could not let it go. I want to tell you something. That Bible says the sword is the Word of God. You ought to have so in your hand fighting the battle with that sword that you cannot let it go. You may not like this. You may not think this is good advice. But the greatest advice for you to stay in that book and stay close to God is to get into a good fight spiritually with somebody with the Word of God. Because when you do not fight, you get passive. You just take things in stride. You start watching, you start on television. You do not watch war movies anymore. You watch the Hallmark Channel. You watch "The Sound of Music." And she walks up and down there and says, "The hills are alive." Most people do not catch that. The hills will become alive with the sound of music. You ought to read the Old Testament. It is when the Lord comes back into the millennium. The trees clap their hands. You say, "I did not know trees had hands." Why? They have limbs. Like I preached one time and I preached on hell and I said, "There will be wailing and weeping and gnashing of teeth down in Alabama, someplace in Kentucky." An old lady came up afterwards. She did not have any of her teeth. She had just gums. She said, "You know how your mouth caves in around that, and all those things?" She lost her teeth a long time ago, you could tell. I was just talking, I hope you know what will kiss me. She came up and she said, "Preacher, I heard your message. You said gnashing of teeth. I do not have any teeth." I said, "Madam, teeth will be provided."

### III. The Bible as the Soldier's Handbook

All down through history, great military men who experienced battles have written books on how to win a war. They will write down their experiences of tactics in warfare. Hermann Göring, who was the head of the Luftwaffe in the German Army, was a fighter ace in World War I. He wrote a tactical book on fighter planes after World War I. Everybody was following it. Erwin Rommel was the tank commander in Germany in World War II, a great brilliant tactician. He wrote a book on tank tactics which was studied all over the world. General Patton did the same thing. MacArthur did the same thing. He wrote a book on the tactics of warfare so somebody else could study by what they had experienced and then wage their warfare.

Today in our military, we will send the finest of our young men and young ladies to places like West Point, places like Annapolis, or the Air Force Academy. They will train them to be leaders, to be officers, and they will all go through these books and everything that these guys wrote. They will get class after class after class on how to wage a warfare. Right up here in Leavenworth, Kansas, we have Fort Leavenworth. Fort Leavenworth is, I think, the oldest fort in

America. There they have what they call the War College. From around the world, and I have met many of them. I had two really good friends that were teachers up there, taught military history. Around the world they will bring in officers from major up to go to that war college. You know what they teach them there? They teach them the expanse of everything they have learned in history on how to win a war. They train them in leadership and warfare. They will sit down in a class and these guys will understand the difference between an enfilade fire and a defilade fire. They will understand better how to do an assault on a fixed position. They will learn how to do a beach assault. They will learn how to do an infantry assault. They will learn how to do an armor assault. They will come out of there and all of that material will be structured that has been compiled by guys and soldiers down through history that have worked.

In Christianity, we are to be a trained army to fight our warfare. Our warfare, Ephesians 6:12, is not physical but it is spiritual.

*Ephesians 6:12*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

One of the disastrous mistakes that churches and pastors make today is never learning the great principle and training people that God will never send green troops into combat. We as pastors or we as churches get them in, get them saved, sprinkle a little Bible on them and then throw them right back into the lions and then wonder why they do not make it. It is hard for a soldier to fight without a weapon, a weapon by his side and a weapon that he is trained to use. The very pastors who were called to train young men and young women with the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, have taken that weapon and replaced it, that sword and replaced it with a butter knife. They have taken the King James Bible, the sword of the spirit, Ephesians 6:17, took it out of their hands and then replaced it and issued them a butter knife. Now they are supposed to go out against the world of flesh and the devil, not with a sword but a butter knife. I guarantee you the guy back there, David's mighty men of valor, were not fair quite as well giving up the sword and picking up his butter knife from lunch.

I want to tell you something. A soldier, any soldier, is worthless without his weapon. You learn to eat with it, you sleep with it, you never leave it, you always have it by your side, you know it inside and out. Christianity today, just as military, is worthless with a bunch of God's people who have no weapon and do not know how to use it if they have it.

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is found back in 1 Samuel chapter 13. I have a message I preach on it, I have never really preached it to you guys, I have not preached it for years, but it is simply called "No Smith in Israel." What Saul did, who is a terrible king and a coward by the way, a picture of most pastors today, he takes the blacksmith that made all the swords for the Israel's armies and he put them out of business. He would not allow them to make any more swords. Then he took the contract from making swords from the Israelite blacksmith and gave it to the unshaved, uncircumcised Philistine blacksmith. Now the Philistines were the enemy of God and they wanted to take over God's people in Israel. So it was a brilliant move for them, for Saul, the rotten pastor, to take the sword right out of the hands of the people and turn it over to

the world system, the Philistines. It is a lot like today taking the King James Bible that is God-made out of your hand and then replace it with a manmade piece of junk like an NIV, an ASV and expect you to fight the battle. You know what? When the Philistines came down, they did not have anything to fight with. You know what the Bible says they had to fight with? Gardening tools. And they got defeated. Most pastors today, most churches today, they train their people with gardening tools. It is great if you want nice rosebuds. Well we do not live in a rosebud Christianity, at least I do not.

In Ephesians 6:10-18, he tells you about seven pieces of armor that he has. It is offensive and defensive because all warfare is offensive and defensive. He says, "Take unto you the whole armor of God." He said that you may be able to stand, that is not enough, "and having done everything, to stand." And then he says, "Stand therefore." When he comes down through that seven pieces of Christian warfare, you will find that four of them cover the four vital areas of your life as a Christian.

- In Ephesians 6:17, he talked about the helmet of salvation. That covers your head. You have got to get your thinking right.
- In Ephesians 6:15, he talks about the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. That is your feet. You have got to get your walk right.
- Then he says in Ephesians 6:16, "Take the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts." You have got to get your emotions squared away. You have got to keep those fiery darts from penetrating inside your body.
- The last one, Ephesians 6:14, is the breastplate of righteousness. That covers your heart. You always love the Lord thy God with all of your heart, with all your mind, and all of your soul.

In our text today, Proverbs 24:6, it starts by saying, "For by wise counsel thou shalt make war." In the Army and the Marine Corps and the Air Force and the Navy, you have a handbook. I think in the Marines they call it a guidebook. In the Army we called it a field manual. It was a manual that you went through it and you read and you studied it that taught you everything that the military wanted you to know about structure, combat. When you went through basic, if you are headed for an infantry outfit, then you went from basic to AIT, advanced infantry school. You got more. But when you got into combat, it is the principles of the manual and the experience you get in combat that make you a good soldier.

Just like your Bible, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, we too have a handbook. It is the Word of God. What will make you a good soldier is not just learning and reading the Bible and getting the principles of warfare down. You have got to get into the battle and actually use those principles. When we do discipleship with you, it is basic training. Once you get through discipleship and basic training, if you even make that, then we take you to our spiritual AIT, advanced infantry training. We will give you discipleship too. We will give you this. If you make that, then we will take you to jump school. Then if you make that, then we will take you to special forces school and we will put you in a Ranger battalion. We will put you in a SEAL unit. Now you will be an expert in warfare, spiritually speaking, that wherever God wants to push you, He will just lift you up and drop you right in it, not think twice about it. He will have all the confidence in the world in you because you will have all the confidence building you with a weapon that God gave you.

They used to get us up at 3 o'clock in the morning when we went to bed about 9 o'clock and just into a good sound sleep about probably 2 or 3, and wake us up and everybody out of the racks and everybody grabbed your rifle and the DI would get down to one end of the barracks and he would turn the lights on, your eyes got kind of focused and you would be sitting there with your rifle on the floor and he would turn that light off and he would yell at you to tear it apart. He would walk from one end of that barracks to the other and all you could hear was pieces of metal clanging and in a pure back eye just got adjusted, now you are back to it, you are taking that rifle apart. When he got down at this end, he would turn the light on, he would walk up and down to see who did not do it right. Then he would get to the other end and he would turn the light back out and he would tell you to put it together again. All you could hear was he walked down there with guys trying to put everything together. When you got down, if it was put together right, when you pull the trigger it would go click. If it did not go together right, it would not go click. He would walk down there listening for clicks. God help you if your gun did not go click.

That is the way you ought to be with the Bible. Paul said you preach that book in season or out of season. You ought to be able to take that thing apart blindfolded. While there are Chinese kids under communism, at the time they are seven or eight years old, they can take a ChiCom 50 or a machine gun apart blindfolded. I have got some of God's people in my life who have been saved for 50 and 20 years. You cannot even find the books in the Bible. And you are going to go into war? Do me a favor, take the Bible in one hand and a white flag in the other.

My Bible is my wise counsel to make war as a Christian in this spiritual warfare. It is my guidebook. It is my field manual. When the Bible says I am to make war by wise counsel, that is what he is talking about. The Old Testament is just filled with it. Some of the greatest lessons on warfare that you ever saw in your life are found in the Old Testament. You take the book of Joshua. Joshua is probably the greatest military book on military campaigning that you have ever read anywhere in the Bible, if not the world. Joshua when he goes into the land makes a brilliant move which is taught today. He divides the country. We know it is divide and conquer. Once he divided our forces and could not let them get back together, then he can hold one off while he defeated the other and then come back and take his full force and get the other one. It is a standard tactic in your life. You do not go three verses in your Bible before you are told that God divides to conquer. You want to get rid of the sin in your life. You want to get rid of the problem you have. You divide yourself from it and then you will conquer it. You will never conquer it till he gets out of your life, she gets out of your life, it gets out of your life.

You know how you got saved? You are supposed to have the victory in Christ Jesus after you got saved. You know how you can do that? Because the day you got saved, Colossians 2:11, a spiritual circumcision took place inside you that divided. You are flesh from your soul, now you can conquer. In the book of Joshua they fight three major campaigns, incredible. Over 30 different armies they engage. You have the battle of Jericho, the battle of Ai, the five kings at Gibeon. You have the battle of Hazor and in chapter 12 he lists the victory over 31 kingdoms that they have defeated, incredible. In the book of Judges, another great book, you have the great battle plan of Gideon in Judges 7. You have the great battle plan of Samson over the Philistines.

You have the great battle in Judges chapter 5 of Deborah over Sisera. Even in the Bible, our field guide to victory over the battles of this life.

## IV. Common Battles and the Multitude of Counselors

I am here to tell you this morning that some of you are going to get defeated in this warfare. Some of you already have. Some of you have already let the world creep in and it is already doing its damage. Right now this morning you cannot stand for anything. In all my life, I have watched God's people succumb to the battle. Never using the handbook, never following the chain of command, never becoming above the status quo, always just being a citizen soldier who really just never gets the job done. In my Bible I have 52 listed in the back. I have 52 basic battles that God's people lose. 52 battles, and not just the major ones, 52 battles that I have cataloged in my almost 50 years in the ministry of God's people being defeated in these 52 battles. I want to talk about just a few of them.

First of all, if you really want to understand the battle of spiritual warfare, you need to go to 2 Kings chapter 6. One of the most defining passages on spiritual warfare anywhere in the Bible. It shows you what you are really up against because most of God's people do not know their enemy and do not have a clue what they are up against. I have seen so many of God's people fall on the battlefield, the satanic strongholds. I have seen addictions come into their life. I have seen the world come into their life in a form of a boyfriend or a girlfriend that they get just as addicted to as they do drugs or alcohol. I have seen a young gal or young guy start to get on fire for God and do what needs to be done, and then that stronghold comes into his life. Let me just tell you, a stronghold will be anything in your life that you put above what God has given you in the Word of God. I have seen him fall in the battlefield to a stronghold. Yet my handbook, 2 Samuel 5:6, tells you how to get the victory over that stronghold because by wise counsel you will make war.

I have seen so many of God's people fall in the battlefield of depression. Proverbs 25:28 says:

*Proverbs 25:28*

*He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, and without walls.*

The number one issue of God's people today is depression. Depression will come into your life and my life as a child of God because of the fact very simply you are not doing what God wants you to do. It is produced because of the lack of Bible, lack of training, it has produced a Prozac Christianity. John 8:9 will tell you why Prozac Christianity will never work. I have known a young man one time who was as goofy as could be, and I always wondered why he was so goofy. Then I found out from the time he was 4 years old his mom had him on those kind of drugs. He was 25, 28 when I met him. All of those years because his mom thought that was the answer to his issues. She never thought getting him into the Bible was. The easy route is just sedating. You want the answer to depression? You want to get into the manual and find out the good counsel? Take out the book of 1 Kings 18.

I have seen moms and dads lose the battle for their kids. You want the model for that in the Bible in the handbook? Judges chapter 11, go study Jephthah. I have seen so many of them lose the

battle for their marriage. Of course the answer to that is in Ephesians chapter 5. Moms and dads, husbands and wives will lose these battles all the time. You have got an issue with your family that you need to heal your family? Well go to the handbook in Luke 8:37, one of the greatest single principles anywhere in the Bible, how to heal your family if you are the one that has hurt them.

I have seen them lose the battle for their health. Most churches have wellness groups. They will have groups that you can go in because you have some ailment or whatever and you sit around and whatever you do in a wellness group, hopefully you get well. I have always loved, and I hope he does not mind me saying this, I have always loved you Sam and you have always been special to me. You are an old soldier, military guy all your life. Sam got terminal cancer and he is going through some really tough times in his life right now. Sam, I will never forget the Bible study when we told everybody, you and I had known about it and a few other people. Sam's question in Bible study was not where is the greatest faith healer or where can I go to get somebody to fix this. His question was, "I am going to die. Give me the principles that when I meet God I meet him right where I need to be with him."

Understanding sickness in your life, the Bible tells you three reasons why we have a sickness. The book of Job is the greatest book in the Bible that shows you why that as a child of God you need to take Sam's position instead of a whiny position that so many other ones take. "Why me Lord?" "Why not you? Why not you? Why not me?" After all he did on the cross for me and for you and the agony he went through and you are going to complain because you have got to go through some little trial in your life that you cannot handle. What planet do you live on? "Well I just, you just do not understand." No, the problem is I understand too well. Job lost in seven days what none of us will live losing in a lifetime. When it came down to him, he took Sam's position or Sam took his position. Somebody said to him, "Well why do not you just," he said, "You know what, I do not care if he kills me, I am going to trust him." Job at the end of his life was better off than he was when he was in his life after what he went through. Sometimes you may have to go through some tough times in life but if you make it in this life you are going to come out better on the other end and if you do not make it and you go home to be with the Lord then you are really going to have a good day. There are some of God's people that the most terrible thing in their life is thinking, "Oh what if I die and go to heaven?" "Well then die and go to hell. See how that works for you."

We lose battle after battle after battle. We lose the battle many times of jealousy or envy. Check out David and Saul. We lose the battle of deceitfulness. Study the life of Jacob. Study the Gibeon principle in Joshua 9:14. It is all in the handbook. We lose the battle of selfishness. It is all about us. What I want. Me, me, me, me. Get in your own way. Study John chapter 11 with Mary and Martha. I have seen him lose the battle of the world. Study the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15. I have seen him lose the battle and turn bitter. Get bitter at God. Get bitter at people. Get bitter at the ministry. Get bitter at the church. Hebrews 12:15 tells you there is a root cause for your bitterness. When you go down to that chapter you will find the eight absolute principles on battling bitterness. It is in the handbook. The one you are supposed to make war with.

Then there is the battle. Well this one is a real killer. Then there is the battle. Boy, this is a battle that most God's people fail. The battle of making right decisions in life. I would say that is the number one problem that messes every one of our lives up. The bad choices that we make. You want to study that? Study Gideon over there in Judges chapter 6, 7 and 8. Putting out the fleece. How stupid that was. Go back to Proverbs 3:5-6. Learn that everything in life that you are going to do is going to have an outcome good or bad. It is going to be based on a single decision sometimes you make.

I have seen him lose the battle of life, and the valleys that they have to face going through the struggles, the ups and the downs of life. I have learned from 1 Kings 20:28 that I do not allow ups and downs in my life. I just keep everything even. I do not have any ups. I do not have any downs. Everything is just even. That is in the handbook. I have seen him lose the battle for temptation. See Samson in Judges chapter 14. See the book of James. Now there are many, many, many more of these. Like I said, I have recorded over the years 52 of them. The Bible will cover every scenario you will face to show you the battle plan. A way to get the right counsel, the wise counsel on the warfare that you are in. You will fight this battle with good counsel, wise wisdom and understanding through the principles of the Word of God. It is the soldier's handbook.

The next thing you do, once you get the handbook down, we talked last week about association. Now you start hanging out with the combat vets. You get with the right crowd. You say, "Well there is, that is a clique." Yeah, as long as it is God's clique, it is okay. You get with the hardcore. You get with the top. You get with the enduring men and women who do not whine and complain about every little thing. You find the people that in every given situation are flexible, adaptable, they are compatible and they are durable. That they can do anything like this camp coming up. People coming from 50, 60 people coming from all walks of life in one 15 minute session you become cohesive as one. Why? Because you are good people. Well you are, but that is not the reason, because of how you were trained.

Learn from the old school vets. How they learn to survive. Look at the ones who have raised their kids the right way and focus on that. Look at the ones that have the really good marriages and focus on that. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:2:

*2 Timothy 2:2*

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

Learn from the vets. Learn how to build a church from someone who already has built one, 1 Samuel 3. Learn how to build people from the model found in Acts chapter 11. Learn where the booby traps and the tripwires are in Christianity from somebody who can see him before you step on him. Learn from a vet.

They used to give us a class on booby traps. The Viet Cong were absolutely textbook on booby traps. The Americans, they played on Americans' weakness. They knew Americans were soft compared to the Vietnamese. The American guys would go over there and they would call him V.C. which was the technical name. They would call him gooks. They would call him slant eyes.

Every war, every place has always had its name. If you were a vet and you were there for any time and you survived, you called him Mr. Victor Charlie. You had a respect for him. He was a guy that could run all week on a handful of maggoty rice and fight you to a standstill. He was the guy that you could put out all the concertina wire you wanted and you could make it foolproof and in the middle of a rainstorm in the middle of the night he would sneak through it without ever touching one of those cans that would alert you. He would be on your throat while you were asleep. They knew that America was soft and when they went on a patrol they would always take the easy trail. We learned very quickly whatever trail you go out on, do not come back on that same trail because it will be booby trapped to the hilt on the way back. Then we learned stay off the trail, cut your way through the toughest jungle you have to because he is expecting you not to.

They used to take punji stakes and used to dig a hole, bamboo stakes and cut them, make them razor sharp, put them in the ground and then they used to urinate on them or defecate on them. That when you stepped through the hole and went down, went up through your boot, you got an instant infection. They used to have bouncing betties that you would step on it and it would come up waist level and it would blow out and kill anybody within a 20 yard range. They used to have death stakes hooked to a trip wire that would be up to a tree with bamboo spikes on it and when you would walk through and you would trip that wire it would swing out and catch you and pin you to a wall and impale you. They were experts at it. You not only had to look for them, they would take our 155 howitzers, bury them in the ground with a primer on the end, put a nail, a nail! You could buy it at a hardware store for 2 cents, put a nail through a pine board, put it on there, cover it up and when you stepped on it it pumped that primer and killed everybody within a 200 yard range.

I am telling you there are just as many booby traps in Christianity. There are just as many trip wires out there that will so easily beset you. The devil wants to make sure that he shuts your walk down so it is in the darkness of this world and he has got booby traps all over the place and the only way you can see him is to turn the light on and that will be the light from the word of God. Your manual, your handbook.

In the ministry as in combat, you never set a new guy out without some vets with him. That is why in discipleship there are always 2 or 3 people with you. We try to put people in your life that will make you better. A great example of this is Paul with his 3 sons listed in the Bible, and he probably had 10,000 but he had Timothy. In 1 Timothy he charges him, he gives him 12 charges, the whole book of Timothy is built around those 12 charges. Great counsel on warfare. Have you ever heard it today?

Then he wrote 2 Timothy and he gave him great insight into the warfare in personal instruction. Four chapters, four great principles.

- Chapter 1: Remember your gifts, your calling, your training.
- Chapter 2: Remember to hold the sound words, hold the sound strength, hold the sound doctrine and hold endurance.

- Chapter 3: He said remember you are living in perilous times so you are going to have to deal with perilous people.
- Chapter 4: He said remember I will always be ready to preach that book in season, out of season. Be God's man where he can drop you wherever he wants to drop you. Remember your mission.

That is great advice from a man to his spiritual sons and yet it is never taught today.

Then you have Titus. He tells Titus to be a good soldier, he has to be a good steward of the things of God. In the Bible there are 7 things that we are to be stewards of and every soldier has to take care of his equipment. Those are the 7 things that God has entrusted to us to take care of. Most of God's people do not even know what they are.

In Philemon, he has got the example of a runaway slave whose name is Onesimus. He tells Onesimus, whom Paul wins to Christ while in prison together or jail together. Paul wins him to Christ and this guy tells him the story how he ran away from his master and Paul says, "Who is your master?" He says, "Philemon." He says, "Man, that is one of my boys who started a church. He is my son in the Lord." You know what Paul does? He writes a letter to send back to Philemon on Onesimus' behalf in his hand to say, "You know what, this guy got saved. He understands now what real freedom is in Christ Jesus. He now understands and he has a whole new set of principles to live with. So I am asking you to take him back in without punishing him. Allow him to come back in because he understands now that as a Christian, here it comes, there is an absolute chain of command we must follow." Follow the principles. Follow the handbook. It is filled with the tactics of our warfare. If you want to wage good warfare, wise warfare with wise counsel, that is what you have got to do.

## V. Safety in a Multitude of Counselors

Look at the last part quickly of Proverbs 24:6. He says, "For by wise counsel thou shalt make war: and in a multitude of counsellors there is safety." My standard teaching today, you have got a problem, go ask the next 50 people you see what they think you ought to do. And then pick the one you like. That is how it works today. That is not what the verse is saying. No, that is not what it is saying at all but that is what we do. Going to someone and telling them your problem when they do not have the ability to fix it only proves to me you really do not want to fix it.

He says a multitude of counselors. Let us start with this. That would be 66 counselors in your Bible because you have 66 books. Add to that another 5,000 other counselors in the books through their trials and tribulations and all the things that they go through. So when he talks about in a multitude of counselors, he is not going to your friend to get their homespun philosophy of how to fix your problem with grandma's secret recipe. He is saying go to the field manual, go to the book that God gave you and in a multitude of those counselors you will get the right answer.

Now look at the last part of that verse. "And in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." That is a good word, safety. Everybody wants to be safe. Be safe. Be safe. Safety first. Safety first.

They do not even call them police anymore, they call them public safety officers. You know why? They want you to be safe.

Now safety in a church of God is in a Christian's life is two things. There are two things that will keep him safe or should.

5. The church itself. This church here, this body is for your safety. No one will hurt you here. I have told that to many, many people and I also tell them you may hurt yourself but this church will never hurt you and in most cases they have hurt themselves. That is okay. As long as we know we did not hurt them. I have had guys that I have done everything to and they have lied to me, they have been dishonest with me, they have been just, and women too. It is a thing where you know what, I always try to set the steps that we do what is right. We may get criticized for not doing, but I guarantee you we sit down with an open Bible, find out what we did and find what they do. It would be a whole different story. That is okay.
6. Bible doctrine. In Institute, we started this year the doctrinal series as I call it. We came through the first year and a half or so and we laid out all the structure things that they needed to see, the foundational stuff. Now we are really going into the meat of the Bible laying out the doctrinal stuff. I told them that a doctrine, the doctrine of the Bible forms a safety net. It is like, and I do not have a blackboard up here, but it is like if you took a magic marker and you put a line here that is one Bible doctrine. Then you put a line next to it that is another Bible doctrine. Then you put another line to it that is another Bible doctrine and on and on and on all those lines of Bible doctrine. Then you start going through the Bible and you will find more Bible doctrines and they crisscross this way. What you have got done when you are done is you have got a net, a net of Bible doctrine. Bible doctrine is true. Bible doctrine is the number one thing that the Bible was written for, the number one thing that God wants us to have. Why? It will keep you safe.

This is why in the handbook, in the manual, when you want to wage war, you want to do it with wisdom and understanding. You have to do it by biblical principles, biblical doctrine, and that forms a net. You will never become a Charis-maniac because the doctrine will keep you from falling through the net. You will never become a Jehovah Witness because that will save your Saturdays because you will never have to fall through the net of Jehovah Witnesses of doctrine to become one. You will never become a cult. You will never become a neo-evangelical cult. You will never become part of the Alexandrian cult. You will never become anything other than a Bible believer because the doctrine will keep you from falling through. It is your safety net.

2 Timothy 3:16 says doctrine is the number one thing in our life. Doctrine is what separates us from the world and doctrine is what separates us from false Bible teaching. For the devil to defeat Christianity and do what he has done and to take in his army and turn it into a defeated rabble, he had to do two things. First of all, he had to get rid of the field manual which he did. When he got rid of the field manual, he got rid of the doctrine. This is what he did to Israel by taking the blacksmiths completely out, 1 Samuel 13, and this is what he has done in Christianity. The pastors have taken the Word of God right out of it and replaced it with the world system.

Yet in Ezekiel 22:30, the Bible says even though that was true in Israel's day, the Bible says that God was looking for a man. It is no different today. God is looking for a man. He says God is looking for a man who will stand in the gap before me and make up the hedge. There is a gap in Christianity today that needs to be made up. That gap is Bible doctrine. God is looking for a man who will take the manual, teach the warfare, get the doctrine, and then stand in that gap. But it will not be your little, little, little, little living Christians that are running around today. It will not be the ones who get their nose bent out of joint about everything. It will not be the ones who cannot stand. It will be the ones who want to be the best of the best who will take their stand among the elite of David's mighty men of power. It takes a certain kind of person. God is looking for that person and I am too because they make the best. They make the best because they will not run when things start to fall apart. When things start to fall apart most of God's people fall apart. I am looking for men and women when things start falling apart you start pulling it together. I am looking for people when everybody is running out of a disaster you are running into it. That is what I am looking for. But you have got to be trained to do that. You have got to see yourself as you really are in God to do that. Most God's people just do not pack the gear. They really do not.

The verse says, "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." We will hold up there.