

If you have your Bibles this morning, let's get back into Proverbs chapter 24. If you are visiting this morning, we have been in a lengthy study of the book of Proverbs, and we have been going through it verse by verse, many times word by word. We know that the book of Proverbs really represents God's mind. It is probably the key book in the Bible that all the other books come back to as far as their principles are concerned.

I. The Fool's Inability to Grasp Divine Truth

Last week we were in Proverbs chapter 24, verse 7, and I laid out some great principles on what the Bible defines as a fool and why a fool can never get to the wisdom and the understanding of God. After last week, I am sure in a lot of people's minds, that answered a lot of questions for you. It helps you better understand why people sometimes just cannot get to the truth of God. They just cannot get it. Verse 7 said it was too high for them; they just could not get to it. It is out of his reach. This concept will go right along with the New Testament principle that I am sure you all know is found in Colossians 3:2 that says:

Colossians 3:2

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

With that, Matthew 6:19-21 talks about:

Matthew 6:19-21

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

That is the reason why a fool can never get the knowledge of God. It is the real answer because the answer lies in a man or woman's treasure, where their treasure is. It lies in what they love, where their heart is, where their affection really is. The Bible says, "If any man loved God, the same is known of him." Real biblical love, or I guess any love, will always identify itself with the object.

We live in a world, and certainly this is true in Christianity because I see it and deal with it all the time, and have almost all my almost 50 years into the ministry. That is that people talk and say the right things, but their actions never go along with what they say. You will find people in churches today, I am not even talking about the world, you will find people in their churches today, "Amen, praise the Lord." They will talk about God and talk about the fact that they are saved, but their actions will never identify with the treasure that ought to be in their heart. They are not faithful and loyal to what they really love. Somebody said one time, and it is so true,

"Words may paint a picture," and they do, "but actions will be the frame by which that picture is in." The frame will either make that picture a modern masterpiece or just a cheap Polaroid. That is what so many of God's people do. They say all the words, but their actions deny the love that they have and being faithful and loyal to what they really love.

II. The Nature of True Understanding and God's Hidden Wisdom

Then you will remember I gave you two great verses that really in my own life were very instrumental years and years and years ago of my own getting into the Bible. Of course, one was in Luke 24:45 where it says:

Luke 24:45

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

I told you that it is not about your education. It is not about your Greek and your Hebrew. It is not about how smart you think you are. It comes down to the very fact that if the Holy Spirit of God, through your treasure in Him, does not open up your understanding, you are not getting a squat from the Bible. Then you are relegated to getting it off the Internet, getting it from everybody else. Look, I read a lot of books. I use the Internet. I will tell you what, as I said the other night, if you want to learn how to hunt raccoons in the daytime, the Internet is the way to do it. But I am telling you, nothing will take the place of God in your life through your relationship with Him, Him being your treasure, opening up your understanding and showing you what the book says. That is a great principle, and that changed my whole attitude, my whole mindset about the Bible and me.

Then I showed you another great one in Luke 10:21 that talks about how that God hid His word. He did not allow the wise and the prudent and the arrogant and the people who thought they were smarter than God and thought that they were smarter than you. The Bible says He hid His word. The Bible says He rejoiced over the fact that God did. Incredible. Now these are the principles of why a fool cannot get it. It is over his head. It is too high. It is the things that are above that go with last week in Isaiah 55:8-9, that great passage where it says:

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

In our society, because we are so educated-minded, and there is nothing wrong with that in its balance, but we think that a fool is somebody who is uneducated. That may be true because a lot of uneducated people are fools. But I want to tell you something, some of the biggest fools I ever met in my life had a string of degrees behind their name. You will remember I showed you step by step eight areas that the Bible defines in the book of Proverbs as a fool. Today, verses 8 and 9 are going to go along with that, and I want to show you the other side of it.

III. Defining the Fool and the Wise Man

So let us read Proverbs chapter 24, verses 7, 8, and 9. Here is what it says. I am going to read 7 again to put it into context.

Proverbs 24:7-9

Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.

The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

Now, as I said last week, there are two reasons in the book of Proverbs that God details out a fool with such great accuracy. One of them, first of all, and I told you this last week, is so you and I will not become one, that we will see the fallacy of that, we will see the dead-end street of that, we will see that that winds up nowhere in your life. The other reason is that once you identify what is foolish in the Bible, or I guess I should say what a fool is in the Bible, then you learn to stay away from them because they will contaminate you through the association of being a fool. Like the Bible says in Psalm 1:

Psalms 1:1

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

You start walking with him, you start standing with him, then you are sitting with him. That is why He did that. He wants you and I to understand that when you see someone that fits those eight characteristics, you stay away from them. It is just that simple.

There are two key words today in our text that I want to kind of look at. Verse 8 says, "He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person." And verse 9 says, "The thought of foolishness is sin." Two words there: the fact that a man devises something, and he devises it through his thoughts. That is what a fool does. Over there in Ezekiel 8:12, when Israel was in its peak apostasy, you have a story there in that chapter how that Ezekiel goes in and he goes into a dark room and there are all kinds of images portrayed on the wall, all things that are unclean and sinful in God's sight, things that are an abomination. Then the Lord says to him, "What you are looking at is the imagination and the imagery of the leaders of the nation of Israel." He was looking into what they were imagining. You know what? It is an old process: if you think about something long enough, you will do it. The imagination is based on the heart, and the heart controls where your imagination goes. The Bible says that when a man devises evil through his thoughts, he becomes an abomination to man because everything he is going to do is not only going to destroy him, his family, the people around him, but anybody who is associated with him.

IV. The Significance of Fruit Bearing in a Wise Man's Life

Now last week I gave you the eight characteristics of a fool. This week I want to do the same with a wise man because just as He defines what a fool is, He also defines what a wise man is. This will give you a balance. Really, it will help you see where you are really at in your own relationship with God. We already know from day one, and I have kept it before you all the way through our study, the book of Proverbs is about a fool and a wise man.

First off, let me just get this out of the way here. It is no coincidence that when you study the wise man in Proverbs that there will be nine characteristics of him. Where we studied the fool, there were eight. But when you come to the wise man, there are nine, and that is because nine in your Bible will represent fruit bearing. In Bible study you have what is called Bible numerology. I understand, I get it, you can make numbers say anything. I follow the rule in the Bible that I have told you many, many times when it comes to anything: I never overemphasize something more than God does. When God will repeatedly show you that a number popping up is consistent with something, then you follow it. But you do not say, "Well, I cannot find this number, so I think this means this." That is not what you do. But there are certainly some numbers in the Bible that mean some things. Number seven in the Bible is the number of perfection. God does everything in the Bible by seven. You cannot miss that. It is over and over and over again you will find these things.

Now let me just say, the scholarly world today will laugh at this. The scholarly world today will think this is so Arkansas, hillbilly, southern Missouri, Christianity. Yeah, amen, amen, amen. My answer to that is, "I thank God that God hid these things from you." That is my answer. Luke 10:21. So when you begin to get into the Bible, you will find that the Bible is a number of fruit bearing. Accordingly, a child of God should bear fruit. I mean, it is just that simple. If you are a mom and a dad, you ought to bear the fruit of your children doing what the Bible says, loving God, serving God with you, and that is the fruit that you bear. Then you bear fruit in your ministry in this church. Then you bear fruit in your own personal life. But there is nowhere in the Bible where you find a child of God gets saved and is not supposed to bear fruit.

If you will remember, that was the basic fundamental problem with the nation of Israel. Remember that? Back there in Matthew 21:34 where He has that great part of that chapter on God dealing with Israel and all that He had done for them and how He hedged them about it and protected them. Then it says, "When the time of the fruit drew near." There was a time when Israel, as God's nation, was to bear fruit, and they did not do it. Then the Bible says that He sent the prophets to them to say, "Where is the fruit that you promised God that God told you to do?" Of course, they treated the prophets terribly. It led to the Lord Jesus Christ giving a great illustration in Mark 11:13 where He comes out and He sees a fig tree. The fig tree is barren. There are no figs on it. Now that fig tree in the Bible, here again, will always be a picture of the nation of Israel. He is looking at this fig tree that should be bearing fruit, that has no fruit, and He curses that fig tree. That fig tree represents the nation of Israel not bearing any fruit. It is just that simple, scores and scores and scores of time. You will find in Jeremiah 17:1-8, this is their problem: they will not bear fruit. So nine in your Bible for you and for me will be the number of fruit bearing.

Also in the Bible you will find another law that we follow here, it is called the law of first mention. The first time you find something in the Bible, it usually sets the pattern for what it is going to be through the rest of the Bible. The first time you find the word "fruitful" showing up is Genesis 9, and it says that he was fruitful, multiplied, and replenished the earth. That is the first time you show it up. You can move a little on a little bit. In Genesis 17, Abraham was promised to bring forth the fruit that was going to be in the line of Christ. You know what happens, he got messed up with Hagar, brought Ishmael in, got the wrong thing going. After a period of time when he got right with God, he finally bears that fruit in Genesis 22, and he is 99 years old. We talk about wanting to be fruitful. Yet the Bible tells us in the book of Galatians that there, here it comes, nine fruits of the Holy Spirit of God found in Galatians. You know, Galatians just happens to be the ninth book in the New Testament. You spell it G-A-L-A-T-I-A-N-S, there are nine letters in it. You know that those nine fruits of the Holy Spirit of God are found in verse 22 and 23, add up the twos and the threes, it is nine. You have in front of you a book that says "Holy Bible," nine letters. It says "King James," nine letters. It is a 1611, six and three is nine. If you want to bear fruit as a Christian, you get that book, that book will bear the fruit. I hear the scholars going crazy now, but you know what? I thank God that He hid those things from you. You want to bear fruit, that is the book.

V. Nine Characteristics of a Wise Man

So in the book of Proverbs, we will have nine distinct characteristics of a wise man that I want to walk you through this morning. I want to present the balance for you. I am telling you now, stay away from the fools because you know who they are. Hang out with the wise men. You are going to know how to judge that here in just a moment. So let us look at them.

1. A wise man will hear.

The verse for this will be in Proverbs 1:5. It says: Proverbs 1:5

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: That is your verse for this one. Hearing what God says. The Bible says in Romans 10:17 that: Romans 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It has always amazed me. It has been one of those things that you see in the ministry that just, it is things like this that help you understand it, but it has always amazed me how God's people can be at church, go to church. They are at all the services. They sit through all the sermons and yet they never hear what the guy says. At least it does not change them any. I was over at QuickTrip yesterday. I went out to get a sandwich. By the way, QuickTrip has the best little... you are shaking your head no. My daughter is shaking her head no. You are the one who puts down a blanket on an airline seat so you do not get your rear end dirty, and you are going to make fun of my sandwiches? Is that what we are going to do here? They have the best turkey croissant sandwich on the planet. I am going to take you out for lunch. We are going to go there. I will take you in the back and show you the monkeys make them. That will really make a good place. So it was a nice day. They have the, oh, you are going to love this. They have the tables out there that you can sit on and eat your lunch. Before I did, I bought four bottles of alcohol and three rags and rubbed everything down. So I am sitting there eating.

Immediately, my little radar entered, coming up. I saw all these Jehovah's Witnesses coming in. They were out doing their work. They stopped to get a chicken sandwich. So I am sitting there eating, but I am watching them. This young kid, he is probably 18 years old. Nice looking kid. Probably a nice looking kid. He comes up there and he says, "How you doing, sir?" I said, "I am doing pretty good." He says, "Are you having a good day?" I said, "Yeah, it is a beautiful day, isn't it?" He said, "Yeah, it really is." Before he gets to the house, I said, "You are a Jehovah's Witness, aren't you?" He said, "How did you know?" I said, "I just bought you guys a mile away." I said, "You got to wear camouflage or something, you know? You got your big Ohio State shirt. You got a KU shirt. All of you guys are Jehovah's Witnesses." I want you to know that. They do not wear any of that stuff. So he says, "Well, how did you really know that?" I said, "Because I used to be a Jehovah's Witness." I studied with them. I told you last week, years ago, I studied with them for a long time. He said, "How long ago?" I said, "Oh, it has been a long time ago." He said, "Are you still active?" I said, "Oh, no." I said, "I got out of that." I said, "I advise you to get out of it, too." He says, "Well, why did you get out of it?" I said, "You know what bothered me?" I said, "What bothered me was," I said, "and I even went to the Watchtower in New York and asked them this. Nobody could answer me." I said, "What really bothered me was, you know, you guys say that you are the only true church. You believe that you got to be baptized in your church for salvation. You believe that all the other denominations are dying and going to hell. And you are the only true church." I said, "But you know what? I could never find in history anybody who believed one thing that you believed before Rutherford and Russell showed up in 1840." He said, "That is not true." Open the door. You are letting the steel-trapped mind carry out a guy who is going to get you now. I said, "Great. Give me your name." Yeah, it got that quiet. This is where the verse in Revelation, "There was silence in heaven to space of half an hour." I said, "Give me one." I even put my sandwich down. I put a napkin down so it would not be on that table. I said, "Give me one." He started to get the... or not, okay? He thought I was dumb. I was dumb, but I was not as dumb as he is. I said, "Just give me one." I said, "Martin Luther, he started the Lutheran Church. You know what? There was not anybody to believe what Martin Luther believed before he started it." He said, "Well, what about the Roman Catholic Church?" "They started in 400 with Constantine, and there was not anybody to believe that before they did." Now he is really panicking. I said, "Give me one." I said, "I will tell you what. I will give you 10 that believe what I believe for every one you give me to believe what you believe." He said, "Well," he said, "what about..." Try to get the old thing. "Well, what about you believe in hell?" I said, "I believe you are going to hell if you cannot answer my question." I said, "Just give me one." I said, "Is that... Now you want to know why I got out? Here is why I got out. You are no smarter than your bosses there in New York. You got into a situation where you could not prove your existence before two men started it in 1850, and you got almost 1,900 years of history that nobody believed what you believed, and you bought that. Well, the older guy comes over now. He says, "What is going on?" Whatever his name was. He says, "Come on, we got to go." I said, "Oh, there you go. Your handler showed up. He got you on a little leash." My sandwich is getting stale now because it is the air. I said, "He has got you on a little leash. That is really good. Come on, talk to the man." "Time to go. Time to go." I said, "Why do not you take him over there in

one of the pumps and let him go to the bathroom? You treat him like a little dog." He says, "You know what?" He says, "I do not want him talking to a person like you." I say, "Yeah, you know what? Because when he hangs out with a person like you, he is going to wind up in a lake of fire." I was not hungry anymore. Mad. You know what their problem is? I will tell you what the problem is. I will tell you exactly what the problem is. They will not increase in learning. They will not hear. When you started to talk to that guy, like any cult, you can watch their eyes and they just turn you off. They are taught to do that. That is the way it goes. They do not hear what God says. But I got to tell you something, God's people are no different. Maybe you are going to heaven, but you do not listen any more than he did. You come here Sunday after Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, and you are still doing your own thing. You have not grown one inch in the last year. You have not grown one inch in the last two years. You have always got an excuse. Those excuses work for me because I do not really care. They will work for your friends who probably care even less, but they will not work at the judgment seat of Christ. Getting God's wisdom, listen to me. Getting God's wisdom and God's understanding should be our number one pursuit. It will always represent understanding and wisdom, seeing the situation as it really is, not as it appears, so somebody cannot snow you. You know, a bunch of Jehovah's Witnesses are former Baptists. People think Jehovah's Witnesses are going to heaven. I bet you a lot of them are going to heaven because they were in Baptist churches before they got into that cult. They got saved someplace along the line. They just so got caught up in it because they did not know what they were talking about because they went like so many God's people to church Sunday after Sunday after Sunday and into other churches at Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night. I mean, it is that you live there. Never heard a thing. Proverbs 4:7 says that: Proverbs 4:7

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

2. A wise man will inherit glory.

Our verse for this will be Proverbs 3:35. Proverbs 3:35

The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools. Now I told you the last couple of weeks, I told the kids at camp that we are an army. In the army, you get promoted. In Christianity, you get promoted. You start out as a PFC and then you get promoted up in the ranks, and there are seven promotions in the Bible. We talked about that, seven stages of spiritual growth. There are in the Bible, but there are two promotions, one up and one down. Psalm 75:6-7 says: Psalms 75:6-7

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. You notice how God put Himself in a place of North. That is because if you wanted to go out and get a compass rating on where the third heaven is, where God is, it is North. He says in Psalm 48 that Mount Zion is on the sides of the North. He said in Job 26:7 that: Job 26:7

He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. Heaven is North. You know, the Salvation Army, before they all went to pieces, I used to like to get their magazine years ago. When somebody died in their obituaries, they would always say "promoted to glory." I thought that was a great thing. I thought that was a

great thing. You know, I want you to notice that He did not say you get demoted. A fool gets a promotion. A fool does not get demoted by God. Boy, the great principles in that. You know why? That is because a fool has no understanding. He actually thinks that the things that are going to destroy him in life, getting a bigger boat, getting a bigger house, getting this, getting that, getting all this stuff, getting all these things in life that he actually thinks is a promotion, that he is getting higher. God just lets him think that. God promotes him to shame based on his attitude or heart of what he thinks that promotion really is. Now I am not saying you cannot have nice things. I have nice things. These shoes are the nicest shoes that you will ever have. I mean, those are nice shoes. Yours are nice. Yours are nice. Would you put yours on please? Yours are nice. There is nothing wrong with nice stuff. But you know why people just got to have possessions all around them all the time? They got to buy this new, they got to buy that new. They think that buying something new and really expensive actually makes them better. They think if they go out and, you know, this guy was telling me, he runs the fly shop up here in our building. He said a guy came in last week and bought a \$3,000 fly rod outfit. Do you believe that? He says, "I do not know why he did. A guy cannot, he cannot do anything with it." I know why he did. You know why he did? Because he actually thought that paying \$3,000 for a fly rod would make him a better fisherman. We think in the flesh that when we have all these things that makes us a better person. I do not mind you having nice things. Just do not fall into the illusion it is going to make you a better person. It is not. It is only one thing that is going to make you better in everything you do. And that is that book right there and getting God's wisdom and God's understanding. Everything else is a waste of time. That is what they do. You know, it is a, and a fool has no understanding. He thinks that everything in life he gets that is taking everything away from him or her at the judgment seat of Christ. They invest their life in all the things that they want to do. They buy, they deny themselves nothing because they think, "Look at me, look how much money I make. Look, I am up, I am going up, I am going up, I am going up." God says, "Yeah, I am promoting you not up. I am promoting you down." Look at the last part of that verse. "But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Yes, He does. But the wise are promoted to glory. Their inheritance is to be as a joint heir of Jesus Christ in Romans 8:17. Incredible.

3. A wise man will receive commandments.

The verse for this will be Proverbs 10:8. It says: Proverbs 10:8

The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall. Now in the Bible, commandments are defined as orders given with authority. In fact, in the book of Psalms, you will find seven legal terms defined for you that puts the Bible together as God giving us, like ordinances, commandments. You will find all those things defined for you. There are seven of them. They will form, the commandments of God will form the rudimentary structure of any society. If you would go to Washington D.C., I know you do not see them anymore. Nobody talks about it anymore. But in all of those public buildings, at the top of those buildings, you know what you will find? You will find a Bible verse. It will not be out of an NIV or an RSV. It will be out of a King James 1611 Authorized Version. You know what the big issue is now across this country? Taking the 10 Commandments out of the courthouses. You know why they are in the courthouses at first? Because those 10

Commandments form the structure of any society. When Jesus Christ came, He is told, we are told that He fulfilled the law. When you got saved and He got in you and you got in Him, you have got the structure for your Christian life. Just that simple. The 10 Commandments were given by the nation of Israel for their structure as a nation. They were given under God's authority to keep them in line with God. I know, I know, I know, no one was ever expected to keep them. They show you how far you fall short of God's glory. I get it. But they form the perfect structure foundation for any working organization. What did Israel do? Same thing that we do. She forsook them. We have what we call the law of the Bible. Most people think the law of the 10 Commandments was it is, but the law also is representative for the first five books of the Bible with Moses' writings. Especially Exodus on. They are called the law because once you got the 10 Commandments in Exodus chapter 20, it formed the structure for the rest of the book that he wrote, so it is called the law. Today God's people, because they do not know anything about the Bible, they do not know anything about the God, they get it all messed up and they think that it was 10 suggestions. That is open as an option for you. Commandments have to come with an authority. When they do not, when the Bible is gone, people do not respect them, they do not reject them, they get them out of the courthouses, they get them out of our government, and God's people get them out of their lives. The Bible says a wise man will receive and keep them, but 10:8 says a fool will fall. He will fall because there is no structure in his life. There is no moral, there is no moral temperature. There is no right or wrong, there is no standard. There is nothing that gives him, keeps him on line and says this is wrong. We live in a time where we think that wrong is right and right is wrong.

4. A wise man will win souls.

The verse for this one is Proverbs 11:30. It says: Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. At the foundational level of Christianity will lie one principle that is the reason that God saved you. There is only one reason God saved you. It was not because you are good looking. It was not because you had a lot to offer that God needed. God saw you and me in our misery and our ungodliness and our filthiness, and God so loved the world, God made a way for you and me, and He has one thing He asked for you to do. He gave you salvation free, but He asked you to do one thing for Him. It is the one thing that God's people will not do. You know what it is? Just reproduce yourself in somebody else. So it says there, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." Every child of God should be like a tree of life. You know what the tree of life is? It bears 12 manners of fruit that they could eat off and get eternal life. You ought to be a tree of life that people can eat of the fruit that God has given you and they will find eternal life. Winning people to Christ, soul winning. You know, we think that that means just sitting down and going through the Romans road with somebody, and it is more than that. It is getting to the point in your life or the point in the church that reproduces itself in others. You know, you reproduce yourself here, we reproduce ourself in the people that God gives us. The Bible says in John 15:16: John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. You have your ordination papers this morning if you

are saved. That ordination paper is right here. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." What part of that do you not get? Oh, I get it. You want to take God's salvation, but you want to send back your ordination papers. Thank God, He does not require to send back your salvation with the papers. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." That is where most churches stop. Then they put the emphasis on soul winning. But I want to tell you something, read the lesson in that verse and that "your fruit should remain." It is not enough just to win somebody to Christ and reproduce yourself. You have to stay with them and make sure they reproduce themselves in somebody else. Moms and dads with their kids, you and me in the ministry. You and your own personal relationship with the Lord that God continually brings fruit into your life. I am telling you, I am telling you, we get the idea that soul winning, like I said, is just sitting down and opening up the Romans road. And it is. But it is more than that. You are reproducing yourself when you disciple somebody. You are reproducing yourself when you are investing your life in somebody else's life. You are reproducing yourself when you invite somebody else to church and they come and like it. You are reproducing yourself in somebody's life when they come in church and they do not like it. I think. It is more than just winning somebody to Christ. It is the investment of your life that somebody puts you. Hey, you may not win the person to Christ, but God may give them to you to disciple. When you bring them along, you know what you are doing? You are reproducing yourself in them. We get so tunnel vision because we make soul winning the number one thing. Oh, soul winning is the number one thing in Christianity. No, the number one thing in Christianity is truth. Once you got the truth, then you get God's wisdom and understanding, you see there is a great parameter to soul winning. Sure. We win people to Christ. Sure. We get them saved. Sure. You sit down at camp and win all those kids to Christ. Sure. But that is just where it starts. Now the reproduction begins. Most people want to win them to Christ and not their spiritual pistol, but they do not want to invest the time to make sure they remain not here. I am just going to say this and I will not say it once and I will not say it again. I probably will, but my church, I can say what I want to say. If you do not make it here, you will never make it anywhere. If you cannot make it here, you will not make it anywhere. There are so many people here that are willing to help you. There are so many people here that will take from their families, their time, their jobs, they will do whatever it takes. They will not make you fit their schedule. They will fit whatever schedule you have. They will do whatever it needs to do. You know why? Because they are committed to reproducing themselves in you. Now I do not take any credit for that because I cannot teach that. That comes back, I just pointed you to the right book. When you got into the right book, you got fruitful. Then God worked out everything else and here you are. Now you will win people to Christ, absolutely. If somebody wanted to get saved today, I could just put them with about anybody here and I know that you would do the job right. You would ask the right questions, you would do the right things, you would put it right down the plate where it needed to be. But it is more than that. The fruit needs to remain. You need to now take the investment of reproducing what you have that God has given you and somebody else. I am going to tell you right now, the reason why some of you do not, you got nothing to invest. They are not interested in a six-pack of beer. They are not interested in the things of the

world that you have. That is where they have been. They are looking now at a changed life that will give them what they have wanted all of their life and now the door is wide open. Come on, you people who work with people, how easy is it to pour yourself into somebody with the doors open? All of you tell me, "Oh, I just finished with so and so, boy, it was a struggle." "Well, this is the third one I had, it bailed, it did not do what is right." You know what, they went so far and then all the world creeps back in. I have heard all of you say it. "I just want to get somebody who just wants to learn the Bible." God will give them to you. You all were that way, you are here. You are all zipper necks. Oh, we had to zip your head off and pour the information in. You got it? You got it? Look at you go. I have never seen more committed people to winning souls and then investing in their growth. I just got to tell you, soul winning is based on intimacy. When a couple gets married through the intimacy of that relationship, in time they will bear fruit. When you become intimate with the Lord Jesus Christ through the spiritual way, in time through that intimacy, you will bear fruit. You do not have to take a course on it. You do not have to do anything. It will come not because you went through a soul winning class. It will not come because you got John R. Rice's book on how to win a person to Christ. It will come because you got an intimate relationship with Christ and an intimate relationship, you just bear fruit. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

5. A wise man will hearken to counsel.

The verse on this will be Proverbs 12:15. Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. Now I am going to tell you what the number one issue we all have. There are a bunch of them. But fundamentally, you know, you can take all of our problems and I know we got all kinds of problems. I got problems today. You got problems today. We all got problems. But if you wanted to take whatever our problems are, if you want to come and take it down to one reason why we got them, here it is. The number one issue is God's people are simply this: "I want it my way and I am going to do it my way. I do not care what the preacher says or God says or anybody says about it." Hey, and it gets better. Hold on, Will, I want a real good one here. It gets better when your world falls apart and all of those great plans just fold up like a broken accordion. It says your world tumbles at your feet. That is, "Oh God help me." Then it even gets better yet. Once you get feeling better, you will go right back to the world again. You know what, you are a fool. You are a fool. You will not hearken to counsel. Now I like the word "hearken." We do not use it much anymore. But "hearken" is an old English word that it is an imperative. It is imperative that you listen. So he says "hearken" when we sing the Christmas song. "Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King." In other words, you better listen because the King is here. "Hark the herald," what the angels are saying. It is an imperative word. It is a thing where it implies a consequence if you do not hearken. It is not used today because in our world we do not face any consequences today. Because we have no accountability for anything. We have no responsibility for anything. Everything is everybody else's fault. "I lost my kids because of other bad Christian kids." How many times I have heard that over the years. "Well, I lost my kids because of the bad influences that they got in their life." Yes, and the bad influences were bad. The bad influences were mom and dad. There is no accountability. There is no responsibility. I do not

care what you do. I do not care what you have done. I do not care what it is. As long as you are willing to take responsibility for it and be accountable for it. The rest will take care of itself. But a fool will never do that. He will not hearken to counsel. He sees what is right in his own eyes and that is all he ever sees. He wants what he wants, when he wants it, how he wants it. God never entered into it. It all comes down to the selfishness about that person. They want it all for themselves. If there is anything left over, you would think they would give it to God but they do not. They just put a little pile and eat it later.

6. A wise man will fear and depart from evil.

Our verse for this is Proverbs 14:16. Proverbs 14:16

A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. Oh, this is a good one. Now that verse says, "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil." I will tell you why. I will tell you why. Because a real wise man with understanding knows you cannot ever get ahead of God. He understands Psalm 139. Psalms 139:1-12

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. You see that? Now I got to tell you, that is almost too high for me. Because I know me. I know me better than you do. I know me. I know who I am and I know what I am and I know all the struggles in my life. Yet the thing that amazes me that I cannot get, why would God want anything to do with me? And the second question is, why would He want anything to do with you? "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." A fool cannot get there. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea," there is the rapture. "Even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." Verse 11, "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me," there is death, there is mission of rapture and dying before it comes. "Even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee. Psalms 139:13-14

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in

secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. You see, a wise man knows what he is and he knows who God is. There is no profit for him to think that he can get ahead of God. Cause he already knows that God knows what he is going to think. He already knows what God knows you are going to say. He is all God got way ahead of him and you cannot get ahead of God. He already knows that. He is confident in the fact that God will always know where he is really at. You see the example of that back in the garden, where God and Adam and Eve met together and had Bible studies together, you know? Then one day the devil came down and messed up the whole plan and God comes down and He is looking for them to have Bible studies. Like God did not know what happened. Like just as God left the heaven and came down to earth, one of the angels bust in the throne room and said, "Where did God go? I got to tell Him the devil just got down there and messed up His plan. Where did He go? Where is He at? We need to get a courier down there before He makes a fool out of Himself. He does not know what is going on down there. He thinks that they are going to have Bible. They are with the devil, man. Somebody needs to tell Him." You think He did not know that? He is walking down there, cool today, beautiful garden. Not as beautiful as it was, but it is still beautiful. He says, "Dumb God. Adam, Adam, come out, come out wherever you are. Where art thou, Adam? Adam, I thought we were going to have Bible study. Adam, where is Adam? Adam, where are you?" You think that is the way it went? God knew exactly where he was. God was like, I was not there, I do not know, but I like to think it was like this way. God was like a guy hunting quail out in early in the morning. Came down, got that old Remington 870. Had a couple angels ferreting through the thing to flush them out. Got sat in there saying, "Adam, where are you?" Oh, Adam heard that gun click. "Adam, where are you, buddy?" Heard the safety go off. You know where Adam is at? He is over in the fig tree. He had been busy, he is now Adam the tailor. He is an expert in sewing fig leaves together. Can you imagine where before he just stepped out, they were naked as their birthday suits, you know, and no problem, no conscience, no, here we are, yeah, yeah, and now God had to laugh. I mean, now he steps out with this ridiculous Swedish knit fig suit on. He walks out with a fig suit. I have never eaten figs since I read that in the Bible. He walks out there, how stupid he had to look. You know how stupid you look at the judgment seat of Christ when you show up naked and all the things that you bought to try to cover your nakedness with think it is going to do it? God knew exactly where he was, what bush he was. He just wanted to see if Adam knew where he was. So sometimes God will play stupid even though He is the most brilliant mind in the universe. He will ask you things just to see if you are going to be honest about it. Sometimes they will ask him through a preacher. The fool, verse 16 says, "The fool rageth, and is confident." You know what his confidence is? This is what makes him a fool. He is confident in the fact that he can beat God at His own game. He thinks he is smarter than God. He thinks that the room is dark and the smoke is thick and the music is loud, God cannot see what goes on. He thinks while he is getting high, God is getting high and God's blurry eyesight cannot see him. The fool actually is confident in the fact that he is going to beat God and get ahead of God and he is going to be okay. He is arrogantly confident that he will beat God and God is not looking. What a fool you are.

7. A wise man seeks knowledge.

The verse for this one will be Proverbs 18:15. Proverbs 18:15

The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. The prudent to get knowledge of God is found, the pursuit I should say, is found in Proverbs 2:1-5. We have given it before, we have preached on it several times. Six things there. You have to receive it, you have to hide it, you have to incline your ear, you have to apply it, you have to cry after it and you have to seek it. Then he says in verse 5 of chapter 2: Proverbs 2:5

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Not the knowledge about God. Find the exact same knowledge that God has. This is called wisdom and understanding in the Bible that a fool cannot get to.

8. A wise man dispenses knowledge.

This would be Proverbs 15:7. Proverbs 15:7

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so. You see, once you get it yourself, then you give it to others. You give it to your family first, you make sure your sons and your daughters are online with the Bible, so they do not get out of the world. You take care of that family first, and you give it to other people. You invest into two things that are going to last for all of eternity and the only two things that God cares about because the only two things worth and you invest in your life in are going to be only two things that will last for all. One of them is the word of God, that was the souls of men. Everything else is nominal. I watch you again. I watch you take them through Discipleship One. I watch you bring them through Discipleship Two. I watch you in the people ministry. I watch how you gather it up in the institute. I watch you find the truth yourself and then cannot wait to give it to somebody else. So many of God's people today, they get the truth, it is right there in front of them, they throw it aside, they buy, they stack their world with everything that they want to do the way they want to do it. God never comes into the equation. I watch you, one of the greatest blessings of my life has been to watch what God has done in your lives. How He took you from where you were, brought you through the basic fundamentals of a church that just cares about making a difference in your life, put the right people in your world that will never hurt you, that will never go against you, that will always be there for you. I watch you find the truth yourself and I watch you grow up and then I watch you just give it to others. When I was at camp last week, the last message I preached was a message on the, or not the last one, but before I finished out was the judgment seat of Christ. I told them in 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 that the Bible says that: 1 Corinthians 3:10-11

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I told them that when you got saved, you laid the foundation in your life. Then I also told them the rest of your life, you just build three things on that foundation. There are six things in 1 Corinthians 3, three are good, three are bad. The ones that are good are gold, silver, precious stones, the ones that are bad are wood, hay and stubble. I went through the first three that are good and I told them the first thing on the foundation you have to build is gold. Gold represents the deity of Christ in the Bible. So you got to find out first of all on that foundation after you get saved who God is, Discipleship One, Discipleship Two. Then the second thing

you build on it is silver. Silver in the Bible is the price of redemption. You see, it is not enough to know who God is, you also got to know what God did for you. So you build silver. Now you get into discipleship, you are ever into institute, into people ministry, you are growing, God starts working with you, you start doing some things with the people in this church who help you. Pretty soon you start to see the value of what Christ did for you and you want to give it to somebody else until the third thing you build on it, precious stones. In the Bible, precious stones are people. But once you get saved and you lay that foundation, you spend the rest of your life building three things on it, what many of you are doing. You build on it gold, you get to know who He is. You build on it silver, you get to know what He did for you and then precious stones. You see, you cannot get to know God and you cannot get to know what God did for you really without telling somebody else about it. The absolute purpose for every saved person on this earth is first and foremost, reproducing yourself and others, your family first and then the people that God brings into your life, building on their foundation of salvation.

9. A wise man will guard his tongue.

The verse for this will be Proverbs 29:11. Proverbs 29:11

A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. I have seen this many, many times that a young Christian, it will take him 30 seconds to tell you everything he knows about the Bible. When it comes to your tongue, what you talk about, what we talk about, what we speak about, the words that we use, we do not sometimes see it as the absolute tremendous power in words. Words can either make somebody or destroy somebody. Teenage kids growing up, especially teenage girls, they are great at this. They will play the little games and they will get their little group together and they will talk about this girl or that girl and where they should be helping that person, should be extending themselves to that person, should be giving that person and making them better, they destroy them. How many times now have you heard of the news where some kid killed himself because of being bullied or just other girls? I remember a story I read about a girl that killed herself because a couple of other girls were emailing her or whatever they were doing, Facebooking her, texting her, whatever, and just destroyed about what they said. It is a thing where it happens. It happens with kids growing up. It is always one of the dangers of the camp. I really did not say much about it, but it is always something that you want to look out for. Every camp I have ever been associated with, you get the little girls that are in, guys too, but girls more than guys, who just want to ostracize somebody that does not fit in their little group. Instead of using that camp to help them, they use that camp to better themselves, to hurt them. Adults do it too. I mean, it does not stop when you reach puberty. Whatever that is. It goes on in life. If something does not change about us that we understand that once we got saved, our job, my job, your job as a Christian, simply one thing past reproducing, it is making people better than you found them, making them better. I have to deal with a lot of stupid issues. I know that I deal with a lot of problems that people get. I know, I know. Some of it is horrendous stuff. Some of it is goofy stuff. Some of it is just stupid stuff. I get it. I get it. When it comes to God's people, sometimes you have stupid stuff, and then you have stupid, and then you have industrial stupid. It is just, sometimes it just blows my mind. But I have learned, no matter what somebody does, no matter what mess they are in, if they want to do what is right,

and they are willing to dig themselves out of it, you do not help them by hurting them anymore. Somebody has to throw them a rope. Hey, there was a time in your life, in my life, Psalm 40 says: Psalms 40:2

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. You know how you got there? He threw you a rope. We like the rope for us, but we will not throw it to somebody else. You never come to the place, no matter what you are dealing with, that you are not there to help that person to make them better. The words that you use, and I know we joke around. I know, we do. Here, anyhow, we have a lot of fun. We do goofy things to everybody. We are goofy, we are. If you are looking for our church, right at the resume, goofiness. We are goofy. We laugh, we have fun. We do not have any, we laugh at each other. We laugh at ourselves. You know, nobody takes it personal. I mean, my boys over here, you know, me and Will and Alex and Zach and all you other guys over here, you know, you tore my picture up, well, I am going to kill you. But, you know, but we laugh at each other. We do not take anything seriously. I mean, you know, the world is too uptight. It is, the world, the Christian world is too uptight. There are too many thin-skinned people. They cannot laugh. That is the biggest problem with God. They cannot laugh at themselves. I mean, it reminds me of that, you know, the Snow White story, their old wish, you know, she was in there looking at, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" If we did that, the mirror would crack. It is just, people are people. The one pre-regular, the helping of them and loving them and not loving them and trying to use them to get some advantage in your life. Well, if God would have done that, or the people that helped you, if they had done that, where would you be today? Where would you be if the people to disciple you just did it to use you? Brought you over and disciplined you at about the fourth one in. You said, "Get along in the Bible, very good." "Yeah, I am really doing good." "Oh yeah, I am an insurance salesman. How is your insurance?" You know, there are people that join big churches just for that purpose and that reason. A wise man should do three things with what he says. A wise man should never teach all the Bible he knows.

That is because you cannot give truth to somebody past the point and the level of where they are at. Sometimes we dump something heavy on somebody. Young Christians are famous, but they will come to the Bible on Thursday night, hear something and they will take it out and want to show everybody what to know about the Bible and they do more damage than they do good. You never teach all the Bible you know. You are always conscious of who is there in your crowd. You never speak of others outside the circle of people who are committed to help them.

We talk about people, if we are working together with them, we are helping them. You bring it to me, I bring it to you. We have come together with a plan to help them. That is what we are supposed to do. But you do not take it outside that circle. You do not say, "Well, so and so did it again. Yeah, yeah, he was out drunk last night and over the place there, he must have gotten a real big fight." That is not what you do. With whatever you do, you build people up with what you say.

No, hey, I know you, we all got issues. I got issues. I know we all got weaknesses. We all do, we all do. But I will never help you if all I ever do is focus on your weakness. I have to look beyond that and I have to see the 95% that is good in you. You

know, I will never help you get past the weakness if I do not help you focus on what is good about you and then teach you in the process that you have to fix what is bad because 5% is going to ruin the other 95. But you already know that. We got to lift each other up. We got to push each other sometimes. We got to be there for each other. We got to make people better. Do what the word of God did for you. Do that with other people. You know what the word of God did for you? It made you better. So with the word that you speak, with what you say, with the word that comes out of your mouth, do not be a fool that "uttereth all his mind," but a wise man "keepeth it in till afterwards." In other words, he assesses the situation through the principle before he ever speaks.

VI. Free Will Versus Predestination: The Purpose of Proverbs

Now you have the complete picture. Wise man and a foolish man, and you get to choose. You know, I thought about this. I got to give you, I got time here, so just bear with me. I got to give you this side note here to help you. How the Bible itself will reveal, just the Bible itself. It is no wonder people want to get away from the Bible and rid of the Bible. How the Bible itself will reveal all the heresy that man wants to put together to try to mess people up. You know, we talk about them all the time, and one of the more ones that you find today is, but what is commonly years ago was called Calvinism. In the Neo-Evangelical movement, which is all the Baptist churches that are taking Baptist off their name and moving into that gray mush area, and all the Neo-Evangelical churches that are already in that gray mush area, you are seeing this creep back into those churches. They have changed the name now and they call it Reformation Theology. Basically, it is the aspect of predestination, the fact that God predestined some people to go to heaven. They would be the wise people. And some people to go to hell, they would be the fools. But you know, if you think about it, if that was true, and I know, I know if you are listening to this and you are a Calvinist, you know, you are a five-pointer, you know, and all that stuff, the very fact that you are already falling into it, this reveals the depth of your stupidity.

I mean, if that was really true, why would there be a need for the book of Proverbs? Why would there be a need for a book that goes into such exacting detail of how you not to get out of being a fool and becoming wise, or not being a fool in the first place by getting wise, if it was already prefixed that you were going to be predestined to be wise or foolish? It is a waste of paper. Why write a book that shows you how to do it and shows you how to get out of it if you were predestined to be in it in the first place? See how simple the Bible is, but when you are educated beyond your intelligence, when you lose your common sense of the Bible truth, and you put yourself up there as some great educated man or woman who knows everything and had been educated to the degree, you lose the simple little common truths that are found in the Bible. I thank God that God hid that from you because He says He is rejoicing in heaven because He hides little things like that from people like you. In the end of the matter, you would need to know how to be a wise or a foolish man if you were predestined one way or the other. That is why they do not win people to Christ. They do not have any revivals, soul winning revival. They do not have any campaigns. They do not teach soul winning classes. You know why? Because

they have already firmly believed in their mind that God already destined whether you are going to heaven or hell, so they are not going to change it. Well, if that is true, why even put the book of Proverbs in the Bible? If you are going to be wise and foolish, you are going to be predestined that way. Nothing you can do about it. Why am I wasting my time telling you how to quit being a fool? When God already said, "You are a fool and that is where you are going to stay." There is no need for a book to change your thinking when your thinking has already been predestinated. I told you early on, you know, some people embrace stupidity like it was a virtue. Now I got a question for you off the subject. What movie is that line from? What movie is that line from? I will give it to you again. "You embrace stupidity as if it was a virtue." Why is that? I get most of my sermons from movies, I want you to know that. The guy that without looking on your computer, the guy or the gal who finds that line for me gets a \$25 gift to get to the bookstore.

It is your free will. You get to choose if you want to be wise or you want to be foolish. Nobody is going to make you be wise or foolish like nobody is going to make you get saved. But once you get saved, you ought to be the wise man that God wants you to be. God gave you the book that changed everything about us that was foolish and to give us God's wisdom and understanding, but at the end of the day, you get to choose. Our job here, my job here is to make you better. Take you where I find you. Do not expect you to be anything better than the world left you. Pick up that job, put the people around you, myself around you, this church around you, take the salvation that God gave you, the foundation and then clean it off, get your junk off of it, get the world off of it, get your beer off of it, get everything off of it down to the better rock foundation and then we will start to build. Gold, silver, precious stones and get you to the place in time where you cease being a fool and you become the wise man of Proverbs and you get the knowledge of God and the wisdom of God and His understanding. At the end of the day, some will, some will not. We will hold up there. Now you got the balance between a fool and a wise man.