

Proverbs 28:14-16

October 27, 2024

SEC: Introduction and Review of Proverbs 28:13

Last week we looked at some great principles that are invaluable to us as we grow in the Word of God and begin to put those things in our life that God would have for us. We talked about how a righteous man will always give the glory to God when he is praising and happy about what God is doing and all that God has done, not only to him, but through him and the things that God has brought into their lives.

We saw a great principle that when the wicked rise up, it is always a man hidden. We talked about that, and that is a great concept, a great key to the issues that we face with people, always knowing that behind every issue you want to look for the hidden man. There will always be somebody, some man, some woman, somebody who is stirring things up and causing discord or problems. I always liked those puzzles. Remember, you get a picture and it says, "Find the dog." It has a whole bunch of contracted stuff in there, people, places, and you have to really study it. The dog is blended into the picture, like with somebody's arm or somebody's leg or somebody's suit coat. The dog is not apparent, and you have to really look and study it. Then as you go over it, all of a sudden, there is the dog right in front of you. You just could not see it. I have always liked puzzles like that. In any situation, wherever you go in life dealing with people, it sometimes can be like a puzzle. But that hidden man will pop out when you just study it and you just look and see, or a woman will, as you put it all together. It was a great verse for us and a great teaching that you want to remember.

Then a great verse in Proverbs 28:13, not to cover our sin, but rather to confess them and to forsake them. What a great principle that was. When I need to get right with God, which is probably about every 45 seconds, I will tell you what I have learned. When I get right with God, I have learned that you just talk plain. Just talk plain. You do not try to lessen what you did or make it seem like it is not so bad. You just talk plain to Him. I would think that that would be just a natural thing for somebody. But you know why you just talk plain to Him? Because it is already plain to Him. He just wants you to come and lay it out.

I gave you two great keys to our staying right with God. One of them was confessing it, the other one was forsaking it. Do not bother confessing it if you are not willing to forsake it. A lot of things in Christianity, the Bible teaches it in a more incredible way, where you have two or three aspects to it, but we like to take the aspects that we just like. Everybody would not have a problem confessing your sin, but forsaking it, that is the problem. We talk about forgiveness, reconciliation, and all those things. Most people, I have read books and books and books over the years and talked to people, everybody talks about forgiveness, but nobody talks about forgetting. The aspect of God's forgiveness for you, not only did God forgive you, He forgot it. Of course, we hear lots about, "Well, you need to forgive." Yes, but also, I always say this, if you can forgive, you can forget. But if you cannot forgive, you can forget it. That is so true today.

Someone would say, "Well, how in the world do you forget?" Let me ask you a question. How in the world did Jesus forget? The first 19 years of my life I did some of the most horrendous things

that you could ever believe, and so did most of you, maybe longer than that. But when you have to say, if God not only forgave you, He forgot what you did. Now, let me ask you a question. This would be a good Thursday night Bible question. How does God, who knows everything, forget? That is a great question. Well, it is the same way that when you really get a biblical understanding of forgiveness, that you forget. That is an incredible thing. It is just like confessing and forsaking. A lot of things in the Bible are that way.

I told you that the two key books in the Bible for God's people were the Gospel of John, which lays out salvation, and then 1 John, that lays out fellowship. Here again, just like confessing and forsaking, like forgiveness and forgetting, these two books go together. One shows you the aspect of salvation the day God saved you. Once you are saved, the other one shows you how to stay in fellowship with Him through the confessing of your daily cleansing in your life.

It is like the book of Romans and Galatians. Romans is the great book that teaches you that you are saved by grace and faith. Galatians is a great book that shows you that you are kept by grace and faith. One shows you how you get saved. The other one shows you how God keeps you. It is the way the Bible lays itself out. Most people do not ever get to the depth of that because they just do not understand the scriptures to that length or that depth when you get all the bottom line of what He is trying to say.

SEC: Prayer and Introduction of Proverbs 28:14

Now today we are going to go through a few more verses and we are going to begin to tie it together as a complete picture of what God is showing us, like we did last week. I want to read for you Proverbs 28:14-16.

I just want to praise you, God, the church, helping us move together. It was wonderful. I want to praise you, the Lord God, praise you, thank you, that a lot of us become a member of the church. It magnifies your Word, Lord God. It magnifies your Word, but in the name of the Lord God, I pray that we be doers of the Word and I hear it all week. I pray that you will be a worthy God, in Jesus Christ's name, I pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Bozy. It was a pleasure to move you. You need to thank us. If you do not do what is right, we are going to move you back.

Now, Proverbs 28:14 says:

Proverbs 28:14

Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

SEC: The Concept of Happiness and Joy

Verse 13 last week and verse 14 this week, what we just read, will really go together. Confessing and forsaking our sins, simply a man who fears God will respect God's warning in the Bible about sin. Martin Luther was a great man and his life story is incredible. In a lot of ways, church history from the 1500s on really revolves around a lot that he did, bringing in the Reformation in Germany. He said one time, "As Christians, we need to keep short accounts with God." That is some great advice. We need to keep those accounts of sin in our life to a very minimum.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We looked at that last week. For you and for me, there are three key aspects that the world, and unfortunately most of God's people, will never really totally understand. The first one, and it says here in Proverbs 28:14, "Happy is the man." The first thing that people do not understand, especially God's people (the world has no clue, but God's people should), is the concept of happiness. Everybody wants to be happy. We spend our whole life doing and adding and looking for things that we actually think will make us happy. Of course, that is a sad lesson in life that things of this world that we try to bring into our world will only bring a temporary happiness, if it will even do that. It simply will not last.

I call it "new car smell Christianity." Everybody buys a new car. We all love the smell. You want to protect that as long as you can. They even sell cans now of new car smell. If it does not work in your car, it is a great deodorant. Everybody that buys a new car knows the great smell. You get in that car for the first time and it is just like it is the reality that you have got a brand new car. You can get a program car that has been used. I do not care what they do to it, it does not have that smell. There is only one thing that has that smell: a new car. When you buy a new car and you get in it for the first time, the smell overwhelms you in a good way. It is a thing where it is, "I got a new car. I love that smell." In our minds, we try to project that new smell as long as we can to keep the new car alive because, let us face it, by the time you have it for three or four months and you take the kids to school and one of them is sick and throws up in it, and you take the dog to the vet and he gets hair all over it. By the time you get to the place where your spouse is going out to go someplace and gets a cup of coffee or a milkshake, and you have to stop and it is all over the floor, new car smell goes. It just does not last.

For a Christian, real happiness will only come through the aspect of joy. When you have the joy of God in your life, it is like that new car smell of your life as a new Christian just continues on forever. The things in life do not take that away from you. The Bible makes it clear that when we talk about the Lord or when God looks at the church, it talks about a sweet savor in the nostrils of God. Knowing that sweet savor in His nostrils started the day you got saved.

Have you ever bought a new house? A new house has got a great smell to it. It is all new stuff, new sheetrock, new paint, and you walk in there. Nobody has ever lived in it before. You walk in there and it is just like the car. "This is a new house," and it makes you happy. Well, the day you got saved, God smelled the sweet savor of you getting saved in Christ, and God said, "That really pleases Me. Now they are a clean temple." You lose the smell in your car and you lose the smell in your new house, but as a child of God, we should never lose that smell of our temple while we are smelling good to God. How do we do that? We do that because real happiness will only come with joy. That is the key to the Christian life. Life for a Christian is just a very simple formula. It is not complicated. We like to make it complicated, but it really is not.

We saw the text last week that 1 John 1, that joy will be in our lives only through our fellowship. So if you want happiness, you have to have joy. If you want joy, the Bible says, "If you are

walking in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." That is the only way you get it. This is why I have never understood, well, I do, but I do not, but I do. This is why I sometimes I do not get why some of God's people get so miserable with life. Why they just do not have any joy in their hearts. There is nothing that really changes. They have lost that new car smell in their life. They have lost that joy of the day it was that you just got saved.

Remember the day you got saved? Remember how you did not care? Your mom just called and said, "Your dog died." You said, "That is okay. Praise the Lord." The house burnt down and you said, "Jesus is Lord," and kept on moving. That moment when Christ came into our lives and saved us is the greatest single day of your life. It is the day when God injected you, not only with His Holy Spirit, but with the joy of your salvation. I am telling you, the key for the Christian is to keep that going. There is the secret for our happiness. You will never be happy outside the Lord. I do not care what you try to bring into your life. I do not care what comes into your life. Everyone will take that joy if it is really biblical joy based on your fellowship. Because at the end of the day, it will put the priorities in your life that most of the things in life that we get upset about really do not matter. I cannot think of anything that I am going to allow in my life that is going to take that joy. It is not worth it to me. Because I know that in that joy is the fellowship that I have with Him that He is going to work it all out. It is okay. That joy is clearly based on my fellowship with Him.

SEC: The Healthy Fear of God

One more aspect to it, the verse today, and fearing God is the key to our fellowship. Proverbs 28:14. Most people think that they do not have a real understanding of God. They think that when they do something wrong, God is waiting to get them. I have definitely dealt with people that just think, "Well, God is out to get me." Get saved, because the only time God is out to get you is when you need to get saved. Once you get saved, He is not out to get you. He is out to help you. They get the idea that, "Oh, I just screwed up this week. So God is standing around the corner and He goes, 'Ah, cancer comes your way. Oh, bad car wreck.'" They live their whole life in fear that because maybe they are not doing what is right or they made some mistakes in life, God is going to come down and kill them. You do not fear God that way.

Hebrews 12:6-11

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Hebrews 12:6-11 is probably the greatest definitive chapter, a portion in the Word of God that shows you to help to understand God's chastisement. Yes, as a child of God, I fear the hand of God and chastisement for myself as any child of God should. But it is not like God is going to get out to get me.

Hebrews 12 says that we have had parents that correct us. How much more shall we give reverence to the Father of spirits that live? Your mom and dad growing up disciplined you. I hope they did. They gave you a whipping when you needed it. They dealt with you, rebuked you whenever you needed it. They did not let you just grow up and live your life like you wanted to live it because they wanted the best for you. Most of you, or all of you here today that are worth your salt with God, had parents in your life, or at least somebody in your life, who helped you but kept you accountable and did not let you get away with a lot of things that we wanted to get away with. If you can understand that and see the value of where you are at right now, how much more should you be able to understand that in your spiritual relationship with God?

The Bible says that when God comes down and He chastises you and me, He does it because He loves us. He does it because He wants to perfect holiness in us. He does it because He wants us to be better in what we are doing. The Bible says, "If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?" In our earthly life as sinners, if a mom and a dad can see the value in chastising their kid or dealing with their kid or keeping their kids in line or correcting them or whatever you have got to do in the chastisement mode of that relationship, how much more can we give God that ability to do that?

The Bible says that no chastening seems to be joyous for them, but grievous. I understand that. I had both my little daughters when they were growing up and I had to give them whippings. I never enjoyed it. There is a biblical process you do that. I remember both Kelly and Jamie, they got in trouble and I had to take them in there and whip them and they knew what was coming. They were like six or seven years old. I remember Kelly in particular one time. I remember what you did. I do not know, you shot the neighbor's dog or whatever you did. I am not sure. She is just a little bit of a girl. I have to discipline her. It was tough because she knows what is coming and I would sit down and I would go through the biblical process, "Hey, look, I am going to have to give you a whipping." Then they start to cry. It is a thing where I make them lay over the bed, pull their little butt buns. It was the hardest thing in the world to try to whip. I do not want to do that. But I knew that if I did not do it, what I was going to have on my hands later on in life with both of them. That was not something I looked forward to, but it was something that I had to do because in good parenting, that is what you do.

Then you go through the whole process. For parents and your kids, when your kids do something wrong, you build your kids' lives to the point where when they do something wrong and you have to deal with them, that they are not upset over the fact that they are going to get a whipping, but they are upset over the fact that they have broken fellowship with mom and dad. That is the

key that you want to build your children to because that is the key that God wants to build us to. There have been times in my life when God has given me a good whipping, and times in your life when He has given you a good whipping. In my life, I cannot speak for you, but in my life it was not a bad, I knew I deserved the whipping and I took the whipping. But the bottom line is what really upset me was the fact that I let Him down. When you can instill that in your children, then you have got something.

To you and for me, chastisement when God comes down is not something we need to fear because no one would just fear for that. But if God does not correct us, the real fear is what you are going to lose at the judgment seat of Christ. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:6-11 that afterward it yields a peaceable fruit of God. It brings you back to fellowship and that is what God wants.

The second aspect is the fear of God's judgment for an unsaved man or an unsaved woman. When a person has a healthy fear of God and His judgment and eternity without God in the lake of fire or hell, it brings them to Christ. They realize that they are headed on the wrong road. So fearing the Lord for the Christian is the catalyst for our fellowship, and fellowship brings our joy, and it is from the joy that we have our happiness.

All my life, I have heard them say, "Preachers just preach hate. They just preach fear. They are just trying to scare you." I have heard that all my life and I always think to myself, fear is a God-given emotion and it is probably one of the healthy emotions that we all have. Fear will keep you from killing yourself. Fear will keep you from doing something stupid. I see these people that go out here to Colorado and these bridges that are 10 million feet high and they are doing bungee jumps. You have to be pretty stupid to do a bungee jump at 10,000 feet or 5,000 feet or 2,000 feet. For me, 10 feet. They stand up there and there have been many people killed because you are putting your hand and your life in the hand of a guy who is making sure that the rope length is right. It was a great bungee jump all the way to the guy for God and added 10 feet to it and you went into the ground and then you bounced back up, headless, but you came back up. To me, those things are weird.

Electricity is another thing. I was an electrician for a while and it used to scare me to death. I was working downtown in Plaza 10 or 21 down there off the Plaza one time and we had to change out plugs that were 270 volt. That is hot stuff. It was hot because we could not shut it down and I do not know what I did, but I am changing that thing out and I hit something wrong. It burnt the whole end of my screwdriver, threw me all the way across the room. People came running in, wanted to call 911, thought it killed me. I am scared of electricity. I do not know that much about it. The toughest time was not when I got shocked. It was when I had to go back in 15 minutes and do the next one. I put on my rubber boots, my rubber gloves, my rubber hat. I was going to insulate it, pal. I wrapped myself in newspaper. I was insulated, but I am scared and sometimes fear will keep you from really doing something stupid.

The young generation today, they do not have any fear. There was a girl or somebody out in Blue Springs or Green Valley last week, and I feel bad for them, but have you ever seen kids just driving down the street and they are hanging out of the car window, sitting on the ledge up here,

or laying back? She fell out and the car behind her ran over her. It is a terrible thing. You will never catch me doing that. That is not the most comfortable place to ride anyhow, but do you realize the danger in that? Something else. I was driving down the road one day in my car and there is a car over here and there was a lane between us. Here comes a guy on a motorcycle with a wheelie on his back wheel, right between both of us. I guess he is thinking we are going to say, "Wow, cool." You have never done that, have you, Sam? No, you better not, because we are going to sell those motorcycles. Why do not you take them over to the garage sale of a guy that is next to me? I need you, you better not get hurt anymore. Crazy man. Kids do stupid things. Down in Paola when I used to work down there, I got to know all the cops, and every year, graduation time, they always had some kids that were killed in car wrecks and they would always be having their funerals. Down there they would do hill jumping where they would get in a car and they would go real fast over a hill and they would come off the ground and hit it. No fear. I would not do that. My car does not go fast enough to get off the ground, but I would not do it anyhow. That is crazy stuff.

Here is the bottom line. In most cases, we are afraid of everything in life except what we ought to be afraid of. That is the bottom line.

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Somebody says, "You just preach about fear." The Bible says Noah moved with fear and the preparing of the ark for the saving of his household. The saving of your household will require you to fear some things. But God's people do not fear anything today.

The Bible says Job feared God. Job 1:1, and he eschewed evil. Eschewed is an old English word. He stayed away from it. If you are going to stay away from and eschew evil, you are going to have to fear some things.

Psalms 96:4

For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

Matthew 10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

We fear everything but what we ought to fear. We sing "Amazing Grace":

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found;

Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed!

Fear is healthy. Bob Jones Sr. said at one time, "You better be in hell scared than hell scorched."

Proverbs 16:6

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

A child of God is at his or her best with a healthy fear of God producing the fellowship that produces the joy that produces the happiness. Then through that, walking in the light as He is in the light, having fellowship one with another.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

SEC: The Hardened Heart and God's Sovereignty

Then the last part of Proverbs 28:14, "but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." Without a doubt, there are always examples in the Bible. I tell you all the time that in the Bible there are models for everything and you just learn about, learn the models, it makes life a lot simpler. Without a doubt, the greatest example of this will be found in Exodus 7, dealing with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt and the children of Israel trying to get delivered out of Egypt. But in particular, it will be Exodus 10:20 where the Bible clearly says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Here is the storyline. Israel has been down in Egypt now for 430 years. They cried out to God and God has sent them a deliverer, and that man is Moses. We know that. Then through Exodus 7 through Exodus 12, Moses and Pharaoh kind of go at it. Moses says, "Let my people go." He says, "I am not going to let them go." The story itself, if you want to get the side notes to it, the story itself is a great New Testament principle. It teaches that they are down in Egypt and the devil is trying to destroy them, no question about that. But God has them down there, not so the devil can destroy them. Sure, they went through some really hard, rigorous times. But the devil looks at it to try to destroy them. God looked at it to make them a strong nation that when He did bring them out, they would be ready to go.

The great principle is that the adversity that you will face in life, that I will face in life, you have a choice, pal. You can either let it break you or you can let it make you. You can let the adversity bring you to God or run away from God. It is that simple. We always look at the adversity of the things that come into our lives and we always look at the downside of it, always trying to get God to take it away, take it away. You know the first thing I do? The first thing I do is look at my

own self and find out if I did something screwy that caused this mess. I look at my own life and say, "Lord, have I been in the book? Have I been doing what You want me to do? Am I growing? Am I doing this? Am I doing what You called me to do?" If the answer is no, then that might be a reason why you are going through some of the adversity. But if you can check all those things off and you still have adversity in life, my greatest advice to you is to enjoy it. That is a hard thing to say, but you have got to learn how to enjoy it because at the end of the day, you know that whatever you are going through, if you are right with God, no hand formed against you is going to prosper and nobody is going to hurt you. At the end of the day, what we view as hurt will come to the point where God will take it like He did the nation of Israel.

Do you think anybody down there in slavery for 430 years actually thought that this was really a blessing? They had been down in Egypt now and nobody down there thought that what they were going through was a good thing. They lost their parents, their grandparents; four generations died down there. But yet when God was bringing them out, God knew that what they had to face to be His nation, they had to be tough and they had to be strong. In fact, if the devil wanted to destroy them, God said, "I am going to use that same thing that he wants to destroy them with and I am going to make them with it." That is what He will do for you and for me, growing through our problems. Instead of getting an attitude in our problems, blaming others for all of our problems, realizing that the problems we, even when we screw up and we cause the problems, when you start to do what is right and want to do what is right, you just keep the right attitude and quit blaming everybody else, God will take that and give you a pathway back and use it for everything that He needs for it to be.

Now the Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. We are talking about a hardened heart here that will fall into mischief. If anybody did, that would be Pharaoh. But this is where the Calvinists, the predestination crowd, display themselves as brain dead when it comes to the Bible. They cannot grasp this verse or connect it with Proverbs 28, nor can they do it to connect to Romans 9 or Romans 11. This verse is a favorite of a Calvinist, Exodus 10:20, where God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Their teaching on it is that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh did not have a choice in it and that Pharaoh is one of those unfortunate people that the Calvinists teach that some are predestined to be saved and some are predestined to die and go to hell. If you happen to be the one that was predestined to go to heaven, praise the Lord. If you are happy to be the one who predestined to go to hell, enjoy it, I guess, life because you are not going to get to heaven. That is probably one of the goofiest things that ever came down the pike. Sometimes it is called Calvinism, sometimes it is called Reclamation Theology. But the bottom line is with just a little Bible study, which is probably a lot for them, it will reveal some great things.

I know the Bible says that in Exodus 10:20 that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. But if you are a Bible student, you will find in Exodus 7:14, Exodus 8:15, Exodus 8:32, Exodus 9:34, and Exodus 9:35 that five times before Exodus 10:20 says that God hardened his heart, the Bible tells you that Pharaoh hardened his heart. Five times he had a chance to do what was right and would not do it. Five times before God ever touched his heart. Five times he said himself, "I am going to harden my heart," and the Bible says Pharaoh hardened his heart. Five times before God ever touched it in Exodus 10:20. Here is another great principle. Five times God gave him a chance to

do right and he would not do it. So God just took the hardened heart that he already had, the hardened heart that he willingly chose to disobey God's commandment through Moses, and God destroyed him with it.

2 Timothy 2:20

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

The great thing about that is we get to choose which one we are. When we came down the assembly line in eternity before God put us down this earth, you did not have some that were spray painted vessels of honor and others spray painted vessels of dishonor. They were spray painted with a free will. Then God's Holy Spirit comes down through people and places and everything that He does, that God is not willing that any should perish. Then we choose just like Pharaoh. This idea that God just came down and poor old Pharaoh just hardened his heart. You are out of your mind. Five times he hardened his heart first. God came down and dealt with him and God took the honor and glory out of his destruction. That is another great lesson.

I am going to tell you something. God wants the honor and glory out of everything that we are and everything that we do. He demands that. He deserves that because He is a holy God. Everything the Bible says that God created in Colossians 1 and all the other places, everything that God created, God created for His honor and glory. Romans 1:20 tells you that. God is going to get honor and glory out of everything. We get to choose. We can choose to be a vessel of honor and God will use your life to be a vessel of honor and get the honor and glory out of it and everybody will see what God did, like Ruthie yesterday, like John Gowans the week before. Or we can choose to be a vessel of dishonor, harden our heart toward God like Pharaoh did. God will still come down and whack you, destroy you maybe, and then God will get the honor and glory out of that. One way God gets honor and glory out of it where somebody says, "Wow, look at that guy. Look at Ruthie. Boy, I will tell you what, what a testimony he is. Praise the Lord. That is really good. I just really thank God for that." Or you will live your life like a drunk. You will live your life the way you want to live it. You will do your own thing. You will never do a thing for God. You will come down and everybody knows you are a Christian and you are not doing what is right and then you will wind up dying someplace or worse, getting into a real mess in your life, and everybody will say, "Wow, that was not the hand of God. I do not want that happening to me." Either way, God will get the honor and glory out of it because He demands it. He deserves it.

When a man hardens his heart toward God and the things of God, it only gets worse. The Bible says he falls into mischief. Now mischief, it is an old English word. It does not really mean what it really means in the Bible. Mischief to us is just like you stole a cookie out of the cookie jar and got into mischief. It is much graver than that in the Bible. It really is. In the Bible it carries it all with the devil and the Antichrist. As I said, when we give our heart to God then He takes it and uses it for His honor and glory and we get the blessings out of it. When we harden our heart and go against God like Pharaoh did, then He will take that hardened heart and use it again for His honor and glory, like He did Pharaoh.

Romans 9:17

For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Long after the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and had to deal with Pharaoh, they are going down there through the lands that are the other nations and some of those nations, yes, they try to stop them and do not want them in. But some of the other nations do? They say, "Oh, you are the nation of Israel. You are Mr. Moses. Thank you very much. Good to meet you. You just come through our land. You do whatever you need to do. If you want to stop for water here, you want to camp here, you want to put your porta-potties over here, you want to do whatever you want to do. You just have at it." He said, "Well, I appreciate that. Why are you so kind?" "Because we have heard what your God did to Pharaoh. We do not want Him doing it to us." They feared God. God will get the honor and glory out of everything. God will use what simply what we give Him. If you give Him the right attitude of heart toward Him, then He will use that. If you harden your heart toward Him, then He will use that. It is just that simple.

In all my ministry, I have seen God's people develop an attitude toward God and what He wanted them to do, just like Pharaoh. Pharaoh is a type of the world. He is a type of the devil. I have seen God's people who I knew were saved. Something does not go right for them or they do not get what they want the way they want it. Suddenly they get an attitude toward God. They get an attitude toward the church. They get an attitude toward the very people who try to help them. That is just the way it is. For a child of God, it all starts with a world system under the devil who controls everything in this world. When you put yourself into that.

Job 41:24

His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

The devil, his heart is completely hardened against God. There is not one ounce of anything that he cares about God or the things of God. That is the way the world runs. When you as a child of God put yourself into that world of Pharaoh, Egypt, you develop the same heart. It is simple. You get into church, get into the Bible, get saved, you get God's attitude of heart and you move that way. You get into the world, get out of church and do what you are doing, then you get the other heart and go that way. It is not complicated.

In Job 9:4, what a great verse, it says:

Job 9:4

He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

The answer is nobody. Not your grandma, not your Uncle Pete, not your Aunt Mabel. Nobody. Nobody has ever hardened their heart against God and prospered. You are going to let that verse sink into your head because you are into the illusion.

SEC: The Danger of a Hardened Heart and Spiritual Blindness

If you want to see this verse in action, let us turn back to Deuteronomy 29. Let me just read it for you. You want to see this concept in full play? Look at Deuteronomy 29:18.

Deuteronomy 29:18-20

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:

The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

Now there it is. You know what he is saying? Here is a guy who walks away from God. Somebody preaches to him or somebody talks with him about it or whatever and tells him that there is a root of bitterness and wormwood going to come into your life. What does the guy do? "Don't judge me." He blesses himself in his heart saying, "I shall have peace." Wow. If that is your idea of peace, brother, I hate to see a bad day. "Though I walk in the imagination of my heart," that is the worst thing you can do. Jeremiah says that the heart is the seat for the licking above all things. Then add to it your imagination.

Look what happened in Deuteronomy 29:20. "The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man. And all the curses that are written in his book shall lie upon him and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord will separate him unto evil out of all the tribes." That would be a rough one. "And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of the tribes of Israel according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law."

I want to tell you something. I know that was given to the nation of Israel back in the Old Testament, but God wrote you a book and God gave you a book with the laws and the statutes of what God wanted and what God expected of us. We do not do it and how many of God's people take that thing right there? Yes, the fact that we like to take the Bible where it works for us, but when it goes against what we want to do or believe, then we do not want it anymore. We like to go to church until the guy preaches on something that is our pet sin that we do not want to, maybe we are willing to confess but not to forsake. It goes along great to the point that we have got to face some reality of who we really are and reality of what we have got to change in life. As long as it is in a general sense, you are okay. But when that Word of God like a microscope starts cracking it down.

I have always liked astronomy even when I was a kid and I never forget my first telescope. I must have been about 13 or 14. My mom and dad bought it at Pennies for me. I remember it was raining all that day and I was so excited to use it and then about six o'clock in the afternoon, seven o'clock in the evening, the clouds cleared off and there was the moon. I was really excited.

I set that thing up and I really did not know how to work it. It was not one where you put different eyepieces in it, it was one that you pulled it out at different lengths and it was higher magnification. I did not really know that at the time. For me, I never read the instructions, just get it out, get it on and just try to do it, and read them later. So I got it set up and I found the moon in there and it was just about that big and I am trying to convince myself, "Well, that looks pretty good." I look at it and it is much bigger than when I am looking at it here, but I said, "Okay, that is pretty good." Then I do not know what happened. I just pulled it out and there, it really got big. I pulled it out again and I am figuring it out and I will keep, pulled it out again. Pretty soon, I had it all the way out and you could just see a big crater. It was incredible. It was just a fact with, and you could see the rills and you could see the beer cans and you could, it was just a mess up there. I will never forget that in my own life as an illustration.

That is what the Word of God does. When we look at our lives through 25 power, we look pretty good. We say in our heart, "Hey, I am not bad. I am going to bless myself," and we look pretty good. But you take the Word of God and start cranking the magnification to it because that is what the book does. That is why you are going to find people that as long as you are looking at them through 25X, they are okay. But when God, through the Word of God, you start working with them and start dealing with some problems and the magnification starts, and you start seeing the beer cans and the craters and the rills and the wrecks and the rocks and the rubble on the moon in a person's life. That Bible really comes to the place where it just exposes who we really are. The problem is a lot of God's people do not want to admit that. They do not want to deal with that. They want to go as the man here. They just want to keep on going and thinking to their self, "Hey, I am okay. I will bless myself. I walk in the imagination of my own heart. I am okay. I am doing just fine." Of course, the Bible says, "The Lord shall separate him unto evil."

One of the greatest values of your Christian life, if you ever can develop it, is let God put as much magnification on your life as He can and be okay with it. I always tell people, when they first get saved, they are worried about the big things in their life. I totally get it. They will sit down with me and they will say, "Well, I want to do this right." It is always big things. "I want to come to church. I want to get in my Bible. I want to fix this problem in my life." Those are the major things in their life. Once they grow and get disciplined and get the Word of God working in their life and that magnification starts to kick in, about four or five years later you will talk to them. You know what the big things are in their life? It is not going to church anymore. It is not doing this anymore or going where they should not go. You know what the real big issues now that are monumental in their life? "I did not get in my Bible enough this week. I did not pray like I should this week." We went from five years ago to the big things and then God put the magnification, fixed those things. Now the magnification is so high, it is looking at the things in your prayer life, and you will walk with the Lord, your time in the Word of God. That is spiritual growth. That is God continually putting the magnification to our lives through the Word of God and continually telling us what we need to fix. That is real spiritual growth.

SEC: The Devil's Operation: Roaring Lion and Ranging Bear

Proverbs 28:15 says:

Proverbs 28:15

As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

Doctrinally, of course all this is true of all this, this is the Antichrist. The lion in 1 Peter 5:8, and the bear in Revelation 13 and Daniel 7. This is all a reference to the Antichrist in the tribulation of Israel. There are over 100 references to this man in the Bible alone, the Antichrist. There are 18 men who foreshadow him in the Old Testament to be able to see and understand how he operates. So, doctrinally, I want you to know all this is dealing with the Antichrist, but the practical side of it, inspirationally. That is how the devil works today. Two aspects. It says there is a roaring lion and a ranging bear. In the world today, the devil operates in two modes.

2 Corinthians 11:14 says that he shows up as an angel of light. That is religion. Then 1 Peter 5:8 says he is a roaring lion. In America, the devil does not come as a roaring lion. He comes as an angel of light and it is through religion, through all the things of the world, all the do-gooders that this is how he does what he does. The roaring lion, you will find in the third world countries like Haiti, Rio, Africa, where he holds them in fear and superstition.

A number of years ago, and I have been in all of these places, down in Haiti, when I sent a team there one time to go work with a missionary and they got into, I think it was Port-au-Prince and they had to rent a truck or a van or whatever and then they had like a seven hour ride up to the mission station. The missionary told them that there was a certain town that they were going to go through to get there and he stressed the fact that make sure under no circumstances that you go through that town, stop in that town or be anywhere near that town when nightfall comes. It was filled with demonic activity, filled with all of the things that in Haiti, voodoo and all of those things and there was a tree outside the city that was supposedly, according to them, a haunted tree, the people in the city. I do not believe in ghosts and none of that stuff but this was all demonic. This is how the devil comes. My people got there, got the van and started driving through there, came through the city. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon and when they got out to the city, believe it or not, right by that tree, the van quit running. Now you are in Haiti, it is not Triple A that you call. So now they are panicking and they are on the phone with a missionary and he says, "Well, you are still two hours away." He says, "I will get in the car and try to get up there." They said they were all praying and they are all asking the Lord to do whatever. It was a thing where just about five o'clock, 5:30, as they were just, somebody went back in and started it and the van started and they drove out of there. That is how it operates in those third world countries.

I do not know if probably most of you have never been to Rio de Janeiro down there but we did a great thing down there with one of the churches years ago and it was with Dr. Benini down there in the largest Baptist church in Rio. Rio without a doubt is probably the most demonic place on the planet. When you fly into Rio there on that mountain, you have the big Christ. You have all seen it, big statue of Christ, probably 200 feet high. You can see it from everywhere, outstretched arms. Of course it is not Christ, it is the Antichrist, but to them it is Christ. It is the most pagan, most godless, most demonic place maybe outside of New Orleans. We went in there at this church and did discipleship and we stayed up in a hotel up on a hill. Word got around that we

were here, Christians doing this, and every night if you would go out on your balcony, you had the hotel was up here, kind of had a road that curved around going down to an open area and then you took another road down here. You were higher, but there was an open area there. Every night you could see the Satanists with their candles down where they were staying, trying to put their evil spirits on us. I would get up and run in the morning and run down through there and there would be dead chickens. It was incredible. It is a thing where that is how he attacks in those third world countries through terror, through voodoo, through witch doctors, through the fear of a roaring lion. In America he is an angel of light.

Then he says the ranging bear. I told you in Revelation 13 and in Daniel 7 you find the bear. Bears are territorial. They roam, the word is range, they range, roam back and forth in their territories. So does the devil. Psalm 1 and Job 2 clearly shows you that he has got some territory that he is ranging in. He even tells God that. I showed you, and somebody asked a question in Psalm 104 a couple of Thursday nights ago and I showed you that where he likes to, where he ranges, where he plays has out created a leviathan to play therein, the devil. You would think a big bear, like a 1200 pound bear, you would think that you could get away from one of them. You cannot. I always feel sorry for the bears when they have to put them down on Yellowstone because some stupid tourist wound down the window to give him a fig bar. He decided that your arm was probably better than the fig bar. They look cute, they really do. How about this lady the other week that climbed an alliance den. She is over there, you show the view, she is over there saying, "Come on." The lion is looking at her like, "Hmm, should I eat the bottom half or the top half first? I think I will do the bottom half because brainless people really do not taste that well." She is there pretending that this lion is okay. I know they look cute. You think they look like your little cat that you had or they are so cute. You see little bear cubs and you do not see the mom around anywhere. "Oh, cute little bear cubs," and you pick them up. Then mama is right around the bush over here looking for berries and here she comes. She may be 1200 pounds, 1400 pounds would be a big bear. They move really fast. You never know, they will track you down, they will find you. They range through those things. Did you see the picture in the internet last week where these two guys up in Alaska were fishing on a stream in Alaska? A guy takes his picture and right behind them is this huge Kodiak bear sticking his head out right behind. They did not even know he was there. I will tell you, I do not go in the water because of sharks and I do not go in the woods outside Missouri because of bears. I even saw a bear down in southern Missouri. It will not be long, I will not be going out of my house. The devil operates that way. He moves freely back and forth to do whatever he wants to do.

Now look at the last part of Proverbs 28:15. "Poor people that are oppressed" will be the Jews again in the tribulation period, doctrinally. Inspirationally, it will be anybody who will oppress God's people by taking the truth from them and making them poor spiritually. When you go to Matthew 5:10 you will see that the nation of Israel, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." So it is definitely talking about Israel in a doctrinal sense, but inspirationally, it is anybody. Happens all the time. People will take the truth from you which are the true riches which is the key to your fellowship, the key to your joy, the key to your happiness. By doing that they make you poor by taking the very book that God gave you out of your hands.

SEC: The Danger of Covetousness and the Path to True Happiness

Then he says in Proverbs 28:16:

Proverbs 28:16

The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

Now in Proverbs 28:16 he gives us a contrast and Proverbs does this a lot. The Bible does it a lot. We have a contrast. In doctrine it is the Antichrist and someone who oppresses the poor and then somebody who hates covetousness. There is a contrast between two people here. Contrast between the two words. Anybody who oppresses people has a desire to control people. They desire to control them because they want what they have. They oppress them to get what they want and take advantage of them. Many times they want more in their life than God they think that God gives them. So they oppress people to get what they want and take advantage of them. In time covetousness will not only turn your heart from God. This is the point as it all ties together. Covetousness will not only turn your heart from God but covetousness will harden your heart to God because you get so caught up in everything that you want. You do not see the very people that God gave you that you are supposed to be there for, now you look at them being there for you. This happens in churches a lot. When you wind up oppressing the people to get what you want instead of being satisfied with what you have and helping the people that God gave you. It is just that simple.

Then he says, "but the man who hateth covetousness God will prolong his days." That is a great verse. In the Old Testament longevity of life came from doing what was right with God. The principle carries over to the New Testament in many cases. That you want to live the best life and the longest life and the happiest life you can. Do what Solomon the wisest man that ever lived said in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes 12 when he says, "Here is the whole duty of man. Fear God and keep his commandments." That will work for you.

So there are three great verses with great principles here on life and how to be happy. Everybody wants to be happy. How it goes back to our heart attitude toward God. Happiness will start with joy. Joy will then have to come from fellowship. Fellowship will have to come from fearing God. Then that will come from fellowship and relationship with God walking with Him. How it all goes back to our heart attitude.

Psalm 119, the greatest chapter in all the Bible on how to love God. There are 176 verses in it and every one of them deals with a different aspect to the Word of God to you. There are 16 references in those things on our heart together with God's heart, the Word of God and how we prosper and what it will do for us.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

I will say to you on the authority of the Word of God that is probably the single hardest thing for a child of God to do. It does not just happen. You have to work at it. It does not come into your life where you go to sleep after five, six years of being saved and God brings the angels down with a big dump truck of spiritual dust and puts your roof back and while you sleep it just tingles all down over you when you wake up spiritual morning. It is something you have got to work at. It is things you have got to get out of your world. It is things that you have got to recognize about yourself that have to go. It is things about you that you have to change that if you do not change you will be like the person in Deuteronomy. You will bless yourself. You will go on with life and you will just think that everything is fine till you get to the judgment seat of Christ.

The greatest aspect that you and I have in our relationship with God is that every day of our life, every moment of our life, every second of our life, the loving one, all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul and the other verse over there in the judgment says adds to it in all of thy strength because that is what it is going to take. Hardest thing you will ever do. Greatest thing you will ever do. It is something that you will never master. It is something that you will never get to the place in your life where you say, "Hey, I got it made." It will be something that you will have to redefine, work at, keep before you and never lose sight of the rest of your Christian life. But the blessings of happiness through joy, through fellowship, through fearing, through walking will give you the true happiness of life and give you the fruit, the true riches that the world will never get. That is what this church tries to do for you. Everything we do we do based on the Bible. I was telling you Thursday night when somebody asked a question I follow the models in the Bible. I do not make up my own deals. I do not think that I have any brains that I can ever improve on what God did. I just follow the models. I follow the models of everything. When I teach you the Bible or work with you or help you or just give you the models it is the simplest way to live your life with God. Everything else it just gets really complicated. There is enough complication and as I said last week in 1 Corinthians 11 that the devil has tried to destroy the church from the simplicity that is in Christ. Our goal is to keep that simplicity right here in front of you.