

Proverbs 28:26

Sunday 11/10/2019

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want us to turn back to Proverbs chapter 28. You remember last week we went through Proverbs 28:24-25. We've been looking at a great set of principles for all of us, no question about it, but especially for you young parents who are just now starting your families. I feel a tremendous responsibility to help you and to help you understand all that needs to be done and put in order. My role is to try to help you any way I can.

At the same time, this is always for the older parents who are experiencing issues with your kids. We talked about the reasons for that last week, and I know that there's always something you can do. Then for our kids themselves that are sitting in this room today, and all the issues that you bring into the family simply because of the fact that you won't honor the fifth commandment. That is the only commandment with a promise, and the promise is God will kill you if you don't do what's right with your parents. We talked about how kids will rob parents of that honor that God intended to be in the family.

I showed you over the last couple of weeks how God's plan, not only in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament, was through families. The continuation of families having kids, raising them up, training them up, and those grandkids on down the line of consistency through generations of serving the Lord. I laid out the parents' rule, and I talked about the fact that even though your child may rob you of your honor that God intended for you to have, you need to understand that the Bible talks about not as fathers to provoke your children or to get angry with them. At the end of the day, and I understand there's always something we can do, and we would certainly do whatever we can do, but the parents need to understand that if they steal the honor and glory that is to you by God, it's because you taught them how to steal ownership.

There is an absolute, to you young fathers, I cannot impress upon you the absolute, tremendous responsibility of being a father. Let me tell you something, and some of this we talked about Thursday night because one of the questions was asked that we have been dealing with here, and I went ahead and answered it, fully knowing that we talked about some of it today. Just having a kid does not make you a father any more than buying a race car makes you NASCAR qualified. A father is a biblical concept. It's much like marriage. People get married today and they think that marriage is something that the world came up with, right around the end of the Neanderthal period, where the guy used to hit a woman in the head with his club and drag her into his cave, which is not a bad idea by the way. We got civilized, and we decided now that we were going to make it civilized, we were going to put together something called marriage. That's not true. Marriage is something that God designed. I don't care that the world stole it and uses it. It's something that has a biblical process to it that God intended for it to be enacted biblically.

Just like marriage, being a father or a mother is a biblical concept. It's not somebody sat back and said, "Well, when somebody gets married, and then they have kids, he's a father and she's a mother." No, no, it's just as biblical in its concept as marriage is. It's based on God the Father and His relationship with the Father or the Dad through His Son, and you having that example in your life. God knew, we talked about this last week, the good news last week and the bad news. You hear the old thing, "I got some good news and the bad news." Well, here's the good news: no

matter what scenario, because no matter what I say, I don't want to paint a bleak picture that there isn't always something you can do. The good news is no matter what scenario you find yourself in, whether you're a young father today or a parent or middle age or old, whatever the case may be, no matter what scenario you find yourself in, there's always biblically something that you can do. Now, that's the good news. But the bad news is that most fathers will not do what needs to be done. God gets involved, and it just goes downhill from there.

I'm not talking about something I don't understand because I've dealt with it for most of my ministry. As always, after last week, and I appreciate this, probably seven or eight fathers came to me and said, "Hey, Bob, I really want you to help me be better at what I'm doing." I've always found it amazing. Almost every one, in fact, every one of those guys that came to me were already in a really good biblical program and doing what they needed to do. But you preach a sermon, any sermon, and the people who really don't—I don't mean this in a bad way—the people who really don't need the sermon because they're doing the best they can will always come to want to do better. The people that really need to hear a sermon never do anything with it. It just works that way. That's normal. It's one of those things where you just keep, in the ministry, you just keep putting out truth, manifestation of truth, principles in the Bible.

I. The Importance of Biblical Principles

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

We know that Proverbs is about a wise man and a foolish man. We know that principles in the Bible will lead us to wisdom, God's wisdom, which will lead us to understanding. We also know from time's past that understanding is your ability to see any situation and see it from God's standpoint, therefore dealing with it as God would deal with it. Wisdom of understanding will only come in our lives through principles. I've said this many, many times, but it bears repeating, especially where we're at today with our families and all the babies that are being born and will continue to be born, and you're raising your kids up and all that stuff. In the Bible, you will find a set of principles for every issue in life that you're going to face. This is why, and you're going to hear this several times today, this is why in everything I do, I am always pushing biblical principles.

If you're looking for a spouse and you're a young person, there's biblical principles that you follow to find the right one. If you're a husband, there's biblical principles that you must follow within that rule to be a successful husband. Same thing for a wife. The decisions that you make in life. I get people all the time saying, "Hey Bob, I'm faced with a new job and I don't really know what to do. Should I take it or should I not take it?" I had a kid one time years ago where he called me up, not in this church, he called me up and he says, "Hey Bob, I just want you to know I'm moving to St. Louis. I took a new job." I said, "Oh," and he's a good kid. I said, "Oh really?" He says, "Yeah," he says, "I prayed about it and God told me that that's what I needed to do." When somebody says something to me, my ears go up. I don't have very big ears, so you have to look real close. My ears perk up. My next question was, "Would you tell me how that He told you to do that?" He says, "Yeah," he says, "I didn't know what to do. I prayed about it." He

said, "So I put my house on the market and I told God that if He wanted me to go to sell the house and if He didn't want me to go, not to sell the house." He said that like he had no clue that the devil hadn't just got his realtor's license. So that's not how you make a decision. You think the devil can't sell your house? You got to have something more exact than that. It's just that simple.

It's a thing where there's a set of principles that even in the mundane things of life that you need to follow because life is about choices, folks. You don't get to make too many bad choices that it really screws up the rest of your life. So you got to have something that's absolute, not a realtor. You got to have something that's more sure than that. You're going to find that there's principles in there for you to follow with the people you associate around your life. Life boils down to I got about six things that I preach that I've learned in almost 69 years of life and almost 50 years of ministry. I got like six things that are absolute that I learned. If somebody would say, "What have you learned all your life?" I could boil it down to these six things. You know what the first two are? The first two is that life is about choices. And the second one is we are who we associate with. It's just that simple.

There's a set of principles that will show you how to find the right church. You'll hear guys on a newspaper go to the church of your choice. Don't ever do that. You want to go to the church of God's choice. There's principles about being a father, principles about being a mother, principles about being a pastor you have to follow. There's principles in the Bible about being a deacon. And certainly there's principle in the Bible in training up your children. I learned early in my ministry how important principles that you put together in sections for life's issues really were. That's because also along with that I've seen every issue in our lives that I've dealt with people. And in my own life too. I've seen every issue of strife, trouble, heartache, tragedy, tumult, turmoil in our lives will simply go back to the violation of biblical principles that we should have followed but we didn't.

In every aspect of my ministry and dealing with people I will use these sets of principles. I always do two things when I start to work with somebody, and I've just, it's proven itself out in my world that this is what I need to do.

1. The first thing I do is I document everything which is said. I document everything that they say they're going to do and then I document everything that we decided we're going to do.
2. The second thing I do is I give them a plan, and through that plan, that plan will always be based on biblical principles. It won't be Bob's home spun theology that my grandma taught me this is how you do it. We will always go to the Bible. We will always find the set of principles that will work in your scenario and situation and that's how we will move toward solving the problem because principles are an incredible thing.

Principles will never fail. Your way of doing things will fail. Principles will never fail. Our way of doing things sometimes constitute us lying about it. Principles will never lie. Principles will do something that nothing else in this world will do. It will hold us accountable. Principles will expose rather we're doing right or what we're doing wrong. For me in dealing with people, I never get my emotions involved because once you get your emotions involved then you're in trouble yourself and then you have a tendency to shortcut principles because your emotions. I

never allow my emotions to get involved. I just follow the principles. It doesn't matter if you're my best friend or you're my worst friend. It doesn't matter if you're my worst enemy. It doesn't matter to me. I just follow the principles. That verse goes back like we talked about a couple of weeks when it comes to God and the Bible and certainly principles. There is no respect for persons and you have to follow the biblical principles and because the Christian life needs to be and the Christian life should be a principled life.

I operate my ministry on roughly 250 or so. I mean, major principles that I have cataloged and that I use. There's many more in the Bible, probably hundreds and maybe thousands in the Bible for what it is. But I use the major ones in dealing with people. Principles are like the white lines on the road. They keep you between the white lines so to speak. I use them in sets because every situation or circumstance that somebody is going to get into there will be a set of principles. My principles that I always use they'll always first of all define the issues that I'm dealing with. The second thing it will do it will show me the context of the issues that I'm dealing with. What I really got here. Then it will show me how to fix the particular issue and then it will show me how I can give them a way to keep that issue fixed that it doesn't revert back to what it was.

Thursday night somebody asked a question about the five things you can do to regain your child when you lose them. I've also given you before that last week the five stages of training up your children. Those are sets of principles. Those are sets of principles that you use and then you follow and you apply. I have through my whole ministry I've had ones that I never deviate from. I never not follow. I've taught many of this too. We have what we call the people ministry here and the people ministry. I started a number of years ago and because I needed people to help me in dealing with problems with people. But I just didn't want somebody that just did it on their own. I know I've taught biblical counseling many many times this past but even in that I've grown up a lot from some of that. I wanted this to be nothing but biblical principles. So we started in Genesis. We worked our way through I think we're up into the minor prophets now. I simply went through the Bible with them some 80, 90 people and we simply looked at every principle in the Bible and how it relates to it. And they're invaluable. Because you don't always know what you're dealing with. And people will lie to you. People will not always tell you the truth. And so you have to have something that's absolute because I don't know the circumstances in this situation.

II. Biblical Principles in Action

One of the greatest ones that I use is found in 1 Kings 3, which if you've been in people ministry you understand it's called the Solomon principle. Where the two harlots came to Solomon and claimed that the baby was theirs and went through that story. Solomon didn't know who it was. He didn't know who the baby was. So Solomon calls for a sword and says, "Hey, just cut the baby in half and you take your half and you take your half and that will solve the problem." I looked at that years ago and thought that's really a dumb thing to do. But now that I look at it with a little more understanding that was one of the smartest things he could have ever done. Because he called for a sword in the Bible the sword's a picture of the word of God. And he was going to cut that baby in half. Now I guarantee you he probably wasn't going to do that. But he

knew he didn't have because he knew that the real mother would rather have that baby go with a woman that was not her mother than to see her child. My point is this. The sword will always produce who's lying. Because it works through principles.

You have the prodigal son principle out of Luke chapter 19. You have the Lazarus principle out of John chapter 11. You have the Jacob principle out of Genesis chapter 27. That's one of the greatest sets of principles in the Bible about people trying to deceive somebody or deception. You learn those principles and you hardly will ever get deceived. Somebody asked one time, "Ever get fooled by people?" Certainly I do. But I will tell you this. I only get fooled by people when I quit using the principles myself. You got to stay with the principles. You have the Joseph principle back in Genesis the last part. You have in 2 Samuel 5 the principles on breaking satanic strongholds. You have in 2 Kings 6 the principles on the inside of a spiritual warfare. People get depressed today. Cross people. I don't know what God's people get depressed about when you got the Lord Jesus Christ living inside you. But they do. The principles of that in 1 Kings chapter 18. We talked Thursday night and this is where it went. I talked last week about the Zacchaeus principle out of Luke chapter 19 and somebody Thursday night Jeffrey did. They asked about the Zacchaeus principle. So we went through that and talked about it. Then I brought in the one in Luke chapter 8 and showed you how they go together. How to heal your family. In Judges chapter 11. Father if you're a new father, mid-line father, whatever. I'm going to tell you something. The greatest story in the Bible to keep a father straight is in Judges chapter 11 and it's the Jephthah principle. Without a doubt the greatest story that every dad ought to have written someplace out when he reads it probably every three or four months. Some cases every week.

In dealing with cults, I mean it's all principles. I don't care. You're dealing with cults. Dealing with Charismatics. You deal with Calvinists. You deal with Mormons. You deal with Jehovah Witnesses. It all goes back to the Elijah principle in 1 Kings chapter 18. All cults may be different in what they approach things on but you deal with all cults the same way and you never deviate from the principles. And when you do then you get beat up. I gave you in Leviticus 13 about sin in the home and showed you the leprosy principle. In the book of Philippians you have nine things, nine principles that will give you an ask. If you didn't have anything else in the Bible. If you had these nine principles you could live a balanced successful profitable Christian life. We have principles dealing on bitterness in Hebrews chapter 12. We have the Gideon principle back in the Old Testament where Gideon was a guy who he looks like he's a great spiritual guy but he's got some real issues and he can't he doesn't walk by faith in any way shape or form and yet he's used in churches and Sunday school lessons as a great man of God. You read the end of his life he wound up in Baal worship and there's a reason for it and on and on it goes. It's simply about taking the Bible and dividing it up into sections that deal with life's issues and that's as I said what we do that's people ministry 101 that's what we do.

Then we looked at when a proud heart standeth stirs up strife and we talked about that and becomes a companion of a destroyer. We talked about all of that and we talked about the fatness of our soul being spiritually enlarged as we grow spiritually and we talked about how fat in the Bible is always connected with sacrifices and how that all fits in spiritually.

III. The Innocence of Children and Parental Responsibility

Now last week and this week will go together, and so I'm spending a little time here building a bridge between the two so we can build on today and just taking out of last week and building a little base here that we can work on to add to it today. Just a couple of things. First of all, your children, and we talked about this Thursday night, your children, and I want you to understand this, especially your young parents, your children will start out in life in innocence. God did it that way for a reason, and you'll have that child in innocence from the time that they're born up till they hit the age of accountability, which I know every child is different, let's just say it's seven or eight years of age. God did it that way so the parents would have absolutely, listen to me, in the fundamental first seven years of your child's life, absolutely no opposition from the world or the devil, absolutely none. They're in innocence, and they will believe whoever is the mitigating factor in their life, for the most part that should be the parent. A parent at that time has a hundred percent control of every aspect of that child's life.

Psalms 127:4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

That first seven or eight years you have absolute a hundred percent control without any opposition from the world, the flesh, or the devil in that child's life. The second thing, through your relationship with God as a husband and wife, you show them through your marriage and through your life what their relationship with God will be as they get older because in the Bible in Ephesians chapter 5 he says, "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church," and he talks about this is a great mystery, marriage, this is a great mystery, but what does he say, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church." When your child is in innocence in those first five, six, seven years, they don't understand God, they don't understand your Bible, they don't understand the great principles. So God made it a way that they would have through association the second greatest picture of a relationship that they should have with Christ through the relationship of mom and dad in marriage, husbands as a type of Christ, the women as a type of church. That's why back in Genesis when Adam and Eve was the first marriage in the Bible, that's where it started, he's a type of Christ and she's a type of the church. Paul uses that analogy throughout all of his writings. That's the great principle of Proverbs 22:6.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Why? Because the parent should have recognized that for the first seven or eight years that child was completely theirs. God fixed it that were totally completely in innocence, and that's why we cannot blame our losing our children on somebody else. It was they were given to you in that mindset, and when that innocent goes, as Romans chapter 7 says that it does, and it certainly will, then God was already been established for what seven, eight, maybe nine years, maybe longer, but you had all of that time to build the foundation in their life through everything that you have in your own relationship with God as an individual Christian within your marriage and everything that you have now you have you have exposed them to.

The Amish are a great example of this, and I don't mean to tell you that the Amish are doing what's right. Amish people are about as far out on the planet, and we all look at them and we all chuckle. We're driving our cars down the road, and they're still driving their little horse and buggies. They still make their own clothes. I preached one time outside of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania at a revival right in the middle of Amish country, and I was running in the morning, and I loved Amish country. They are they they are somebody who wants to completely stay away from the world. The guy I was staying with was an Amish, it was a Baptist Church, but he ran a car dealership, and all the Amish people would come in because there is a sect of Amish that you can drive a car, and so they would come in and buy a car, but then they had to take it to the pastor, and he had to de-world it. No, no, he had to take the chrome off of it. They, and I always thought it was absolutely ridiculous, you take all the outside stuff and makes it look worldly, but it runs on a systematic million-dollar computer system, it's under the hood someplace, and that's okay. It's all a farce.

I'm running down this farm road one day, and I see this Amish guy out there feeding his cows, and I stopped, and I thought I said, "Hey, I'm a pastor, and I'm preaching up here," and I said, "I've always been just interested in Amish and in the way that you live your lifestyle." I said, "You know, I understand the Bible talks about separation," and I mean they make their own clothes, they all wear, notice they all wear straw hats, they don't have buttons, they have hooks and eyes. I mean it's an incredible society. I said, and he didn't have a car, he had a horse a buggy, and I, and he's, and I, and I said, "This is how they get around." I said, "You live pretty much with nothing in the world," and he said, "That's correct." And he's a very nice guy, had to wear the little beards, and they're all named Yoder. I mean, they're all connected someplace, just like living in Arkansas, you know, they never solved a murder in Arkansas because everybody's got the same DNA and nobody's got any teeth. That's the way the Amish are.

I asked him, I said, "What do you do if you have an, I said, 'You have a phone in your house?'" And he said, "I do not have a phone in my house." But I had already noticed phone lines going into the barn. And I said, "Is there, oh, we have a phone in the barn." You see, in his mindset, if he didn't have a phone going into his house, God is pleased, but as long as it's going into the barn, I guess the cows were ordering stuff. I don't know, but I thought to myself, that's the hypocrisy of all this. But I will say this, when they raise their kids, and they got a lot of problems with their kid, don't think just because, you know, I had a friend, Jim Lake, he worked in a hospital for years and years before he was an orderly, and he would, we would laugh about the Amish people that would come in there, and they'd bring their some of the girls in that broke a leg or whatever, and they're always wearing those long dresses and the socks up to here. And he would laugh, and he said, "What's so funny?" He said, "Well, we had an Amish gal come in, and by the time he got all her gowns off and clothes and her socks off, they had a broken leg." And I'm saying, "Okay, how'd that go?" And he was laughing, we laughing, I was just because she had bikini tan lines underneath her. I mean, that's the way it goes, it's crazy. But their lifestyle is a culture that separates them from the world, and they're wrong. I mean, their whole system is non-biblical. Now there was a time obviously in church history when the Amish were pretty much straight as the Baptist, but they all fell apart. My point is simply this, they isolate their kids from the world, and that'll never work. You as a Bible believer in those seven innocent years, you

insulate your kids from the world, that's the difference, and it's an incredible thing. When that innocent goes, then you have a foundation.

IV. Taking Ownership of Parental Mistakes

The next thing I want to lay down, it's a simple fact that your children today are clearly what we have made them to be. They're either a vessel of honor to God or they're a vessel of dishonor to God. It's just that simple. There is no middle ground with it. The next thing, so if you find yourself today in that situation, the number one thing you don't want to do is you don't want to blame them. I know it can be hard not to because they can cause you some real problems, but I'm also telling you in a biblical format, you'll never fix the issue until you take ownership of the issue. You have to do that.

Let me make it even more simple for you, and as a new young parent, you have got to see this. I've seen parents all their lives, they have violated every principle of God that there was, made every mistake there was, and it's a thing where at some point in their life they either get saved, praise the Lord, or they turn it around for what they are saved, praise the Lord, and now they start to have issues with their children. The thing that they don't seem to get is the fact that your children are dishonoring you because all your life up to that point you dishonored God and you lost that opportunity for them. Now praise the Lord, I mean we all learn from our mistakes, and I am the last guy on the planet that would ever castigate anybody for whatever problems you have in your life because we all have them, and please don't misread this as somebody who's being judgmental, I am not. But what I am saying is at some point in our life, the third thing in my six things of what I have learned in life, the third thing would be simply learn from your mistakes. If you don't learn from your mistakes then you're going to keep making them all through your life. You'll never fix your children or be able to hold them accountable to you. First fix the real the root problem, and that is us as the parents.

We all as parents, we want our kids to be accountable to us, and I understand that, but I'm going to tell you something else, you as a father, you will never, never get your kids to be accountable to you till you first make yourself accountable to them. It's just like being a pastor. I want to hold you to a standard of accountability, but I expect you to hold me to one. Pastors who stand up and want to hold you accountable but won't make themselves accountable to the people, you're headed for some problems. As a family, you want your kids to be accountable to you, but the only way you accomplish is that is through the model of you being accountable to them. I understand that's something on a basis needs to be explained, but in the concept is where it's at.

V. Trusting in One's Own Heart is Foolish

Now laying that foundation down, and like I said last week was part one, look at it that way, and this week is part two. We will take a look at just verse 26 today, and we'll try to put these two together.

Proverbs 28:26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

Now again, let me just say this to you, this is the general truth, obviously it can apply to anybody across the board, that's just one of those standard principles. But when we look at it in the context in particular here, which is what we want to do today, it will be the man of last week in two scenarios:

3. The child who is rebellious.
4. The parent who trained them in the rebellion.

Rebellious children only come from rebellious parents. When I'm saying rebellion, I'm not saying parents out murdering, killing people and doing all kinds of worldly things. A lot of the rebellion is simply nice, very nice people, very nice people who don't smoke, don't drink, don't go with the world as the old saying is, don't smoke, drink or chew or don't go with girls to do. It's that thing where they're very nice people. The problem is they just violated their own principles and do their own thing in a nice way. Of course now this verse is very clear that what it's saying it's simply saying that if a man is going to walk wisely he cannot trust in his own heart. Now you would think that everybody would know that but we don't. If this verse is true, and it certainly is, then the whole history of man will be a history of a fallen creation falling with own heart that has put not only families in jeopardy but put countries in the whole and put the whole world in a state that it's in.

Men being self-deluded, men being self-deceived, men hypnotizing themselves that they're better than they really are, men self-justify, and I'm using men here but you know how I'm using it, it's everybody. A man trusting in his own feelings and his own emotions, a man who trust his in a wish, "I'm going to, I want to do this and I think, you know, I have, I have the way to do this," his own impulses, his, we like to call it his gut feeling, certainly his own motives, trusting his own intentions, and most certainly his idea of life and everything connected with it. His idea of marriage, his idea of his family, his idea is a role of a father, her idea is a role of a mother, his idea is a role of a husband, her idea is a role of a wife, all of it without one biblical principle involved in it, just because you're following your own heart.

Here's what we do as human nature. We want something or we want out of something, and so when the biblical principles would go contrary to what we want to do, we simply put those aside and then follow our own heart, follow what we want to do because at the end of the day we don't want to bring the Bible in because it would stop us from doing what we wanted to do. I can't say it enough, and I'll probably die saying it, learning and cataloging and following the principles the Bible says that when you don't walk after your own heart and you walk after the things of God you'll get delivered. What you'll get delivered from by the learning and cataloging the principles is being a fool and making a mess out of your life because cataloging them will form for you the principles of life, the principles of life that God so clearly has provided for us.

I said this Thursday night, it's like you and me going to the library and it's a situation where you want to get a how-to book. You've got to fix something in your house. Usually you don't have to go to the library more. I'll tell you one of the great things about the internet is on YouTube is the the fix it things that they have on there. If you want to set a mousetrap to catch mice, there's one on there to show you how to do it. I mean, I am not a very good fix it guy, but believe it or not, I

know you're going to find it's hard to believe, there's some major things that I have done simply because I had a YouTube video that showed me how to do it. Now I admit it's a little hard holding a hammer in one hand and the computer in this one, but it can be done, trust me. I think some of those things are incredible. I mean, it's a thing where they're instruction videos, and you know that's what principles do. Principles will show you how to get it fixed because the guy doing the video is an expert at it, and I'm obviously not. In the Bible, the principles are given by the expert, God Almighty, and we are certainly not.

It's like a lawyer. He has a case that he has to try, and obviously every case is different, but he goes to either his own law library or goes to a law bar at law everybody where they have in this city and on the on just miles and miles of law books. He knows what his case is. He knows he has a certain statutes he has to look at. He has to also want to look at other cases to see what the how they settled it that that may set a precedent that he has to follow. So he'll get a big old table and he'll get all these law books out and he'll sit there for hours. He'll get this statute, he'll get that statute, he'll get this example, and when he's done and puts all the books back, he now has everything that he needs in his mind to try that case to be successful in it. But he didn't come up with it on his own. "Well, you know what, I don't like this guy anyhow and I he's a crook and he's a drug addict and he does this and he does that." That doesn't hold up in court. You have to go through a principled legal system by which you find established legal principled law that will apply to your case. That's what we have to do with the Bible. The principles that I give you, you should be cataloging and putting into a library for yourself that you can use them that whenever you get and you face a circumstance or a situation, whenever there's something that you have to deal with, you simply go to your Bible and pull out the principles that you need for whatever given situation that you may find yourself in.

The man who walks wisely is talked about throughout the Bible. He's clearly the man of Ecclesiastes 10:12.

Ecclesiastes 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

He's most certainly the man of Ecclesiastes 12:9-11, who incidentally is called the preacher because he finds acceptable words. That's an interesting phrase because when you have the principles and wisdom, you won't just say some of the stupid things that's on your heart. The principles, the acceptable words, and the gracious words will override the anger words or the fleshly words or your own spirit of just who wants to say because somebody has angered you. So the preacher here who follows wisdom, he finds acceptable words. He finds the way to deal with any scenario that will be acceptable, and I'm not talking about acceptable to the person, I'm talking about acceptable to God in his dealing.

Ecclesiastes 12:9-11 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

It talks about a man who teaches his people knowledge. It talks about that this guy, oh I love this one, he sets in order many proverbs. You know what that is? It's exactly what I'm doing for you today. He takes the principles found in the word of God and he puts them in workable scenarios in order that we may be able to use them. It says in that passage that his words which are acceptable, his words that are gracious, but they're like the words of a wise man, his words are like nails. I like that because that's two aspects as far as I'm concerned because sometimes on Sunday morning you need to get nailed. What principles do when you apply them in any given situation, you know what it does? It nails down that situation that it's fixed and fast.

He's like the man in Jeremiah 9:12-23, who he declares what God says. He's like the wise man in Psalms 119:89.

Psalms 119:89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

He has a final authority, and he's certainly like the wise man found in Matthew 7:24.

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Who hears the word of God, it is a doer of the word of God, and the Bible says that when the storms come and the sea rages and the wind blows his house stands because his house was built upon a rock, the biblical principles.

VI. The Foolishness of Trusting One's Own Heart

In contrast to that, when a man trusts in his own heart, you'll find that he's a fool in five areas. Five in the Bible with the number of death, which is usually how it works, either spiritually or physically.

5. First of all, it's the fact that his Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9 that his heart is deceitful of all things and desperately wicked, and he fails to see that, and he trusts that wicked deceitful heart, and it's above all things, it's the worst problem you got.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

6. He's lost sight of the fact that Genesis 6:5 told us that the imagination of man's heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

7. He's lost sight of the fact that in Mark 7:21 the Bible has clearly laid out 13 abominations a man's heart that will defile a man.

Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

8. He's lost sight of the fact that the natural heart is no good and we need a new one, Ezekiel 36:26, in other words, a heart transplant.

Ezekiel 36:26A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

9. He's forgotten the great truth that when we forsake the principles of God, Mark 7:6, then our heart gets far away from God because your heart is what you're trusting in.

Mark 7:6He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

The principles of the word of God are over here, people ministry 101, and in all this and dealing with people, you want to try to help them to be better, that's what we do. But you have to know this, and I mean this with all of my heart, human beings, human nature is one of the most hardest things to deal with because of the fact that people will try to deceive you. Now many, and I need to clarify that, many times truly people really want to do what's better in life, they really do. They'll come in and they'll sit down and they'll say, "Hey, I want to change my life, hey, I want to do this, I'm tired of the way it is," and I get that. I know you always got the ones who you're never going to be able to reach, I'm not talking about that. But you know, you have people who are good people and many times they'll want to, they want to have a better life, honestly they are at that moment in time, they are sick, something's happened, something broke, something ain't working right, and for that short moment of time God's got their attention and they know they need a better life.

Here's the problem, and you need to understand this, this is why I never get angry with people. I know some people go through the roof, you know, they write people off and all that. I write very few people off. You have to have a in a very small parameter about three or four things before I will write you off, and when I write you off for that it's because the Bible clearly says write them off for that. But I never, I never get angry with people. People think that if you don't do what's right and yet that I'm mad at you, I'm not mad at you. I can do anything against me, I'm going home, my dog still loves me, I got plenty to eat, I got a Jeep I can drive around, I got a little black truck I can go where I want, McDonald's, my house is open 24 hours seven days a week, I got it made in the shade. You're not doing right isn't going to affect me, so I'm not mad about it. If you, if you worried about anybody being mad, don't be the preacher, be the Lord Jesus Christ because you're the one you dishonored. You're going to find that that's just the way it works.

Here's the problem, they want to do what's right, they really, I believe, want to change it around, but here's the deal. For years they have deceived themselves. For years they have convinced themselves that they were really not the problem. For years they have developed a pattern and a lifestyle of denial, and all their issues that ever have faced will be somebody else's fault, and their lives have been blamed on everybody else for all the issues that they have. I've seen them where they've been in every church in this city, and you know what, it's always the pastor's fault. When they hit the truth of God's word and now an accountability system that makes them become take ownership of their own life or their families or their problems, they can't do that because the pattern that they have been living for so many years has so ingrained itself in them

that it's hard for them. I've had couples sit in my office where the wife would just blame the husband, and then the wife husband will take 20 minutes and blame the wife, and in reality, I always tell them, "You know what, you can't fix him and you can't fix her. What you only can you fix is yourself. And if the husband will fix what's wrong with him and she'll fix what's wrong with her, trying to fix the other one, the problem will take care of themselves." But you see, they've grown up in a mindset in a marriage for all those years, it's hard, I get it, that's why I don't get mad about it.

It comes down to years after falling in your own heart. So the real key in dealing with people will be the principles that you give them and then helping them establish new patterns in their life that are based on the truth of the word of God, not the false ones that they've tried to follow for all those years. But I'm going to tell you right now that's hard for some people. It doesn't make them a bad person. I'm not standing up here saying, "Well, that person, I don't want to do what's right." I'm not saying that. I've seen them where they were good, decent people that I liked. Of course, I like everybody, but they were, I just saw that one person back there I don't like, but others. I'm not talking about that. They are good people, but they're just really screwed up and following their own heart for so many years, and they won't necessarily get up in the morning and say, "Oh, I'm going to deceive the person that's working with me." It's just as natural as getting up in the morning, human nature will follow a pattern, and when you're dealing with people, you need to learn those patterns.

I never just listened to what a person will say to me, and I would advise you if you're working with people, I mean, I take it with a grain of salt, and I want it to be true, I really do, but I've learned through bitter experience that you never just listen to what a person will say to you because people many times will lie to deceive you because of the pattern they've lived in all their life. I'm not saying that they're getting up in the morning with a plan to deceive you, I'm saying it's their lifestyle all their lives. So I don't necessarily listen to what they say, I watch the patterns. I simply ask myself, "Does what they say line up with a pattern they now have put themselves in?" And you follow the principles in dealing with people, you always need to be one step ahead of them, and you do that through principles and patterns. I call it smarter than the problem, knowing what to look for and knowing what's real and what's phony.

VII. The Jacob Principle and Real Change

Now this falls under the Jacob principle. If you want a passage in the Bible that defines somebody trying to deceive somebody else and lays out a complete art of deception, it's unparalleled in the Bible, it's the Jacob principle. I don't have time to get into all this morning, but you know what Jacob was all about, and he stole the blessing and the birthright from his brother, and that is one of the great, and through a deception. When you lay that whole thing out, and I'm certainly not going to do that this morning, but when you lay that whole thing out, you know what, Jacob didn't have to revert to the deception because Esau would have forfeited that birthright under the biblical principles because of sin, and you already were told that he was a sinful person. So Jacob had it in the bag. It's a picture of you and me as Christians having all the

blessings of God, therefore if we just wait on God and let God do it, but we can't because all our lives we've been scheming and deceiving to get what we want.

Jacob was no patient man, so you know what he did? He went out and shot a deer because he knew his dad loved, loved, loved that venison stew, and so he made him a little pot of chili and put that little stuff in there. Esau was a hairy man, he's a picture of a worldly man, so a man today, not a real man unless you have hair in your chest, you got to be a hairy man. So he puts on this garment, now keep in mind Jacob can't hardly see, he's going blind, and so he's going to deceive him. So he puts on this garment, he makes his little chili, and he wants to his father to bless him, and then he'll steal the blessing because Esau's out there running through the woods, running an Iron Man competition someplace, and he's out there and he's not home. So he brings it in, the old man can't see, tremendous principle, and the old man is about to be deceived, and his eyes were dim. My first rule in dealing with people is never let my eyes go dim. But he comes up there, Jacob, to his daddy, and he says, "Daddy, I'm Esau, and I've got you some of your favorite food here." Now the old man is kind of confused, and he reaches up and he feels the skin that he's got on, and it's hairy. So he says to him, "It feels like Esau, but it sounds like Jacob." How many times have I been in this scenario where somebody has told me the, and the principles are pure, the principles and what the person says and the pattern has to line up. How many times I've been in this situation dealing with people, and it sounds, it sounds like this, but it smells like this. Got to line up. That's one of the greatest principles on not being deceived or how people will deceive you.

Real change in any person's life will come down to you forsaking your own heart. That's where it starts. I talked early how that your heart's no good, you need a heart transplant. You get that new heart the day you got saved. It's just that simple. Where's my buddy Zach at? Where did you sit in, Zach? You got Zach? I won't tell you when you got saved Thursday night. You know what God did up in that office? He gave you a new heart. Gave you a new heart. You now have the ability to be whatever God wants you to be. You're in the right place with the right people with the right pastor. You got the right Bible, and you got everything going for you. All God did, Zach, all He did was rip out that old one and put in a new one. You'll get the medical bill here at 40 end of the month, just give it to your grandma and grandpa, they'll take care of it.

Real change in any person's life will come down to you forsaking your own heart and getting God's heart. That brings up another principle that we deal with called attitude versus action. Action will be what you do, attitude will be your hard attitude about what you do. You see the reason why most people can't really make an effective change in their life because all they do is adjust the action. You see this so many times, and Mary says, "I don't know how many times I've been in a husband and wife situation, she says, 'I'm done, I'm done, I'm done.'" And he'll say, "Oh honey, I'll do what's right, I'll, you know, I'll, I'll fix it up, I'll do everything I need to do." And she says, "Nope, nope, nope." And I'll say, "Well, come on, give him a." He said, "Let me tell you something, Bob, I have been here a hundred times. He'll fix it for three or four weeks or a month, and then he'll go right back to what it was before." You know why? Because all he's doing is changing the action. Changing the action will not last. You want it to last, you have to change the attitude about it. You have to get a right attitude of heart about it. That's the only way

you'll make a lasting change in it. Of course, real change will be about a changed heart, a changed attitude of heart, and that's changing your heart and not just merely changing the action. When you change the, when you change the action and don't mess with the heart, it'll always go back. When you change the attitude first, in time the attitude will always produce the right action, and that's hard for some people. I get it. Not mad at anybody. I'm here to help you, but you need to understand the truth this morning.

That's why many people simply will not make it in a church like ours who have issues, and I feel bad about that. But you know what, I do what Jesus did. You never find where Jesus ever violated one principle so somebody would follow him. He simply laid out the truth, and you got to choose if you want to do it, just do it or not. I realize that sometimes people come in here, and they want to do what's right, they make a stab at it. All of you here who in people ministry have worked with them at some point or the other, and you see it all the time, and they go for a while, and then, you know, it's just like, you know, they just don't make it. That's because life for them has been a self-denial, self-deceiving game to try to stay ahead of God all of their life and get out of the Bible and not follow it and yet make their life happy and successful. There ain't no games here. We follow Ecclesiastes 12:9-11. We use the principles to nail ourselves down, hold ourselves accountable. That's because all through life with pastors and counselors they have only treated the symptoms of the issue, they've never addressed the real problem, and I will not waste time treating your symptoms.

VIII. Addressing the Root Problem, Not Just Symptoms

I remember years and years and years ago, Kelly was just a little baby, and she was sick. You won't remember this Kelly because you had been only born about two years, if you do remember, you're scary, I want you to know that. I remember she was really sick, and she really had a very high temperature. I remember going into her room, and I was praying over the crib there, praying for her, and I reached down and I felt her head was just so hot. Little did I know that she had been smoking crack cocaine, and it had put a reverse reaction to it. I put my hand down on her head, and she was just burning up, and I remember praying, and I said, "Lord," and Lord taught me a great principle through this, I said, "Lord, I said, she's such a little gal, and she's just such a little baby, and I know that sickness is in the world and all those things that are just part of it, but I said, you, you have got to just take care of this fever. I said, she is burning up, and you have got to take care of that fever." And about that moment the Holy Spirit of God spoke to me, and he says, "Son, I'm going to take care of the fever, but I want you to know that the fever is really not the problem. The fever is just a symptom of an infection down inside her body that is the real problem. So I can take away the fever, but if we don't fix the infection, we're not going to really solve anything." And I learned from that, treating the symptoms in your life will never fix nothing. You want to fix it, we got to go after the problem, and that's part of the problem.

I'm not a symptom guy. You go to your favorite pastor, and tell him all your life's troubles and problems, and he'll give you a little spiritual prescription that you take, and he'll pat you on the rear end, and off you go. You go to your counselor, that's your pastor who doesn't do it anymore because he would never go that at the begin with, and so he second farms you out to some

Christian counselor, and he works with you as long as your insurance holds out, and then you're cured suddenly. I never do that. I'm not interested in your symptoms. I know your symptoms too well, and I also know what the real problem is, and we'll deal with the problem and forget the symptoms. You see, it's like attitude and action. When you fix your attitude, the action will take care of itself, and if I fix your problem, your symptoms will go away, and that's how you got to do it. We only do that through principles. You're going to do that through nailing somebody down, making them take ownership of whatever their issues are, and then helping them through that. Most people won't do that. It just takes too much time for them. They'll start to, but just as you know, there's just too much time, there's just too much baggage, there's just tons of life of just living that lifestyle of denial, those patterns in your life, and I'm telling you they're hard to break sometimes. I mean, they'll start to, and then they just fall apart, and just like always at the end of the day, it'll be your fault. We've had people in this church that have come back four or five times, and every time they leave, the next time it's always somebody else's fault that they didn't get what they want from you. I know the people that are working with you give them exactly that was. You see, that is the key. You didn't give them what you want, they wanted, you gave them what you needed to give them. They don't want to be nailed down.

Yet the Bible says in Proverbs 28:26:

Proverbs 28:26 But whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

He's delivered from his own heart, which makes him a fool.

IX. The Bible as Our Book of Regulations

I know you hear me say this all the time, my ministry is simply and clearly built on the word of God, and I know, I know, I know, 100% of the churches in Kansas City would tell you the same thing. The difference is to them it's a Christian catch phrase, it's something they're supposed to say, what their people would expect them to say, but when push comes to shove, there is no biblical principles. You get a little psychology or a little this or a little that, or you get some homespun theology from the pastor, but you'll never get any principles. Most of them don't even have a Bible to start with. It's like the term saved. I don't ask people if they're saved because everybody on planet earth is saved. You see, it becomes a catch-all phrase that everybody uses that the real meaning of it has been lost like problems that people have. So I don't ask them that. I simply ask them, "If you died right now, do you know for sure you'd go to heaven?" You see, that cuts it to the principle. But here to understand totally what I'm saying, you only have to have an issue that needs to be fixed, and you'll see how quickly we'll do it by the book through a principled life.

Today's Veterans Day, and we recognized all the branches and everybody up here in the Navy, true of all military really, all branches really, but I use the Navy because it's my best example. If you're a career officer and you're a good career officer, it's because you're a book man. There's a Navy regulations and code book in every branch of service, but there's a Navy regulations in a code book that they simply call the book, and if you're going to be a naval seaman or you're going to be in the Navy, everybody follows the code book and the regulations. The officers

exercise discipline in those codes and regulations. You violate the regulations, if it's a minor one, you get an article or maybe get a put on report, get extra duty. You do it now when you get an Article 15, you get written up for it, not short of a court martial. You do a big one, disobey order or do whatever you want to do, and it constitutes a breach of regulations that seriously get a court martial from it. A good commander will never deviate from the book because he knows himself he's under the penalty of his losing his command or a court martial depending on if he's in a time of war or not. He's held to and he will hold his subordinates to the highest standard of the naval service based on the regulations that he has been given to follow in the book of Navy regulations, and I mean it just, it's about that thick, and it just covers every aspect of it. In the military, when you walk away from the book, the regulations, especially in war, people die. In Christianity, it's the same thing. We have a book, it has our regulations and principles, and when we walk away from the book spiritually, people die. I've spent my whole Christian life cataloging these principles, and now at 69 years of age, I will spend the rest of my life trying to teach them to anybody who wants to learn them, but most surely we will use them when we fix problems here. Simply, I'm a book man, we do it by the book. I don't care who you are, I don't care how much money you got, I don't know who you think you are, we'll all put our pants on the same way, and when it comes down it's the book.

Years ago, I had a Navy captain, commander of a destroyer, address his men, and he said something I never forgot, and he was a by the book man for sure, and he went on and on and on. In fact, he told him, "I am a book man. If you don't do something outside the book, you better have a hundred reasons why you did it, and I won't accept any of them." He says, "On my ship there's four ways to do something: there's the right way, there's the wrong way, there's your way, and then there's the Navy way, and we will do it the Navy way." I thought about that years and years and years, and I got into the Bible later on and got to grow, we got into ministry, and I thought to myself, you know, that's the way a church ought to be. That's the way this church is. There's only four ways to do something: there's the right way, and then there's the wrong way, and then there's your way and my way, and that's somebody the first three who are following their own heart. The fourth way is the Bible's way, God's absolute principles, His regulations for life.

The Bible says that we're out, we're in a spiritual warfare. Ephesians chapter 6 talks about putting on the whole armor of God, and when Paul wrote that, if you read that passage in there, he's describing a first century Roman soldier who without a doubt in military history, the Roman army was probably the greatest army in the history of the world. Many of the tactics that we use even with our mechanized tanks and our mechanized things go back to the fundamental battle things that they designed and used and conquered the known world rather than any nation, any army anywhere. I know they're depraved and all in hell, I get that, but I'm just telling you from a world standpoint, they were the best military force on the planet, but they also were the best disciplined. Paul looked at that, and I know what he's doing. Paul is looking around him, and he's looking at all the Roman soldiers that have taken over his known world. There isn't a place that you go you wouldn't see centurions or soldiers guarding, soldiers checking things out, roadblocks checking everybody's who you are, where you're going, what you're doing. I know what Paul's thinking, he's writing about this, and he's describing a first century Roman soldier in the structure

of a spiritual Christian because in his mind he's saying this, "If I could get God's people to be as disciplined and structured and dedicated to the things of God as the pagan Roman soldier is to the Roman government, we turn this world around for Christ."

In your life, in my life, it takes exactly those things:

10. It takes self-discipline.
11. It takes self-control.
12. It takes self-denial.
13. It takes a book of regulations and principles that we can never afford to deviate from.

In everything in your life, in my life, there will be a set of absolute biblical principles that will dictate the way you handle it, how you handle it, with whom you handle it, and the way you deal with it, not only in your own personal life but in the circumstances of your endeavors, the people that you deal with in life every day. This is what constitutes whether it's your family, whether you're a child, whether you're a young parent, whether you're a medium parent, whether you're just dealing with the issues of life. This will fix for you and nail down for you a principled life, a life that is based on not following your own heart but a life that is based on the regulations and the principles that you put into your life that your life now is a principled life. Let's hold up there, it'll be done here. Let's have a word of prayer.