

Proverbs 27:2-5

Sunday 5/12/2019

SEC: The Sin of Omission

Last week, we started Proverbs chapter 27. I think it was a great beginning to this chapter with a verse that deals with the number one issue you will run into with not only lost people but saved people too. The whole message was built around the greatest and the worst sin a person could ever commit. When you talk about the worst sin, we think of all the bad things people can do, but in reality, the worst sin man can ever commit is the sin of omission. It is not the things we do, but the things we do not do or the things we put off through procrastination.

For an unsaved man, as we learned last week, it is putting off the day of his salvation, the day he trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior. For a saved man, it is putting off the calling of God in their life. I know that Proverbs 27:1, as it is traditionally taught, and there is nothing wrong with that, is always taught as dealing with an unsaved person. That is generally true, but if you have been in ministry any length of time or you work with people, you know that God's people say no to God probably more than unsaved people do. It seems to be easier once we get saved that we can tell God no. It seems to be easier that once we get salvation and we are safe in the arms of Jesus, then we can tell Him, "No, thanks." That is a phenomenon you will be faced with in dealing with people all your life.

In both cases, as we talked about last week, it is getting more and more of the world than it is getting more and more to the Lord. We looked at two great examples found in the Bible on this: one in Exodus chapter 8 and the other one in Acts chapter 25 and 26. In Exodus chapter 8, we saw Pharaoh and how, up against Moses and Moses delivering him the message of God, he gave the statement that most unsaved people and most saved people do when they are faced with the reality of God in their life, and he said, "I will do it tomorrow."

Then we looked at Acts chapter 25 and 26, and we saw the second great example, King Agrippa. Paul is up against King Agrippa, and he is really putting it to the old boy about what God has done and what God is doing. He does not spare any of the details; he puts it right to him. There again, how many times, I am sure, God's men and women have sat in churches across this country, heard a message that pierced their heart, and they knew what they needed to do, or an unsaved man or woman who knew they were lost and knew they needed God's salvation, but at the end, after the message touched their heart and they knew what they needed to do, they walked out just like King Agrippa and said, "Almost, almost got me, Lord. I almost did what I needed to do." Saved or lost, we find this happening in people's lives today.

SEC: Biblical Principles for Life

A great principle on the reality of life is how we, saved or lost, will in time, once we get to that point, lose all touch with reality. Using the biblical principles in our lives, like we try to teach you here, will bring three absolutely crucial aspects into your life. We talked about it last week.

The biblical principles will give you, first of all, in your life, a perspective of life. It will give you the ability to see the reality of what you are really dealing with, based on all the smoke and

mirrors and all the things that life is cloaked with to hide the real identity of what you are up against. It will give you insight into reality, not just how something appears, but you will see it as it really is.

The second thing, we did not really touch on these last week; I just mentioned them because I knew what I was going to do with this week, is that it will give you position in life. It will show you where you are really at with the Lord and how to position yourself against the world in any given situation you find yourself in. No greater example of that than last week than Paul before the Roman governors and the Roman kings and the priests, and finally King Agrippa. He is in chains; he is going to go to prison, but yet he positioned himself in such an incredible way to take that moment and captivate it for the Lord.

Then, of course, the third thing is your purpose in life. Are you and I fulfilling what God saved us for? The real reality question today for all of this is, what is our purpose in life as a Christian? Is it to amass all the things that we have and forget about the things of God, or is it to forget about all the things that we have and focus on amassing the things of God? The reality of the calling of God in your life. There was never a person, man or woman, who ever got saved that God did not call for something. There would never be a time down through the history of Christianity or history of man that a person got saved that God did not call them for something to do. That has never been the problem. The problem is, man has never picked up the phone. He will not answer the call.

Losing these three areas of your Christian life will result, obviously, in a disaster in your own personal life and, very frankly, in the life of your family or, if you are a pastor, in your church. We have talked about that unbreakable chain of strongholds that go through a man's life or his family or generations of a family that in time will set them adrift from the Word of God and the reality of life into this great hodgepodge of mush called the sea of life.

Today, we are going to look at the next couple of verses, four exactly: verses 2, 3, 4, and 5. We are going to talk about this, and we are going to look at this, and I think there will be some great principles here, and we will try to get some things across and try to help you in your own personal relationship with the Lord.

SEC: The Danger of Self-Praise

Now let us start in verse 2.

Proverbs 27:2

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Doctrinally, as we look at this first verse here, this will be a reference to the Antichrist. There is no question about that. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, there is a whole discourse there about him going into the Holy of Holies, sitting down and claiming to be God. In verse 11, it is very clear that this is what he does. He is declaring to everybody how great he is and how he is going to run the world.

Yet, as you look at that in an inspirational application, if there ever was a verse that is needed today with God's people, it will be this verse. I know that, again, it goes without saying that all these apply to an unsaved man. I get that. The only problem I have with that today is we probably do not have any unsaved people here today. You already know that. So I would rather come after you because this all fits to us as God's people. So I want to talk about that.

We talked about this last week, how coming to church is a reality check for all of us. We go through the week. We hobnob in just the normal course of life with unsaved people. We have to deal with unpleasant circumstances. It is a thing where you just get out into the world just because you have to work in it. You live in it. If you are not careful and you are not focused on it, it is easy to let that world rub off on you. When you come to church on Thursday night or you come to church on Sunday morning, you need to get clean. If you have not gotten clean before you got here, which is what you should have done, then it is okay, I will wash you good this morning. No problem. Because that is what the Word of God does.

Churches are many things on many levels. I get it. But I want to tell you, the number one purpose of the church for you and for me is our reality check. When you come here, I cannot speak for every church out there, but when you come here, you leave with a reality check. I told you last week, that is why some people in churches, they only go once every four or five weeks. That is all the reality check they can stand. You guys are here every week. There is seriously something wrong with you. For you to take the—but you know what the problem is? You like a reality check. To you, your relationship with God and the Word of God is the most important thing. You know what the world will do to you. If it has not already done it to you at some point in your life, you have seen it in the lives of others. You do not want that to happen to you. So, like it or not, we all have to get a reality check.

A reality check is a terrible thing to be faced with. Nobody wants to deal with reality. We all like living in Egypt, a type of the world, and we all like that little house on the river of denial.

SEC: Christ's Character and Our Reality

Christ had three basic characteristic qualities. I want to start with this, and then I am going to work from here. What I want to do is I want to show all of us today, me included, how far we are from what we really think we are with God. We all just need a little—I need one today. I need one. You need one. I guarantee if I need one, you need one. I dare you, if I need one and you do not need one, you are still going to get one.

There were three, and here again, when you study the Lord Jesus Christ, there are so many different levels. But fundamentally, reality-wise, there were three basic characteristics of Christ that He had, or really four.

1. The first one was the fact that He was a very humble individual. Humility was He—there were times when He healed people, and He told them not to go tell them that He did it. He was very humble in His approach to things. He did not come down and kick the door in of Israel. He came as a common man and was going to work His way through to the Messiahship.

Philippians 2:7

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

You do not see Him going around lauding the fact that He was God's Son. You do not see Him going around putting out on the side of His big bus as He made His tour through Jerusalem, "God's Son is here. The deity has finally showed up." He did not do that. He made Himself of no reputation.

2. The Bible says also in Philippians chapter 2 verse 7 that even though He was made in the likeness of men, He took the form of a servant.

Those three character qualities are the greatest character qualities that make us love Him. We love Him because He was humble in everything that He did. We love Him because He made Himself of no reputation, and we love Him because He made Himself a servant.

3. Yet the fourth thing that I want you to see, in spite of all of that, He was still a King.

That is quite a statement. You do not find many kings today who are humble. You do not find many kings today that do not make themselves of a great reputation, and you certainly do not find many kings or presidents who take the form of a servant. But the reality of that is, you do not find many Christians that way either. The real, real, real reality of that, you do not find many pastors that way either.

We, as God's people, want to skip the first three and go straight into the kingship. But there is a process in life, the Christian life. When it talks about the fact that we need to be humble in what we do, we need to work at no reputation for what we do, and we need to have the attitude of heart of a servant. Later in the millennium, we get the kingship, Romans chapter 8. But right now in this life, John chapter 3 verse 30 is the rule of the day.

John 3:30

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Clint Eastwood is a great actor. Everybody—I have never met anybody that did not like Clint Eastwood movies. You may not like, but just the way he portrays himself. He is a tough guy. He is always usually on the side of right, and he has starred in many action-packed movies for many years. But I think he is best known to anybody for his Dirty Harry series. When they are on, I watch them. I saw them when they came out years—they were in the 70s, man. He was a really young dude back then.

The thing I like about it, and I guess it is true of all movies, is the fact that they always take something and build the whole movie around it. Dirty Harry movies put Smith and Wesson .44 Magnums on the Christmas list of everybody. .44 Magnums, the most powerful handgun in the world. Every other cop in the movie carried a .38 or a .357, not old Harry, he carried a .44 Magnum. That thing looked like a cannon. In his movies, the best thing I like about it, I like this about all movies because they get great sermon material, is some of the great quotes that you find

in these movies. We always remember, you do not remember the name of the movie, but you remember the quote.

- "Make my day."
- "Do you feel lucky, punk?"
- "Ever notice how once in a while you will come across somebody you should have never messed with? Well, that was me."
- "I have seen all the killing and all the murders and all the crime in this city, but you know what really takes the cake? Putting ketchup on a hot dog."
- "Your mouthwash ain't making it."

None of those fit the sermon today. But the one quote that he does, and you are probably—you smart guys now, I already know where I am going. The one quote that he said fits exactly what I want to preach on today. That is back in the 1983 movie called *Sudden Impact*, he said to one of his superiors who was giving him a tough time, "You know what? You are a legend in your own mind."

That is where most of God's people are today. That is where most of Christianity is today. Nothing would be more true today in Christianity than that statement. Christians, pastors today, claim to be Christ-like and following God and His Word. But if you notice that, it is all about the appearance that they give and what they say and the things that they surround around them to make them look that way. You do not find very often the character qualities of Christ today.

Back in the New Testament, Jesus was faced with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. They were the religious leaders of the world in Jesus' day, and they cared nothing for the truth. They cared nothing for Jesus, but the Bible says, "My, my, my, they loved the upper seats of the synagogue. They loved to be seen praying in the marketplace. They would stroll around in their long robes so people could see who they were." I want to tell you something, that was the first coming of Christ, but not much has changed within the standard of Christianity today, ready for the second coming. There are no character qualities of Christ today. There is no humility. It is all about them. It is all about status. It is all about power. It is all about money. It is all about possessions.

There was a famous evangelist back in the 80s in the fundamental circles. This guy was a con man of con men. He is still alive. He is up in Canada someplace now. He got booted out of the United States. He burned his bridges with everybody here. He started out with Youth for Christ, which was an organization—I do not even know if it is around anymore. Then he went down and got hooked up with Jerry Falwell at Lynchburg. Then he came out of that as the super evangelist for all churches. This guy thought he was God's answer to everything. There was certainly no humility. There was no attitude of a servant, and he certainly wanted to make himself a reputation. He would boast that every church he went to, he had over 900 converts. Well, right off the bat, if a Baptist preacher, as stupid as he is, thinks that, "Wow, I can have 900 converts," they would have him in.

Of course, he got to the place where he got so big and he got so important and he got so—God just could not get along without him—that pretty soon he would tell these pastors, "I will not

come and preach in your church unless you can guarantee me a crowd of 5,000 people." In other words, he thought that his skills as a preacher, his evangelistic skills, were so important to God and so absolutely vital to mankind that it was not worth wasting on a crowd less than 5,000 people. I want to tell you something, you know that there were a lot of pastors that thought that was a good thing. There were a lot of Christians that thought that was amazing, that this guy was that good.

But you see, the reality check is Acts chapter 8. In Acts chapter 8, there is a great revival going on in Samaria. The evangelist there, the head evangelist, the guy over there, Philip, he is preaching. God lifted the head evangelist out of the greatest revival in the book of Acts and took him to the backside of the desert for one man, that Ethiopian eunuch. See how reality fixes things for you? It is incredible.

I remember one time he preached at a church that I was at, and he got up and he said that the last church he was at, he had over 800 converts. Everybody in the crowd just, "Amen, glory to God, and praise the Lord." So, Mr. Reality here, on Monday morning, I called that church and I said, "Hey, we are thinking about having so-and-so here." She says, "Oh, he will be a blessing to you." I said, "Yeah, I heard that he was at your church last week, or two weeks ago, and he had over what, 700 to 800 converts?" He said, "Absolutely, it was the most amazing thing we ever had." I said, "Wow, that is great. Can I ask you a question? That has been two weeks. How many of them have you baptized?" It got just that quiet. Had not baptized any of them.

You see, we live in a Christianity where we will tell you anything you want to hear to get saved, but that is where we leave it. I want to tell you, the same Bible that demands that you have to get saved to go to heaven is the same Bible that says, through obedience after you get saved, you need to get baptized and join a church. Now, I know I am a negative guy. I know I am. It is just part of my charm. It is just the way that I am. But I am very suspect if somebody says, "I got saved," but then you refuse to get baptized. Because I see the two going together, not you need to be baptized to be saved. But you are going to tell me that you are going to obey God and you will be there for salvation, and you are going to disobey Him in baptism because what, you do not want to? Hey, when you get saved, everything in your life was supposed to change. When you got saved, the "I do not want to" is supposed to go when it comes to God. Many of God's people, that is when it comes in.

It is a thing where, you know, I saw those things. He was the kind of guy that when he would come into town, and this has happened several times because I know the pastors, he would come into a church and a pastor would put him up in a Holiday Inn. He would check into the Holiday Inn and not think it was suitable for his demeanor, so he would check out of the Holiday Inn, go to the most expensive Sheraton in the city, check in, and leave the bill for two hotels. Because he was the kind of guy who just was worth more than a Holiday Inn. Pal, I would have put you in a Motel 6 and said he got along there. There is no humility. There is no attitude of a servant today. There is no making yourself of no reputation.

One of the key aspects to a false church and/or religion will always be, and this is just something you can learn down through history, will always be the setting up of a religious hierarchy. We all

know and love the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches that came out of Rome, and now the neo-evangelical and even a lot of the Baptist churches follow that doctrine of the Nicolaitans back in Revelation chapter 2 verse 15, where they all set up a hierarchy over the people. The big guys on the top and the little guys on the bottom, and you have to—you have to serve them, build my kingdom.

In the Dark Ages, this was called the feudal system. In the 1800s, it was called totalitarianism. In 2018, it is called New Testament Christianity. Men who have portrayed themselves as something that they are not, trying to get people to believe that they are just like Christ and just like Paul by what they say about themselves, but when you really look at what is going on in their world. The church at Corinth is a great example; they were claiming that they were God's church, but the Bible says that they were puffed up with knowledge and they were having issues among themselves. New Testament Christianity has become a Christian Roman Catholicism with the pastor being the unapproachable Pope.

I understand when I start talking like this, I get it, some of you just think, "Where is he coming from?" Let me tell you, I lived through all this. I am not somebody that just fell off the turnip truck yesterday. I have been around the block a couple of times and ran over some fire hydrants. I know what I am talking about. I came out in Kansas City in 1976; that was the heyday of the Baptist fundamentalist movement. I was with a church that the pastor wanted all of us to go down to Springfield, Missouri, for fellowship week at the Baptist Bible Fellowship down there, and that was the Mecca. You talk about the Muslims having their holy days. Boy, their Baptists had them too back in that day.

It was graduation at Baptist Bible College, which was the premier—back in the day, it was the premier Bible college. It probably ran three or four thousand students. Today, it is lucky to find two chickens and a duck. It is dead. But back in the day, it was the place where they went. We would go down there, and most of the other guys would go down there, and we got spending money, you know, they would get a hotel and they would go eat and do their own thing. Not me. I always wanted to see that. I had heard about it all my life. Boy, I would go down there, and man, you talk about the—you talk about the guys showing up who at that day were the great guys in Christianity. I always looked at it; there were three groups down there.

- 1.) There were the big guns, and they were all hobnobbing around, you know. They were all talking about their churches and what were we going to do this and setting the course for all Christianity. They were the big guns of the fellowship, you know. These guys were—these were the next to the gods.
- 2.) Then you had the wannabes. Those are the little pastors that would never get to that status but always wanted to pretend they could by hanging out with the big guys.
- 3.) Then you had the worker ants. They are the ones that would come there, and they were good people and did all the work, but it was an incredible thing to see.

I watched how that they—it was nothing more than religious politics up against worldly politics. You had the big guys on the top who did not care about the guys in the middle, would not give them the time of day. Then you had all the little worker ants over here who really did all the work

but never got any credit for it. All the big guys took all the credit. It was incredible. It was incredible. It was one of those things when you stood down there, you know, everybody thought they were standing in the presence of greatness. I thought it was the biggest hypocrisy you could ever be in in your life. All these guys talking about how they are great churches, they all had churches of four or five thousand people, and those four or five thousand congregations were built on the backs of those little people. When the little people got burned out and failed, then the big guys blamed the little guys because they were not spiritual enough. Nobody disciplined anybody. Nobody helped anybody. When you got saved, you got slapped on the back and you got thrown into the ministry, and you survived or you did not survive. That is how it worked. I was there. I saw it.

These pastors, much like today, most of them, not everybody, but most of them, they lived in mansions that their people could never afford. They enjoyed a lifestyle that their people could never have. He, through his own self-adoration, looked at himself as, "How do these people get along without me?" He would hobnob with the elite while everybody else just sat at his feet. If you had a lot of money in this church, you were a deacon just like that, or you were put on some important board, or you were given some real responsibility because the pastor realized that if you got a lot of money, he wants you close to him. If you were just a common ordinary folk like us, and you did not get anywhere with him, he did not even know your name. Through all that, he actually believed everything that all the other fellowship guys and everybody said about him. Every one of those guys lost touch with the reality of not only who he was but the people that God gave him.

You think that you have all the answers, and yet at the same time, you package those answers into things that you charge people for so you can make money off of it. You simply take everything that God has given us freely and then try to repackage it so you can make money off of it.

Going back, we had our Lincoln Bible study this last Tuesday night, and we were in Matthew 21. I remember I told them, it is a great chapter, Matthew 21, and it is where Jesus goes into the temple for the second time to throw out the money changers. I told them, "Two times in the Bible, He goes into the temple and He throws out the money changers." The first time was at the beginning of His ministry, and He throws them out there. He says, "You have made My Father's house a den of thieves." Three years later, right before He goes into Jerusalem to be crucified, He throws them out again, but this time He says, "You have made My house." I told them, it is an interesting study to see why over here it is "My Father's house," but now three years later, it is "My house." Oh, it is a great study.

He goes in, and what they are doing back then is they are taking advantage of the people. They know that the people have to come into the temple to make sacrifices, so they have set up their little booths selling chickens, ducks, pigeons, and everything that they need for the sacrifice. They are charging an exorbitant amount of money, and they are not—they are taking the house of God, which is for sacrifice, and they are actually more interested in the money they are making off the animals that are to be sacrificed than they ever caring about the sacrifice. When Jesus comes in, He overthrows the tables, He kicks everybody out. This idea that He was just a lowly

little guy that when you shook His hand, it felt like picking up a dead squid. He was a man's man, and He went into that temple, and I bet that was a sight to see, kicking over them tables and throwing those guys out in the name of Jesus, of course.

There is a great verse here, and it says after He throws them out in Matthew 21:14:

Matthew 21:14

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

I think that is one of the most amazing verses anywhere in the Bible because it says that the religious leaders of the day were only concerned about taking advantage and getting and making what they could make off the people. When they got kicked out and Jesus took over, that is when He started healing the lame and the blind. This church is here to heal the lame and the blind. Every church's concept fundamentally should be that. The idea coming in some place that a church exists for big bucks and big this and big that and all the money in the world we can raise to do all these kinds of great things to make us look great, that is somebody who has lost a touch of reality. Any church, certainly this church, is here for one reason: you are lame and you are blind, and we all have issues in our lives, and this church has to be here for that. The moment the scribes and the Pharisees got kicked out and the money changers got kicked out and Jesus came in, it went away from the big production and became just for the lame and the blind.

Then verse 15:

Matthew 21:15

And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.

I guess you were. That is like going into a big mega church today and getting up in the pulpit and you get to be the featured speaker, and you, after King James, will preach for two hours on the perfect, inspired, verbal, plainly inspired Word of God. You will tick them off. But that is what is needed to be done. You see, churches need to be a reality check. You do not need me to come in here and tell you how wonderful you are, though I think you are wonderful. I think you are the greatest people on the planet. But if that is all you ever heard, how great you were and how great you are, you know what? It would ruin you in time because as good as you are, as great as you are, let us be honest, that goodness and grace is only because of the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done in your life. If you think it is because of you or me, you are in trouble. So I get it. But everybody needs a reality check. When Jesus went in and kicked them out, He gave them a reality check, and the scribes and the Pharisees and the priests, they did not like it.

They said to Him another great concept.

Matthew 21:16

And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

You know what He said? He just simply said another reality check: all your doctor degrees, all your scribes, all your Pharisees, and all your higher education, you missed the boat. You have got to be a little child to get the truth. That is a reality check. We do not like reality checks. It is simply taking everybody that God gave you and seeing them as God sees them. Any pastor on this planet, any Christian that displays themselves any higher or better than their people that God gave them, you are a fool and you are wise in your own conceit. There is not a pastor on this planet that is not just a sinner saved by God's grace, no better, no worse than the people God gave him. You go back in 1 Samuel chapter 22 verses 1 and 2, and you find a model for that. You will find that is exactly true. The fact that he self-adorns himself with a BA or an MA or a PhD or a THD and he is a doctor, it does not make him any smarter or any holier. In fact, just the opposite. All he does is get educated out of his intelligence. The fact that he has educated himself to impress those around him with a doctor or a PhD and he has puffed himself up to set up his own religious hierarchy does not change the fact that he is just a sinner just like you and I.

Years ago, when I—you have got to see Jesus sometime in Matthew chapter 23 what He said about these guys. Years ago, when I again when I was getting into the ministry, we had a class on the eight rules of pastoring. I never forgot them. Eight rules that a pastor is to follow.

- 1.) Rule number one of the pastors: Never lose touch with your people.
- 2.) Rule number two: Never set yourself up over them.
- 3.) Rule number three: You pastor to serve them. You do not pastor so they can serve you. When you serve each other in the right perspective, then you both wind up serving God in the right perspective.
- 4.) Rule number four: You build the people God gave you. You do not use the people that God gave you to build your monument to yourself.
- 5.) Rule number five: It is not getting smarter that makes you a good pastor. It is getting dumber. The smarter you are, the more you think you know, and the greatest lesson you can ever learn that whatever years you spend in the Bible, whether it is 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 100 years, you need to come to the conclusion of that time that all you know of the Bible only shows you how much you do not know of the Bible. God reigns in our lives through our inabilities, through our stupidity, not our education. I told you last week when He picked Moses to deliver the nation of Israel, He picked the one guy that if you were looking for a pastor of a church or put in a Bible college someplace, everybody would have passed him over. He did not speak well. He did not have good confidence. He was afraid to talk. He was afraid to go before Pharaoh, and God said, "That is the guy that I want," and it was through his weakness that God used him to be great. We come around like we think because of what we know and what we have and how great we are, God is sure lucky to have us. God does not need you or me for 15 seconds. We need Him.
- 6.) Rule number six: There are no experts when it comes to the Bible, life, or ministry. Just students on different levels helping each other get to where they need to get.
- 7.) Rule number seven: Never send your people into ministry. You lead them into ministry. The rule is simply a pastor is the first boots on the ground, the last boots off. That is the rule number one of leadership, by the way.

- 8.) Rule number eight: Never, I mean never, never put yourself in a position to take advantage of your people.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 14 that no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. As a pastor, your church will be exactly what you built them to be. It is the same way in a family. A family will be exactly what the father has built them to be, just like a church will be whatever the pastor is building to be. They will be what you are like with the Bible, your spiritual reflection, whether it is good or it is bad. Whatever you are, and whether it is your family as a father or a church as a pastor, you will either be a legend in your own mind or your family, or you will teach your family to follow the legend that will change their minds. But that is the way it goes.

Back in Proverbs chapter 31, you have the story of the virtuous woman. We will spend a lot of time on that one and take that one apart when we get there, probably 12 or 13 years from now. But Proverbs 31:28 says:

Proverbs 31:28

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

As we find it in the text, that is your own children in your family. This is what Mother's Day is all about. So now we have made this message a Mother's Day message so we can move on. That is what has happened today. You are a mom, you are a good mom. Your kids rise up and call you blessed. They thank you for whatever you do. Many of you, I get that. Many of you do not have that in a physical mom or dad, so you have it in a spiritual mom or dad. I get it. But it is also talking about our spiritual children. The people that you have invested your life with. The people that you have taken in and invested your life with them and helped them and given them what they needed. Recognize that as God's people, and God used them in their life, and those people see that.

Many of you have invested your life with so many people in this church. You have a reputation of building people through your investment. I always like it when I am talking to somebody and I say, "You know what? You got this or this or this." I say, "I think this will really help you." And you will say, "I really want that. Could I get so-and-so to do that for me?" There is no greater thing in this world than somebody to ask if you will teach them the Bible. It happens all the time. Because of the investment and the—and you have made in so many people that you have just poured yourself into. So many of you have done that. People look up, and today they recognize the reality of this truth. They would not be here today and have what they have if you would not have invested your life in them. You are not just doing it here. You are doing it across the country. You are doing it wherever you go. The people—your family, your friends, people that God has put in your life. The reality for you is you see them and you understand God brought them to me. For what purpose? To take advantage of them? To get what I can get from them? Or for me to give to them what they desperately need? I will tell you, it is an incredible concept. Building those areas in your life that are the character qualities of Christ that everybody pretends they have. They want to give the illusion. But when it comes right down in you, look, there is no humility. There is no attitude of a servant.

SEC: The Progression of Foolishness: Wrath, Anger, and Envy

Now look at verse 3 and 4.

Proverbs 27:3

A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

Proverbs 27:4

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

This is a great insight into issues in life that we will all have to deal with. The heaviness of verse 3 will be obviously the weight of any issue that somebody puts on you or you put on yourself or you have to deal with in life. Like some heavy burden that someone has to bear, we find people, we have all had that at some point in our life, and we understand that. Paul said in Hebrews 12:1:

Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

There are the weights of life that bog you down, that hold you down, that you cannot run the race and do what God has called you to do. I think verse 4 is a great verse because it shows the order of how and where all problems will start. Look at the progression laid out for you, and this is all what a fool does.

- 1.) First thing, wrath is cruel and heavy.
- 2.) Second, anger is outrageous.
- 3.) Third, but who is able to stand before envy?

Then it says, envy will be worse than both wrath and anger. You know why? Because that is a powerful verse, for it will show us that the root issue of a fool when he has a problem, it will be rooted in envy. Why? Envy was the original sin in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 with the devil and God. I know it was pride, but it started with envy and then it got into pride. He wanted to be like the Most High. That is envy. He was envious of what God had. He did the exact same mistake that we do. Lucifer was number two. He had everything he could want. He was over everything that God created, and that was not enough. He makes the same mistake we all make. We never focus on all the things that God gave us. We just focus on what we do not have. We lose sight. No, no, no. We lose the reality of who we are and what we have and what God has given us. If we just spent our day walking through that, we would be the happiest guy on the planet. No, no, no, no, no. We do not focus on our family, all the good things He has done, all the blessings He has. You are not in a hospital. You are not in a cancer ward. You are not there. You are not blind. You are not—they did not lose a leg. You have a good house. You have a car. You have a good job. You basically had three meals today, some of you four or five, and that was a problem. But never mind. You lose sight of that and you focus on, "I want that."

I know how it started. It will be the root of all sin after Genesis 1. The Bible says, Lot lifted up his eyes, and he saw the plains that were great for flock. He saw all the cattle that he had, and it was not enough. He had to come up with a plan to get more cattle. Everything that we do, we lose sight of the reality of what God has done for us and given us and what we have, and we just have to focus all the time on what we do not have. You see that something that somebody has or even is, their ability to be what God wants them to be, and you try to outdo them so you can look good too.

I know this is—have you ever been around a person, and I see it all the time, I just kind of laugh at it. There are people out there that you are going to work with or be friends with. When you get into conversation, no matter what you say you have done or somebody else says they have done, they always chime in and they have done it better. They always, whatever the equation is, they have got the answer. Whenever somebody gives an answer, they have got a better answer. It seems that people and pastors just cannot seem to be their own man, happy with who they are. We are all envious of others, and it always drives them, and you know it is quite an incredible thing to watch.

I remember back in—I have told you about this several times—back in the first go-round of the mega churches. We are in the second round today, and now it is all in the evangelical crowd, but back in the 60s and the 70s and the 80s, it was in the Baptist fundamentals crowd, and people do not see that. They do not know that it did not work back then, it is not going to work today. Back then, Jack Hyles—nobody even knows who Jack Hyles is anymore—Hammond, Indiana. Back in the 70s, he was running 10,000 in Sunday school. He was the poster child for successful churches. Jack Hyles was a great preacher. He really was a great preacher. He was a tyrant to work for, but he was a great preacher. He was a terrible pastor, but he was a great preacher. I mean, boy, this guy could preach the paint off the wall, I am not kidding you. Everybody looked at his church and wanted, but they did not see inside was the fact that, you know how he got running 10,000? He was in Hammond, Indiana, on his bus routes. He had over 300 buses. Three hundred, a bus ministry of 300 buses. Those buses would start at 5:30 in the morning and go 100 miles out to bring people back to church. They were not bringing them there because they wanted to get saved. They brought them all in. Have you ever been around 600 bus kids? Are you kidding me? They did not want to teach them anything about God or the Bible. They wanted to count them because they wanted to keep the prestige of heaven.

Everybody in the Baptist world wanted to be like Jack Hyles. So they had Sunday school campaigns. They had special days where you would bring all your people. They had a friend day. They had a heaven Sunday. They had all these great things. Hey, I was there. I was in the meetings where they sat down for hours plotting how we can get a bunch of people to church on Sunday. Did we want to win them to Christ? Did we want to teach them the Bible? Oh no, no, no. We wanted to be able to stand up and talk about how many we had in church on Sunday. Be like Jack Hyles. The 70s, 80s.

Jerry Falwell, Lynchburg, Virginia. Jerry Falwell got involved in politics. He started really the first TV broadcast of church services on Sunday morning. I mean, there were some of the weird guys out there, but he was the first fundamental guy, called it the Old Time Gospel Hour. The

moment he did that, everybody in fundamentalism thought that was the secret to raising a lot of money. Secret to having a lot of people come to church. Get a TV ministry. So they did. Church after church after church after church. I remember I have been in meetings where they had a fundraising drive to raise \$400,000 to buy TV camera equipment and all the broadcast equipment. They brought a bank guy in who took the church's finances where the church banked, and they had a table sit over there, and they asked every family to give \$5,000. If you did not have \$5,000, no problem. The bank here will give you a low interest rate that you can get a loan and give that money to the church. I was there. I saw it. Everybody wanted a TV program. Everybody wanted to be on the air. Everybody wanted to be like Jerry Falwell because Jack Hyles was the guy, and now Jerry Falwell was.

Jerry Falwell on the broadcast had this pulpit. It was an incredible big pulpit. It was beautiful. It reminded me of the Great White Throne Judgment. God is going to have a pulpit like that. It was a spectacular pulpit, and he preached behind it, made him look powerful, made him look big. It had a little button on the side that you would raise if you had a tall speaker. You could raise the pulpit up, raise it down. I like this one. It has got lead in the front so if you shoot at me, I can just crawl right underneath there. And tenons come out here. Anyway. So every Baptist, you guessed it, every Baptist church wanted a pulpit like his. They were making those big white pulpits, and every church had one because they thought it made you look prestigious, made you look powerful.

Then around the 1960s and 70s and 80s, along with that, rose the God of education. Now every Baptist preacher wanted to get a doctor's degree because education was the way to go. Now you were not anybody if you were not a doctor of theology. It takes a lot to get an earned doctor of theology. It is a waste of time and money, but if you want one, there is a route you have got to go. But they found out a better way. See, they worked a little deal with the Bible colleges. Bob Jones University, Tennessee Temple, Baptist Bible College, back in the day. They made a little unwritten deal that, "Okay, Canton Baptist Temple, Harold Henniger was a doctor. Bob Johnson, the music director, was a doctor." But they did not earn their doctorates. They got honorary doctorates. You know how you get—but who cares. When you introduced a guy, you did not say, "Here is honorary doctor," it was "doctor." "Doctor so-and-so. We are going to have speaking out doctor, I want to introduce you to, going to preach you tonight, doctor, doctor fine, doctor Howard, doctor fine." It was not, "He is not a real doctor, he got an honorary, he did not have an," you know, it is "doctor." Because that is all you needed. If you were a doctor, you were somebody. If you were not a doctor, you were not anybody. When you went to a candidate for a church, if you were a doctor, you beat the guy out that was not. It does not matter if the guy knew the Bible a thousand times better and was the greatest showrunner on the planet, they were not caring about that. It was, "Are you a doctor? Where did you go to school?"

The game worked like this. I will take Bob Jones University because that is what I am familiar with. Canton Baptist Temple, Dr. Harold Henniger, Dr. Bob Johnson. Bob Johnson went to Bob Jones University. So here is how it worked. You brought all your young people as they grew up, they wanted to go to Bible college, you channeled them to Bob Jones University. You sent them all down there. Those kids go down there to pay the tuition, \$10, 15, \$20,000. You send down

100 kids, you send down 50 kids a year. I mean, you have got a big church, you have got 2,000 people in your church, kids grow up, most of them want to get a Christian education. Where do you send them? You send them to Bob Jones University. Bob Jones University looked like the place to go. Clean-cut kids. When they would send a singing group around, Penny knows, Penny was in—was not in that one, but when were you in? Live Action. Dead Action after a while, but Penny was in it. She knows what I am saying is true. It was all choreographed. They picked the best kids who could sing and send them to your church. They would put on a concert. People would think it was wonderful. They would have 20, 15 of the sharpest-looking kids, clean-cut that you ever saw in your life. Parents would sit down there and say, "I want my kid to be like that. If I send my kid to that school, they will turn out like that." It was all a sham.

I am a reality guy. I saw the same people go to different churches. It was—they, here is how it worked. You would have five guys, five girls, because they wanted to attract guys. It was always the prettiest girls. You will never get guys coming to your Bible college with ugly girls singing. The guys were all good-looking guys, because girls are not going to go down there if they are all doofuses. They are sure what a doofus is, but they are not going to go. So they would sing together. Then the guys would—the guys would sing and the girls would go like this. All the girls in unison. Then the guys, the girls would sing and all the guys would go. It was choreographed. They would have somebody give their testimony, and they would cry. It was amazing because I saw them do it another church. She cried at the same spot. Same testimony. "You have got a cry button on your pants. You just push it and tears start coming out." It is fake. It was phony. It was the funniest thing you ever saw in your life. But parents said, "I want my kid to be like that." "Yeah, I want my kid to have a cry button on his pants. I want my kid." So, and the pastor would get up and they would say, "Now this is," and they would just send those kids down there. After they got what, 100, 200, I do not know what the magic number was. But then when you hit that magic number, you are like the big wheel that you turn on the TV program. When your number comes up, they bring you down for graduation, and you speak graduation. You know what happens then? They crown upon you an honorary doctor's degree. Doctor of the Defense of the Truth. You wear a robe. You wear a little goofy hat. They confer upon you doctor, an honorary doctor's degree. The whole Christian world goes, "Oh, wow." That is the way it was. You traded kids for your degree. Do not tell me I was there. Do not tell me I saw it. I watched it happen. It happened there. It happened everywhere. That was the game they played. Why? So a guy could stand in a pulpit and gain credibility with all the other pastors and around his people that they thought because he now had a doctor's degree behind his name, he was more holy than he was before he got it. That God now recognized him. "Come on up here and stand with me. Now you are a doctor. I am still Jesus. I am still here, doctor." No. No. It was the goofiest thing you ever saw. It was the reality of this verse. It became a joke. It became—but what happened was they lost all touch with reality. It was a show.

I had a guy one time. He is a Christian psychologist, and he has got an earned doctor degree in it. But he is a pompous idiot. I have not seen him for years. We went to lunch one time. I do not think he thought I heard him say this. This guy was a nobody. He was an absolute nobody. He was not a good counselor. I would not let him counsel my lab on, he is terrible. But he fit the mold. We went to lunch one time right here in Lee's Summit. We are waiting there for a table,

and the waitress comes up, and we start to walk to the table. He goes over to the woman who is the hostess, and he says, "I am Dr. so-and-so if there is any calls for me." Now, come on. Who on this planet is going to call you? What? Did your oxycodone run out? Who is going to call you? But see, nobody was going to call him. You know what is even worse? He knew nobody was going to call him. He wanted her to know he was a doctor because now she is thinking, "Ooh." The only one that was disappointed was the waitress because she found out he was a doctor and saw the crappy tip he left her. I am telling you, it was a game. It is always a game. It goes to your head. It gets you out of touch with reality that you really think you are something special. I want you to know something. Everybody, including this preacher this morning, there is nothing special about us. The only thing special about you and me is you were washed in the blood of Christ, and you are living in the shadow of the cross, and you are going to heaven someday. If it was on your own merit, we would all be in hell this morning screaming for a drink of water. Boy, we sure get off of it, don't we? I am telling you. It was all a show.

Instead of the world looking at Christianity like it once did and the world speaking well of it, I know you do not know that. Most of you young, a couple of you older ones may be around here, but most of you young ones, all you have ever seen is the garbage. Remember in England when George Mueller was alive in the latter part of the middle 1800s and the early 1900s? He had the prestige of every unsaved person over there, and he started orphanages for kids in England. He prayed into existence. I do not know how many orphanages. He was one of the most godly men, and everybody wanted to help him because he had the characteristics of Christ.

D.L. Moody had the great Moody Church in Chicago. Do you understand that the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times printed every word of his messages on the Monday morning newspaper because they thought that he had a value? There was an issue after he was dead where Chicago had went into deep problems, and the unsaved New York Times put a picture of Chicago Tribune, put a picture of the city of Chicago with a shadow over it like a cloud, like the face of Moody, and in the Chicago Times it said, "What this town needs is another Moody." Try that today.

Billy Sunday. I told this story the other night when somebody asked a question about booze that when he died, his body laid in state in Madison Square Garden, and for two days over two million people came by. A New York Times reporter covered his death, and he stood there and wrote in the paper that almost every person that came by that casket said to themselves out loud or somebody else, "I would be in hell if it was not for that man's preaching. He saved my family. He saved my marriage. He got me out of alcohol." Over and over. The world was reporting that.

David Livingstone, the great missionary that went to the heart of Africa that nobody heard from him for two or three years. Who cares? The New York Times sent Stanley, a reporter to Africa, paid his expenses, got him a guide to go into the interior of Africa to find out what happened to Dr. Livingstone. Are you kidding me? From which our Quamus wrote, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume." He found him.

Today, churches, pastors, and Christianity, it is a joke. The world scoffs on us. It makes fun of your money-grabbing ways and looks at how you really are a crook using God in his church to

fleece people so you can live like a king, and all the time you are pretending to your stupid people that you are like Paul and you are like Jesus. Well, let me tell you something, friend. The only stocks and bonds that Paul had was on his hands and on his feet. Quite a difference.

SEC: Open Rebuke vs. Secret Love

Now look at verse 5 here.

Proverbs 27:5

Open rebuke is better than secret love.

Oh, I love this one. What a great truth. Christianity, Christians, millions of them who claim to be saved and love God in His Word but will never take a stand for it publicly. I call them spiritual homosexual Christianity. They live their life in the closet and never want to come out. The Christians whose theme is, "Don't ask, don't tell." They are never going to come out of the closet and say, "I am really a Christian, I am going to take a stand for the Word of God. If you do not like it, that is tough." Never one time have they ever stood up and defended what God has done for them and what God has given them.

There is a great example that is in the Bible found in John chapter 3, and most people never see this part of the story because we use it for soul winning all the time, and there is nothing wrong with that. But I want you to see something here.

John 3:1-8

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, "How can these things be?"

John 3:10-11

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Wow, that is a powerful deal. Now there is a secret agent Christian right there. Everybody else is getting clobbered. Everybody else, the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they are just killing them and they are just beating them up to beat the band, but not Nicodemus. Now he comes to Jesus by night under the cloak of darkness so nobody would see him. Why? Because he is a Pharisee. He is a ruler of the Jews, and he is playing it safe. Verse 2, he believes who Christ is. He knows that "thou art teacher come from God." He called him Rabbi. He knows exactly who He is. Boy, the Lord gets right to the point, does He not? He does not say, "Well, it is about time somebody recognized who I am, Nicodemus. Thank you very much. Yes, I am a teacher." He never even answered him. You know what He said? He said, "Nicodemus, except your nation, get born again. It has no chance." That born again is found in Matthew chapter 19 verse 28 and again in Romans chapter 9 and chapter 11. At verses 10 and 11, He says, "You know our witness. You know what we stand for. Why have you not declared that witness?" I will tell you why. Because you are a Pharisee. You are a ruler of the Jews, and you will lose your status. You will lose your position as a religious leader. They will get thrown out of the fellowship. You will be called a heretic. Oh, there are a lot of Christians who believe Jesus, and I believe you are truly saved. You are just a coward when it comes to standing for the truth. Boy, a great rebuke in verse 10 Jesus says, "Art thou a master of Israel and you do not know these things?" You mean to tell me you are saved and on your way to heaven and you do not know you are supposed to take a stand for the Lord Jesus Christ? Is that a standing for the world? You have a secret love for God, but you never take an open rebuke for Him. You do not want to lose your status. You do not want to lose your friends. You do not want to be labeled a heretic. You do not want people to look at you like there is something wrong with you. There is something wrong with you. You have been saved and born again, and you are no longer part of this world. Act like it.

We today have a non-confrontational Christianity. The theme is, "Don't rock the boat. Let us just all get along. Let us just, all right, we do not see eye to eye on this. Let us just agree to disagree." You are out of your mind. If they do not, somebody is right and somebody is wrong. Let us get in the book and find out who is. Let us get along with everybody today.

I will tell you what, and this is my own problem. I get it. I can deal with a lot of people in a lot of different areas, and I have no problem with it. I never judge people. I will always be there to try to help them. I do not care. I have said it many times. I do not care what you have done. It does not matter to me as long as you want to do what is right. I mean, there are a couple exceptions to that, but in most cases, you know what? If you want to do what is right, I am here for you. I do not sit around and think about all the things you did or this, that, and point fingers at it. There is no profit in that. We cannot change the past, but we can sure shape the future together and just try to do that. But I want to tell you something. When it comes to Christians who are afraid to take a public stand on biblical issues and they play the Christianity and the world go together game, you stay out of my way. My Bible says in Proverbs 17:17:

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

I want men and women around me that can take it on their shoulders, take it on their chin, and we stand and let it come. I am not interested in playing games with anybody. I am interested in the truth. When I went into the ministry years and years ago, Dr. Bob Johnson, who got his degree from Bob Jones University, I might add a little bit later on when he got out of a Baptist church and went into another church, they took his honorary doctorate back from him. Nice deal. You give it to me, but I will take it back from you.

I was ready to come out to Kansas City. I realized I had a lot of rough edges, and there are a lot of things that I needed to learn. I take that. I get that. I was there one day, and Bob and Mel never got along. Bob did not believe the Bible was the Word of God. He was Bob Jones University, just everything in his life. Everything, his kids went there. He went there. He thought that that was where the New Jerusalem was. Of course, Mel was anti-Bible college, and he was saying, "Just train them right here, just like we have." He sat me down. He knew I was coming out to Kansas City, going to go to work for Truman Dollar, and they were good friends. He said, "Bob," he says, "I want to help you." I said, "Well, Bob, I appreciate that. I need some help." He says, "Look, you are going out there. You are going to a big church. You have got the chance of a lifetime." He says, "But I want to tell you, you have got to change some things." I said, "Well, Bob, I am all for change. What do you think I need to change?" He said, "You cannot preach the way you preach." He says, "When you go into those big churches," he says, "it is all about results." He says, "You will not make it with your preaching because your preaching will not produce results." He went on and on. I said, "Well, Bob, I appreciate it. But I said, you better understand something right now. I may make it or I may not make it out there. That is immaterial. But I am not interested in the results. I am interested in the truth. If the truth cannot produce the results, then I do not want the results to get produced without the truth." That was the end of the conversation.

It is one of those things where, you know, that is just where it is at. I want to tell you something. This is my own personal deal. You can stretch this off the tape if you want. Do not put this note down if you do not want to. But let me tell you something. If there are not people saved and lost out there that hate you for your stand on the book and are not your open enemies because you love a book and stand for a book and preach the book, there is something wrong with your Christianity. It is just that simple. I have seen families that Dad had to take a stand against the family for the truth to do the right thing. It cost him some great things. Or a wife cost her some great things. Or a couple together cost them great things. But you know what? If some of the time in your life when you know what is right, you have got to take a stand. There may be severe consequences to come along with it. That does not change the stand. It just does not. I realize we all have a tendency to want to not be, especially the world we live in. You know, we do not want to have conflict. Let me tell you something. You cannot get into Christianity to the level that God wants you and not have conflict. Now you talk about Jesus and Paul. You want to be like them? They were hated and had conflict all their lives. Hebrews chapter 13 verse 13:

Hebrews 13:13

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Are you? Are you a nice little safe, cushy thing like Nicodemus? Well, you get along with unsaved people. They open your refrigerator. They see the same thing in yours. They see in theirs. They are fine with you. "Oh yeah, you are a Christian. You go to church. You just, you are not radical about it. You do not get over the top about it." Well, you go to a Chiefs game and they make a touchdown or win the game, then let us see radical displayed. You can scream and yell down there. You go to a Royals game and they win a game, and you go nuts, ballistic, and everybody is happy. Now I know the beer loosens you up a little bit there. I get that. Well, I will tell you what. You know what, somebody, you know what? They say, "Don't be a fanatic." You know what the word "fan" comes from? It comes from the word "fanatic." Lots of people need to be a little more fanatical about what God has given you.

I have no use in my life for college. Never have. College gets people killed, physically and spiritually. One time years ago when I was in the Army, we were doing a jump at 1,200 feet out of a C-130, and there were like 18 guys on our stick, and I think I was, a stick is 18 guys, and I think I was six or seven in the line. The guy behind me, three or four, was a young kid, and he panicked, and he started yelling and screaming and crying that he could not do it. He could not do it. He could not do it. A jump master, they were incredible guys. Jump master came back, unhooked him, pulled him out of that line, rolled him up to the front of the line, snapped him in, and said, "Then you better jump first so when you get killed, you do not take anybody with you," and booted him out the door. See, cowards will hesitate at the crucial moment that life and death will hang on. God's people need to be—they need to know what they are doing. They need to know when to do it. They need to know how to do it, and then to be able to take their stand in doing it. I mean, this is a great series of verses today for all of us. We all need a reality check. After all God has given us. After all we have. After everything that He has worked out in your life and my life and the things that He has done for us. You know, we need to keep our perspective as a Christian. We need to keep our position as a Christian. We need to keep our purpose as a Christian and keep the reality of who we really are in Christ and not some legend in our own mind.

SEC: Discipleship and Reality

Around here, somebody comes into our church that has not been, you know, maybe just first gets saved or whatever, and we have what we call discipleship. Discipleship, you know, basic lessons that we have. There are four basic goals with discipleship. I think there are ten lessons, and you would think that you are done discipling when you hit lesson ten. You are not. You are done discipling when these four goals are accomplished. It may take you forever to do it.

- 1.) Goal number one is to establish you obviously in the Word of God.
- 2.) Goal number two is to establish you obviously with other people.
- 3.) Goal number three is to establish you within our church.
- 4.) But goal number four is to bring it all back around and establish you in ministry.

You see this happening all the time. You are not done until those four goals are accomplished in that person's life. A while back, we developed a discipleship two, which I think is a perfect match for discipleship one. It is based on 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17. It talks about the seven things that changed in you the day you got saved. I cannot think of any greater lesson than one and then two that when properly appraised will keep you from ever falling into the issues of Proverbs chapter 27 verses 2, 3, 4, and 5. Because it will always keep you—what happened, what changed about you. The moment you got saved, seven things now change. If you keep focused on those seven things, you will never lose touch of reality. It is when you just get saved and you start moving out and you get a little Bible here, a little Bible there, and then pretty soon the world starts pulling you back, or you get a girlfriend or a boyfriend that pulls you off, or you start making a lot of money, or you have a lot of things, and you just cannot get past it all, and they start pulling you off, pulling you off. Pretty soon, you actually think that you are a good Christian never coming to church. You actually think you are a good Christian never being a servant to anybody. You actually think, "Well, I am a Christian now. I have been saved for what, 10, 15, 20 years, never disciplined anybody, never invested my life in anybody, but boy, look at my house, look at my garage, look at my job, look at all that I have, look what I have invested in." You have lost touch with reality, pal. Getting the reality and keeping the reality of who you really are in Christ Jesus. Getting the right perspective, which will lead you to putting yourself in the right position, which will always keep you with the right purpose. When you understand these seven things, then it will always add a fourth one to it here: you will always have the right passion. That is the problem our preacher did a couple weeks ago. We are too passionate with the wrong things. There is one passion that should be over and above every other thing we do, and that is our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

So you can see how these verses in Proverbs just fit. You can see from my perspective, and I know I just gave you a little inside glimpse at it, but boy, I have seen this thing work for almost 50 years. I have seen how it has worked its way through and destroyed churches, destroyed families, destroyed people, destroyed pastors. How did they actually believe that getting a grandiose degree behind your name really makes you closer to God? I know I have heard all the arguments. I have heard guys say, "Well, we do that because it opens doors for us that we normally would not have." Gee, I may be wrong about this, but I thought that was the Holy Spirit of God's job no matter what degree you had behind your name. I must have just picked that up someplace. You see how we rationalize out of our reality. If you need a degree behind your name to override the Holy Spirit of God working in your life, you are in trouble.