

## I. The Bible: God's History Book and Puzzle

If you have your Bibles this morning, we want to turn back to the book of Proverbs, chapter 27. Last week, you received a great piece of your Bible. For those of you who are students of the Word of God, you have to put the Bible together sooner or later in your life. The Bible will be the most important book that you will ever come across.

Before Glenn left this morning, he pulled me aside and said, "I don't know anything about social media, so I'm probably not getting this exactly right. I guess there's some place on Google where you can comment if you've been someplace. I guess it's called Google 'where you've been,' I don't know. I have a hard time finding out Google 'where I'm going.'" Anyway, he said that there was a guy asking about our church and where I got all this stuff from church history. He then asked, "Demons are likened to birds. Where in the world does he come up with all this stuff?" Glenn didn't know if anybody else had said that, and I said no. But I thought to myself, he's obviously either watching Bible study on Thursday night, or maybe he's even been here. I don't know, I think he lives out of state now.

If I were able to counsel him in any way, shape, or form to help him, it would be a very easy answer: all that stuff is found in a big book called the Bible. When you get into the Bible, when the Bible becomes the most important thing in your life, then those things are no-brainers. There's nothing amazing to it. One hundred or one hundred twenty years ago, the things that we talk about in the Bible that are strange things now were commonplace, and everybody believed them. It is the time and the passing of time and getting away from the Word of God that the Bible itself says that the great things of the Bible now become the strange things to people. And that is so true.

Last week, you got a great piece of your Bible, and I've told you this many, many times: the Bible is like one of those thousand-piece picture puzzles. You have seven mysteries; we talked about that last week. The restoration of Israel is likened to one of the mysteries. You had seven things you are not to be ignorant of. In the Bible, there are seven baptisms, seven judgments, and seven resurrections. It is God's systematic theology of the Bible laying itself out.

When a person begins to go through those and begins to learn those, and this is what we do in Bible Institute, we take a very simple approach to it. We don't spend a lot of time with apologetics or hermeneutics; we just stick with the Bible. Because the Bible is like a puzzle, and the more you define the pieces and not only put the pieces together but then lock them together, in time a picture slowly emerges. The picture that emerges is what God is doing in the history of man.

Everybody thinks that the Bible is a religious book, and of course it's not, if you know that it's not. It never has been, never will be. The Bible is not a religious book; the Bible is a history book. The Bible is a record of the history of not what man is doing down through history, but what God is doing down through history, and God's interaction with man. We talked about it last

week: in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel; in the New Testament, the local church. God's plan for each identity in the history of man.

We talked about how our attitude toward the nation of Israel, as we see and understand God's plan unfolding, is done through the two landmarks that are found in the scriptures. As I said, we found them in the book of Proverbs: the nation of Israel in the Old Testament and the New Testament local church in the New Testament.

The Bible is not only the key to, and I said this last week, the Bible is not only the key to giving you a context and understanding of your life, your marriage, your family, or even your ministry, or even finding the real purpose in life that God has for you. The Bible will do all those things. I will never underestimate the importance of context, but the Bible will put all history in context, as we talked about last week. It will give you a picture not only of the context of history accurately but also where you are going in the future.

I have probably read in my lifetime every book worth reading on church history or God doing something in history, probably more books than I could ever remember. I learned a great lesson about reading books about history. So when I wrote my books on church history or whatever I talk to you about history, I am always very careful to always remember this: when you read history from somebody's book, Philip Schaff wrote seven volumes on church history, Newell wrote two, there are all kinds of them out there. I learned that whether it's church history, religious history, or the history of Europe, or the history of the world, or history of whoever, you've always got to remember that the writer of that is going to, maybe not on purpose, but he's going to infuse his personal understanding of history and what it means to him and what he believes. It can't help but getting into what he's saying. In that, he may not always be accurate. He may have his own prejudice, his own ideas, so that 90% of his account of history is good, but that 10% is his own persuasion. So you have to be careful with that.

That's why I always tell you the greatest history book in the world is the Word of God. I'm okay with God infusing Himself into His book on history because He's the author of history. So when I read somebody else, no matter who it may be, I never lose sight of the fact that I always bounce it back to the Word of God and get God's bottom-line perspective for me. The Word of God will give you a context of history, future events, and current events. We saw it last week, the world around us. And certainly, there's a lot going on with the world around us. But without a doubt, it puts Israel in its proper place. I showed you last week how Paul was so careful that he wanted to make sure that we understood from Romans 9 and Romans 11. Then we were talking about the fig tree out of Proverbs 27. So we had a great piece of the Bible last week.

## II. The Inability to Fix Others

Now this week, we're going to slide back into the practical. We're going to see a great truth about ourselves today, at least I think it is. We'll be in Proverbs 27:19-20.

If I've learned anything in all my years of trying to help people and deal with people and their problems and their issues, if I've learned one absolute truth, it is the fact that I can't fix anybody. It's just that simple. I get a phone call probably two or three times a week. People don't want to

come to church. They don't want to get involved in the Bible. They don't want to do anything in their life. They don't want to get disciplined. They don't want to get into ministry. They'll come to church for a while and then they'll drop out for a while, and then they'll be back for a while and then out for a while. They'll always get their lives in a mess because that's just the way it works. Then I get this phone call, and suddenly they want Bob with his magic wand to wipe it and fix all the problems. They want to get on a phone call in 30 seconds, tell me what their problem is, and then I guess, you know, drones are big now. Like Amazon using a drone to deliver your package, I'll just use a drone to deliver the answer. It doesn't work that way. It really doesn't.

I can preach to you. I can teach you. I can admonish you. I can rebuke you. I can show you. I can guide you. I can even hold you accountable. I can put, and I've told people this before, I can put 10,000 people around your situation and your problem. But at the end of the day, if you don't do the work and fix yourself, none of it means anything. There's no quick fix for the problems we find ourselves in, and there's nobody that can fix our problems.

I grew up in an era where the pastors would get up, and they really didn't know what they were saying. I understand that. But they would always say, and when I hear it today, I just kind of chuckle; it brings me back to the old days. I would hear a guy get up in the pulpit and say, "Reading the Bible, you need to get in your Bible. Reading your Bible will solve every problem you have." I'm going to tell you this morning, that's simply not true. Reading the Bible will not solve your problem. What solves your problem is reading the Bible and applying to your life what you read. But we've lost that today.

There will be couples that have marital problems that I deal with all the time. Part of the sticky problem is that they get into a mess, and she doesn't like the way he is, and he doesn't like the way she is. What's got them where they're at is because they have gotten into a situation or a scenario where she's always trying to fix him, and then he's always trying to fix her. It goes on and on and on and on. There's no end to that. There's actually no fixing anything with that. The answer is simple: if you're a wife, you can't fix your husband. If you're a husband, you can't fix your wife. But I'll tell you who you can fix: you can fix yourself.

When the husband recognizes his problems as a failed spiritual leader, as a failed whatever, and she recognizes her problem as a failed follower and a failed Christian in her own life with the Word of God, when those two people quit blaming each other for their problems and then take responsibility and accountability for where they're at in their own personal relationship, your marriage will only be as strong as your individual personal relationship is with the Lord. When a couple does that, then the problems go away. Because what was the problem is blaming him for the way he is or blaming her for the way she is. At the end of the day, when you take that out, you just take your own problems and fix your own problems, then your conflict is gone.

I've had parents that had kids that were headed for the world, or in the world, or messed up in the world. They're headed that way. The parents will come and see me. I've had many, many meetings with them. They'll come and they'll say, "Hey, what can I do to fix my kids? What can you give me to help me fix my kids?" My answer is all the same: you don't need to worry about fixing the kids. You need to worry about fixing the parents because the kids will be with the

parents, allow them to be. We like to blame our problems on everybody else. "Well, it's this person, it's that person, or they may disturb." Yeah, but who taught them that value system? That's what we do. We have to fix ourselves in every area, in every aspect of our life.

### III. Examine, Prove, and Know Yourself

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul gives us some really good advice. I'm nobody paying attention to it today, but it's really good, solid Bible advice.

*2 Corinthians 13:5*

*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Those are three of the greatest pieces of advice for you and for me in light of what we're going to look at today and looking at ourselves. The first thing he says is, "Examine yourself." People walk into every place they go. I'll just use church, for example, but they'll come into church on Sunday morning, and the first thing they'll do is they'll look around and they'll start examining everything. "It's too hot. It's too cold. Why do they have them fans going that fast?" That's the way it is. Years ago, I learned that the way you fix that problem is you put a thermostat back there and don't hook it up, but put it up there with a sign: "We want you to be comfortable. You set this wherever you feel comfortable." It doesn't work. It's like your life. There's nothing really hooked up, but you just feel good when you think you just set the temperature, and it'll be 110 in here, and I'll say, "How are you feeling?" "Oh, that's wonderful. It's just nice in here today. Thank you for doing that up there. That really makes it, it really makes me, oh, you're special. We want you to know that whatever the temperature that you want it to be, that's what this whole church is going to be about." I'm just kidding you.

"The sermon's too long. The sermon's too short. He tells too many jokes. Too many people." We had a guy and his wife came here a number of years ago, and he loved it, and she didn't. She obviously didn't like it. After a while, he was such a wimp that she just said, and he couldn't stand up. I met him one time for lunch, and he said, "Well," he says, "I've got some problems," which I already knew. He says, "We're going to have to go back to our old church, I'm afraid." I said, "Well, that's okay, no problem." He says, "Yeah, that's my wife." I said, "Okay." She says, "She just gets too claustrophobic in your church. The ceiling's too low." Without getting into a lot of details here, they had a professional business, and I went to that a couple of times when they first started coming. She called me into her office, and we talked for a little bit. Her office was 12 by 12. It was like holding a meeting in a VW, but it's claustrophobic.

People, they examine everything. They walk in and they say, "Well, I don't like what she's got on. Wow, nice suit. Too bad they didn't have it your size." We judge everything. We judge everything except ourselves. You know where it starts? It starts with you and I examining ourselves.

Then he says, "Prove your own selves." Romans 12:1-2 says:

*Romans 12:1-2*

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

You and I have something to prove.

Then he says, "To know yourself." This is probably the best one because most of God's people, and I haven't even been talking about the world, but most of God's people can never be honest with themselves. They just can't. What we're going to talk about today is that very thing: getting honest about ourselves. I looked at this, and it says, "Examine yourselves." Then it says, "Prove your own selves." And then it says, "Know your own selves." Know yourself, not somebody else. You examine yourself, not somebody else. The key word there is, "your own self," not somebody else.

Now our text today will strike right to the heart of what Paul was saying in 2 Corinthians 13, where he said, "Examine yourself, prove yourself," and then he says, "to know yourself." Our verse today is Proverbs 27:19-20.

*Proverbs 27:19-20*

*As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.*

*Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*

Nate, would you stand up and ask God to bless the service this morning for me?

## IV. The Depravity of Man and Self-Righteousness

This verse is a great verse, and it will squarely hit us as human beings and really show us the situation and the depravity of man, and how rotten we all are. In life, and certainly in Christianity, we will find people who will in time develop a self-righteous attitude about other people. They'll have an unforgiving spirit toward them, whatever. In the Bible, the number one sin we know was pride, way back, not in the garden, way back before that in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Pride will lead to self-righteousness. They will develop a prejudice against somebody or something. Sometimes it's because somebody did something to them. Hey, I've seen it where the person did nothing to them, and they just don't like that person, and they'll develop a self-righteous attitude toward them and reject them.

In Christianity, and I'm sure it's still out there, I'm so out of touch with it now, but when I grew up in Christianity in the 70s, it was the concept of legalism. Legalism was a system, a non-biblical system, that said that your Christianity and your godliness depended on what clothes you wore or how you looked. Now I get it; the Bible says women need to dress in modest apparel. I understand that. But it was a place where it was such an extreme that if a woman wore slacks to church and didn't wear a dress, she was ungodly.

I was preaching up in Rochester, New York. There was an evangelist up there who, you know if I told you his name, so I'm not going to tell you. He was crippled. He had cerebral palsy since he was a kid. He walked on crutches, and he was deformed below the waist. He was one of the most angry guys. I never did figure out, he's dead now, I never did figure out what he was angry about. But every time he started to preach, he always went one place: he started preaching to the women in any church that didn't dress the way he did. Now, he'd been married; when he died, he had lost three wives. I understand that totally. I get that part. Who would want to be married to this guy? He was mean, very prideful.

There were about 2,500 people sitting there. I'll never forget, I'm sitting there, Barb is sitting there, and Mel Sabaka is sitting next to me. We're both preaching, taking turns. I wasn't on that day, nor was Mel. We were just enjoying the preaching. This guy is ranting and raving. There are 2,500 people here, and I'm going to tell you right now, nobody was dressed inappropriately. But there were women who wore slacks. He in the pulpit called the women wearing slacks, "dirty legged whores." Yes. Yes. Now, that shocked my wife, who was wearing slacks at that point in time. Never wore them since. But you had to appreciate the moment. She leans across to me and says to Mel. Now, you had to appreciate Mel. Mel said whatever he thought, and many times, it was probably, I thought it was always the best thing he said. Anyway, she leans over across me, I'm sitting here, she says, "Mel, Mel." I mean, Mel was her spiritual father. She says, "Mel," and those people around us. And Mel never whispered. You knew that. When God gave the whisper, he didn't give one to Mel. So she leans over to me whispering, and she says, "Mel, Mel, is that true? Is that true?" And I'm sitting there, and Mel goes, "Nah, he's just mad because he got no legs." You had to be there, man. I'm telling you. But this crowd, I mean, they were nuts.

You learn from the fallacy of legalism that you can't legislate morals, and you don't make people godly by making them dress. You go after their heart. I mean, I'm telling you. You tell a woman, "You can't wear slacks. You have to wear a dress." And then she will. And it'll be up to here. And then you say, "No, no, no. It's got to be a dress. It's got to be long." And then she'll wear one that's long, but it's so thin a mosquito could fly through without breaking its wings. So now you got to say, "It's got to be a dress. It's got to be long. And it's got to be thick." And then she'll wear one so tight, it'll look like a skin diver suit. You can't legislate morals. You have to preach to a person's heart. I want to tell you, guys or gals, when you dress every morning to please the Lord, whatever you've got on is going to be okay because it's based on the heart.

I never met some of the most self-righteous people in all your life that they won't even fellowship. They wouldn't even talk to somebody. They looked at other people that did that, and it's a thing. And they're so stupid. They always, the verse was back there in, I think it's in Leviticus, where it says, "A woman should not wear that which pertaineth to a man." God forbid we should get the context on that, but that's homosexuality or somebody dressing like a woman, cross-dressing or whatever. It has nothing to do with that. If that was true, this is how stupid they are, if that was true, then if you're here this morning or any church and you're a woman, you have a dress on, then you've got a man's clothes on. Because then in the Bible, every man wore a short skirt. See how stupid it is? But they would develop this self-righteous attitude that "I'm godly because this is the way I dress, and you're ungodly because you wear shorts or you wear..."

There are pastors who will not permit anybody to preach in their pulpit without wearing a suit and tie. Now, I don't have a problem with that. And hey, I've been invited to places in the past where, when I do that, not Romans 14, I wear a suit and tie. I'm not going to cause a problem over it. I understand that. And I don't have a problem with that, but please, please, please, do you actually think that encasing this filthy flesh in a \$400 suit is going to make you godly?

I had a friend of mine one time that was a pastor. He never—he would cut his grass. He would take the coat jacket off to cut the grass in a shirt and tie. We were good buddies. I loved him very much, and he was a great guy. I would laugh at him sometimes, and we would make fun of him. I would make fun of him. I asked him one time, and he was a—he had a big church. He was a doctor. I just called him doctor, just for that. We were good buddies. I had heard this story, and I wanted to ask him. We were together one time, and I said, "Doc, let me ask you a question. Is it true that you and a bunch of pastors went on a retreat in Colorado at a ski resort, and you wore a suit and tie underneath your ski suit?" It got just that quiet. And he says, "Well, Bob," he said, "you know, I'm just stuck in a lot of old ways." And I said, "Okay." It's just crazy.

They used to have—you know, when they had girls' softball, the girls had to wear culottes. You ever see a girl sliding into second base wearing culottes? Crazy. I've seen them come to the place where they wanted to play ball, and they wanted to wear culottes, and they had to wear culottes over pants or over their sweatsuit. It's crazy. I'm just telling you. They would develop a prejudice, and it's just—it's people who believe the Bible, who just get self-righteous and get an attitude toward other people.

## V. Seeing Our Reflection in the Word

Our verse starts out by declaring a great truth. It says, "As in water, face answers to face." It's a simple truth. It's simply saying we will all see the depravity of our reflection in the life of somebody else. We're really no better than the person sitting next to you. The quicker we figure that out, the better off we're going to be. People like the word reflection. "What are you doing?" "I'm just reflecting." "Deep thought. I'm just reflecting." "What are you reflecting on?" "A truck's got its lights in my eyes, and I can't see anything except his reflectors. I'm just reflecting." No. And we just—deep thought.

The Bible talks about reflection. In James 1:22-25, he talks about us seeing our reflection in the Word of God.

*James 1:22-25*

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

There are so many people who are just like that. They come every Sunday, they come every Thursday, they're in church every Sunday across the city, and they never do anything with it. The reason why people don't want to get into the Bible, let's be honest: you don't like what you see. You can say, "Well, where does he get all this or where does he get all that?" But at the end of the day, when you look into that—the Bible's the only book when you start to read it, it starts to read you.

It's that Snow White, mirror, mirror on the wall thing, which was one of my favorite nursery rhymes because it's based on the Bible. Snow White is a picture of you and me before we got saved. Over there, she's the fairest in the land. She's got a stepmother or whatever it is that doesn't like her, and her stepmother every day goes and looks in the mirror and wants that mirror to lie to her and tell her how pretty she is. So she says, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" And the mirror comes back and says, "Ain't you, you're ugly. Snow White." So what happened? She developed a prejudice to Snow White. Then she wanted to get rid of Snow White. So she sends this hunter guy out to kill her, and he can't do it. He sees her and he says—you know, he probably fell in love with her. It could have made a great love story if it had a second chapter to it. And he can't kill her. So then she dresses up as some old lady and takes a poison apple. She knocks on the door, and she says, "Here's an apple for you." And Snow White bites the apple. It's a poison apple, and she dies.

Now if you can't figure out the Bible so far, here's a woman who was Snow White. She got a forbidden piece of fruit that killed her, and now she's dead. And now lo and behold, one day, yes, you guessed it, her prince came. Prince Charming. And what did he do? He kissed her. That will always work. He kissed her. And she came alive.

I'm telling you right there, there was a time when the Bible says over there in Isaiah 51 that when you get saved, you're made white as snow. You become Snow White. And we had it, and we lost it by somebody taking of a forbidden fruit. And now we were dead. And one day, you know how it happened? Our Prince Charming came, and he kissed your soul with that book. And you came alive today. Every time you go to the mirror, mirror in the book, and you ask, "How good am I? Boy, did I do good?" That book will reveal about you not only the things that you did are good, but really the things you need to work on. And we don't want to see that. We don't want to do that. The problem with most of us is we're hanging out with the seven dwarfs.

The Bible says he beholds—in James 1:23—he beholds his face, his natural face. We all get up in the morning, and the first thing you do is get up and go to the bathroom, and you look into the mirror. You know that's not how you're coming to church. And thank God for it. You know it. I mean, you look like you've been in a cat fight all night long. You're bleary-eyed. You're—and you haven't even been drinking yet. Your eyes are all puffy. Your hair looks like it was just done by the north wind. And you look at that thing, boy, you turn the light on, and as fast as you can, you turn that light off. But look at you here today. Oh, you're beautiful today. You're just lovely. Gorgeous. You just drop-dead gorgeous. I mean, you got a \$39.95 Urushai paint job this

morning, sweetheart. You did. You did good. And us guys, we're the same way. I watch those young guys in the bathroom there. Get that part just right there. I walk up behind them and go, "Bleh." That's what the Bible does. We don't look that hot the first time we look in the book. You have to work at loving the Bible and what it says to you that isn't what you want to hear. That's part of growing. When you don't want to grow, then you walk away and you forget what manner of man you are, and you go his way, and you forget what you really look like.

Proverbs 27:18 and James 1:22-25 simply tell us that we need to get over ourselves. You didn't look too hot the first time God laid eyes on you either, nor did I. But you've forgotten that. I'll tell you, when we have a problem with somebody else or we don't have that self-righteous attitude or we just get an attitude about somebody, and I realize people can be goofy. Don't tell me about it. I understand. Somebody asked me the other day, "Hey, we've got a group going down to the zoo. Do you want to go with us?" "No, I pastor what? I'm good." I'm telling you, people will get up. But you know what? So what? That's what human nature is. I don't get an attitude about you being the way you are. I just understand that by the grace of God, that's where I would be. And now I understand that maybe I can help you. Maybe not, but maybe I can. But I realize, brother, the first time God laid eyes on this guy, I didn't look too hot. I don't still look too hot.

The Bible makes it clear that all men will have the same human spirit that needs to be cleansed by the Word of God. That spirit will be the same in all of us. When we don't see that or we forget that, then we actually think that we're better than somebody else. We get an attitude about it.

#### *1 Corinthians 10:13*

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

It's common to all of us. You want to live your life and pretend like you live above all those things. You're fooling yourself. You need to get honest with yourself. We're all in the same boat.

#### *1 Peter 5:9*

*Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

We all struggle with the same things. That's what we see in each other. That's the common bond between us: we have this old sin nature. Now we struggle with issues. And yet sometimes when we are in a position to help somebody struggling, we want to take the attitude of being self-righteous. Come on, it's easier to cast blame on somebody than it is to get into their life and try to help them. You cannot make people better until you see and understand that you're no better than they are.

When you understand that and you realize that where you're at is because of the grace of God, Bobaba said something down at the mission the first time I ever heard him preach years and years ago. He started out with these guys, and he said, "You know, you guys may think that we think we're better than you, and that is not true. But I will tell you this, we're not better than you,

but we're better off than you because we've got God in our lives." You're not any better than anybody else, but some of us are better off than some other people. Okay, then help them. Use it. Don't get that attitude that you're better than them so you want nothing to do with them or you don't want them in my little group or I don't want this or do you want that? Quit acting like a junior high. Realize that if you've got that and you understand that, then you're in the best position to help somebody. Now maybe they don't want the help. That's okay. My whole life is filled with people who I tried to help didn't want help, but when I walked down the road and looked back, I know I did what I was supposed to do.

## VI. The Corrupt Heart of Man

Then he says in the last part of Proverbs 27:19, "so the heart of man to man." Just like we all have the same fallen nature and spirit, we all have the same rotten heart. You need to know this, and it's two great truths about us. The spirit of man will be the contact point of God or the world. He told you that in Proverbs 20:27 where he says:

*Proverbs 20:27*

*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*

Where God is going to first start to make contact with you is through your spirit. Where the world, the devil, is going to try to make first contact with you is through your spirit. That's one of the other contacts. The direction you go in life is formed by now out of your spirit, the heart attitude that you have. Where the spirit will be the point of either God touching you or the world touching you, your heart and your attitude will be the direction that you go in life based on who just touched you. It's just that simple. What you allow in your spirit will be in time where your heart will be at. It's just that simple.

That's why you parents have to guard with good kids in your kids' lives. That's why you parents have to make sure that to the best of your ability growing up, you teach them a good value choice. That they don't want to hang out with this crowd. They don't want to be part of this because the moment they, I'm telling you, the moment they attach their spirit to it, their heart's going that way. Because the Bible says in Proverbs 23:7, "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Your spirit, but what we call the mind over there in Ephesians 4:23. When you let this mind that we have, our spirit, be associated with the things of God, then you develop an attitude of heart for the things of God. When you deny your children that or yourself that and you cater to the world, then that's where your heart attitude is going to go. It is just that simple.

And yet we live in a world, and certainly in Christianity, that tells you and me to follow your heart. Listen to Joel Osteen some Sunday morning while you're getting up and trying to make yourself look presentable. The whole mindset is just follow your heart. Follow your heart. Follow the dreams of your heart. Let your heart be your guide. In our sight, every man is that still small voice. Listen to it. It'll always tell you what to do. Yeah, and you'll wind up in a lake of fire. Good job. Good job. Do what your heart tells you to do. "My son, follow your heart. Follow your dreams. Follow your heart. Oh, I believe that with all of my heart. Oh, I love you with all of my heart." And so is the heart of man to man.

And yet when it comes to a heart, the Bible's so crystal clear. How could you miss it? Jeremiah 17:9 says:

*Jeremiah 17:9*

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

You're going to follow that? You can't trust your heart. You can't trust anything about you. You want to trust the right heart? Trust God's heart. That's the heart you can trust. You want to trust the mind? Trust God's mind. Philippians 2:5 says:

*Philippians 2:5*

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

Mark 7:18-23 is a great passage.

*Mark 7:18-23*

*And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;*

*Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?*

*And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.*

*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.*

That is the greatest passage in the world that tells you whatever problem you're dealing with today, there ain't no psychologist going to fix it. Whatever you're dealing with is not going to be fixed by some therapist or somebody giving you advice. It's a spiritual problem. It's a spiritual issue. This is called the Asa concept. Remember Asa back there in 2 Chronicles 16? He got a disease in his feet. Picture you and me getting a problem in our walk with God, and instead of taking it to God, he took it to the therapist, the psychologist, he took it to the doctors, the physicians, and you know what? He died. You know why? Because those things aren't physical problems. You say, "I'm depressed." That ain't a physical problem. That's a spiritual problem. "Well, I'm struggling with this." It's not a physical problem. He told you right there, those things that defile a man come out of your heart. Where's your heart been? Where's your mind been? Where's your spirit been?

People don't want to get honest with themselves. They always want somebody else to bail them out. They're always looking for, to blame their problem on somebody else, and always looking for a good, good old spiritual handout. Last Saturday, I was out, and Zach called me on the phone. You were discipling somebody over at Starbucks up here by 291? 39th Street. Yeah, okay.

Yeah, that's 291, Zach. 291 goes right across 39th Street. It's okay. Never mind, Zach. I'm going to tell their story.

So he calls me, and he says, "Hey, this woman," I guess you had your Bibles out, "and this woman comes over and she says, 'I really need help.'" If you're going to do this, put your Bibles under the table because the moment they see a Bible, you're going to be a target. I get people like this all the time. I get them. I get calls four or five times a week. It's obvious that they're going down through a list someplace. There's probably people out there that for a dollar will sell homeless people a list that's got every church on it in Kansas City. This lady came up, and hey, I was good. Don't get mad at me. Don't look at me like that. Zach called me, and she says she needs some gas. And I said, "Well, get her. She needs to get to St. Louis." And I said, "That's fine. Get her some gas." I said, "No problem." And she said, "He wants to talk to you." And I said, "Oh, here it comes."

So I took the phone. She says, "Hello." I said, "Hi, how are you?" She says, "I'm fine." She says, "I'm in real, real trouble." And I said, "What's the matter?" She said, "Well, somebody gave me a gift card that had \$100 on it. And for some reason, they have, they have, I pushed in the wrong pin, and they shut down my gift card." You buy a gift card, it is what it is. Nobody shuts down your gift card. When you buy it, you tell your little thing there, you got a sign. If you lose this, somebody else is going to spend it because you can't shut it down. But I was cool. I was cool. Because I want to help people. Don't you look at me like that. And I was cool. So I listened to her, and I said, "Well, here's what I would tell you to do." I said, "You know what?" She said, "Well, I just need some money to get to St. Louis." And I said, "Well, we're going to give you some gas." She said, she kept pushing, "But I need some money. And this card will not work for \$48." Well, and I thought to myself, we fill your car up with gas. You got \$48, you don't have to go anywhere. Just wait. You got to open up your gas. No, I didn't say that.

So I go through my standard procedure. And I said, "Well, look, you're obviously not associated with the church." She said, "Oh, but I am." I said, "Oh, okay, good." I said, "Where's this church at?" She says, "It's down in Oklahoma." And I said, "Fine, fine, fine, fine. You may have your pastor's phone number. I will call him. And if he verifies that you're a good member in that church, I'll give you the money. And he doesn't even have to pay it back." I'm going to tell you something. If you're ever in another state and your car breaks down or you get waylaid or somebody steals everything you got and you find a church and you need money, you need \$100, \$1,000, \$5,000, \$20, whatever the case may be, new car, new house, whatever. You go to that pastor and you say, "Pastor, this is what I meant. Would you call my pastor, Pastor Bob Alexander, and he'll verify that I'm a member of that church?" And he'll call me. And I'll tell him, "I don't know who these people are. I didn't know who these people are before. I don't know who they are. You can't be. Drake who? You see a little skinny guy with a little mustache down here? Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. They got the SWAT team looking for him up here at Independence. Right. That's right."

So I said to her, "Hey, don't look at me this way. If it's all good, I'm good." And so I said, "Well, let me call your pastor." And she says, "Well, the church went through a terrible flood, and the church is underwater." I said, "Is your pastor underwater?" Okay. "The church is underwater." I

get that. "Is she down at the bottom in a scuba tank trying to what? He's underwater too?" Well, when I asked her that, then she got, then she handed the phone back to you. He never got, I said, "Get her to get her." She didn't want the gas. People all the time like that. And I, hey, don't look at me like that. I will help anybody. You know me. I will. And I, but I want to, I'm not, you know, I just, you ain't going to rip me off. If you got, if you're a standing member in a church and you love God and the Bible and you've got a church and a pastor will back you up, I'll give you whatever you need. If you don't go to church and you're just shaming me, hey, if life serving the devil is that good, let him fill your tank up with gas. Amen. But see, yeah, you're amen in that, but people don't like that. Where do you get the idea that church is a charity organization? I mean, we're here to help. I always tell them, "Well, I help my people in our church first, and we take care of them first." And I said, "You know, I'll be glad to call your pastor." Well, you start talking that way, and then you're in trouble. They're gone. They're out of here.

I'm telling you, people will do that all the time to you. It's a thing where this passage here tells us that the problems we have, they don't come because of a physical thing. It's our heart. Your heart is based on where your spirit is at, and your spirit where it's at is based on where you put it. That's just the way that it works.

## VII. The Cure: A New Heart and Mind

That's why when we get saved, we got a heart transplant. Romans 10:9-10, we talked about it in Gentile salvation.

*Romans 10:9-10*

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

In Acts 15:9, he says, on a daily basis, after we're saved, we are to purify our hearts by faith.

*Acts 15:9*

*And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

Getting God's spirit and getting God's heart at the time you get saved. Now, keeping your spirit and your heart with God instead of the world, you now have the ability to have the three greatest character qualities of Christ in your life. If you want to see somebody that's doing it, you don't have to ask them, you don't have to look at the notes in their Bible, you don't have to see how many times they're coming to church, just look for these three things. Because these three things are the greatest character qualities of Christ. And when you have the right heart, the right spirit, then you have them.

You know what the first one is?

1. Grace. You know how you got saved? God gave you and me grace, and we didn't deserve it. What are you giving to people that don't deserve it? Amen, amen, amen.
2. Forgiveness. "I just can't forgive that person." Oh well, I'm glad God didn't say that about you and me. Amen.
3. Restoration. You know the whole idea of God and everything in the Bible is about restoration? God's going to restore Israel. God wanted to restore Adam. He restored the people in the Old Testament. He restored you and me and our fallen race. And yet, we take that restoration, we let God restore us, but oh boy, I'm not restoring myself to anybody.

There's only two things that will keep you from doing those three things.

4. James 1:24, forgetting what manner of man we are.
5. The relic of a self-righteous attitude of heart, because your soul, my soul is saved.

*Ephesians 1:13*

*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

*Ephesians 4:30*

*And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

We're saved. Our soul is saved, but our spirit is not. 2 Corinthians 7:1 says:

*2 Corinthians 7:1*

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

It simply says that the promise of God, the principles of God, will change your heart. It's as simple as that. Now, having a notebook full of principles, having your little three by five cards in your purse won't do you a bit of good if you're not applying them. How they change you. How they changed you the way you look at things that are things of God, face to face, face to face in the Word of God, recognizing who we are, face to face with this heart and spirit of man, knowing that I am no better than you. We all struggle with the problems of life.

I'll be honest, I have a hard time with people who won't make things right with other people. To me, it speaks to a fundamental problem. People want to exclude people or they shun them because they don't like this or they don't like that. Hey, what would have been if that's what God would have done with you? I mean, come on, who am I not to forgive you or to restore you? Especially when God had so much against me. And I was a total mess to God, and I was very clear from Romans that I was His enemy. And yet He made it right for me through Christ. When I couldn't do for myself, He did for me. Many times the very people you don't like or you don't want to shun or you don't want to be part of, you have what they need. If you just get your head out of wherever it's at, you'd realize that you have what they need, and you would be there for them. Oh, no, no, no, no. I mean, I'm not going to have an attitude toward anybody. Are you kidding me? What's wrong with us? How do I have an attitude about anybody after, anybody had

a reason to have an attitude to anybody, God had one that had one toward me. And He didn't. We're all glad we're saved this morning, if you're honest. We're all glad that we're in Christ. We're all glad that our sins are forgiven. We're all glad that God restored the fallen image of Adam, and here we are today. But we're just a little short on taking that to somebody else. Amen, amen.

## VIII. The Insatiable Eyes of Man

Look at Proverbs 27:20 now. Here's another good one. Look at another truth, wow.

*Proverbs 27:20*

*Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*

Now, for the Bible student, if you're paying attention and you study to show yourself approved, you'll remember or should have marked in your Bible that back in Proverbs 15:11, you have the same verse. But if you'll notice the word "eyes," which are here in Proverbs 27:20, have been replaced back in Proverbs 15:11 with the word "heart."

*Proverbs 15:11*

*Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more than the hearts of the children of men?*

Same verse, he just switched two little words to give you a great truth and a great principle. Our heart attitude and our spirit will be based on what we look at in our eyes. Lust of the eyes leads to the pride of life. It's just that simple.

Then he says in Proverbs 27:20, "hell is never full." That's because Isaiah 5:14 tells us that hell keeps enlarging itself to accommodate all the new arrivals.

*Isaiah 5:14*

*Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.*

In this life, there'll never be an end to destruction, not till Jesus comes back. Man causes it by his sin. Man causes it by his disobedience. God never intended the world to be in the mess that it is. God had a plan that the world was going to be perfect. It was man that messed it up. Destruction.

Back in the 1960s, this is before most of you were born, '60, '65 on up into my early years as a young man, I learned a great lesson. We had back in the '60s, what most of you would only see in museums now, they were called hippies. Hippies were, we called them flower children. Their theme was "make love not war." They'd have great, this is where your rock bands really get their start. They'd have great places, where they'd have great rock concerts, that were called love-ins. It was free sex with everybody, free drugs everywhere. They were against any established authority. The war in Vietnam was going on then, and they were very much against the war. The whole country was against the war. There were riots going all over the place. I remember the Kent State Massacre. Most of you don't remember that. There again, they were burning down

buildings in college campuses, rioting, burning cars. They called the Ohio National Guard to protect the facilities. The Ohio National Guard, they were up on a hilltop, and they were protecting because they wanted to burn it down. It's a crowd of kids coming at them with torches, throwing rocks, dog crap, everything, just terrible. I don't know what happened. I don't know what took place or what triggered it, but they felt threatened, and a couple of the National Guard fired into the group, and there were seven or eight kids killed. That didn't help situations any.

The whole country, I was in the military at that point in time. We had a different view of it. The whole country was thinking of a great injustice. "Put them, he's been on trial for murder. They killed these college kids." I mean, it didn't matter, the kids were burning down the buildings and doing terrible things. That's how the hippies looked at it. We in the military looked at it differently. We looked at it, "National Guard, eight Kent State, nothing." That was us. I was at Fort Devens at the time with the 10th Special Forces Group, and they were going to storm the front gate. They had MPs out there lined out with flak vests on with bayonets under M14s, and there was about a thousand people out there. Well, the Special Forces guys were good at infiltration. So some of those guys got all dressed up like hippies and infiltrated them and found out what they were going to do. They found out that morning, they were going to storm the gate, and they were going to come in and burn the fort down. So our Colonel commanding officer, he was a tough old guy, so he, I'll never forget it. I went up onto the hilltop, I wasn't part of it. I was up on the hilltop watching him, and they were going to come out the gate and going to storm the gate. There was only one, two roads you could come up on both sides. They had 300 Green Berets with nightsticks up around the corner waiting for them. They didn't come in, but if they would have come in, I'll tell you what, there'd have been a fun time. I mean, it'd have been something special, I guarantee you.

But that's the way they were. They burned down colleges, they burned down buildings, they burned down houses all across this country. They were against anything with established authority. Anything that stood for anything, this movement was against. It was against any established authority: the government, the military, the war in Vietnam, all those things. I learned a great lesson. I saw them burn down buildings and destroy things, but never in all my years did I ever watch them ever build anything. I came away from that, understanding a great truth: when you rebel against authority, you never build anything, but you become an expert in destruction. Boy, I learned that lesson.

I'm telling you, it's a thing where, when we don't submit ourselves to the Word of God and the things of God, and we do our own thing, and we get an attitude about other people, we become the art of destruction, and it never ends. I mean, I've seen it, kids destroying their own lives, parents destroying their kids, husbands destroying their families, pastors destroying their church, religions destroying Christianity, the government destroying countries, and higher education destroying the final authority of the Word of God, on and on and on it goes, and it says that it will never end. Because man without God, saved or lost, can never build anything. He can only destroy it. In life, in the life of destruction, man will never find fulfillment and always will be dissatisfied with life, and he'll keep getting into things that he destroys, looking for the satisfaction, but he'll never find it.

## IX. The Secret to Satisfaction: Contentment

The book of Ecclesiastes is a great book, and it talks about God's dealing with man under the sun on planet earth. It's a book in the Bible that is written directly to show you how the world and unsaved men think. He says, "under the sun, all is vanity." The theme of the book is nothing will satisfy you without God. In the book, he lists 10 vanities that will leave you empty and never satisfy you, but these are the same 10 things that everybody, saved and lost, try to put in their lives.

6. Wisdom (Ecclesiastes 2:13). Look, you can get all the wisdom that you want, but if it isn't God's wisdom, it didn't go anywhere.
7. Labor (Ecclesiastes 2:19). The vanity of labor, working hard, doing this, getting all the money you get, get all you can, can all you get and hold on to it all your life, it's vanity.
8. Purpose (Ecclesiastes 2:26). Most of God's people have absolutely no purpose in life. They don't know why or have any idea what God wants to do with them. They're like that little rat in the maze of life, and the golden cheese is at the end, which is heaven. All their life, they just find, they just, up and down, dead-end streets, this, that, and all of their life, they never get to it until they're exhausted at the end.
9. Ambition (Ecclesiastes 4:4). What you want to do in life. We thank God for saving us, we thank God for giving us a home in heaven. Now get out of the way, God, I want to do what I want to do.
10. Fun (Ecclesiastes 7:6). We spell fun, S-I-N.
11. Fame (Ecclesiastes 4:6). We think because we're going to be somebody. Christianity is about being nobody and letting God be somebody.
12. Money (Ecclesiastes 5:10). Love of money is the root of all evil because it leads to covetousness.
13. Self (Ecclesiastes 4:7).
14. Covetousness (Ecclesiastes 6:9).
15. Reward (Ecclesiastes 8:10).

With all of this, all it will do is leave man unfulfilled and unsatisfied.

Now God's cure for all this will be simple. You get a new heart that is based on a new spirit, that's based on you getting a new mind. The Bible says in Romans 12 that you renew that mind on a daily basis with the Word of God. 1 Timothy 1:7 says it turns into a sound mind when you make it God's mind. Ephesians 4:23 says that you renew the spirit of your mind every day. Philippians 2:5 says that we have this mind which was also in Christ Jesus, the mind of the Lord. I'm telling you, that's just how it works. That will give you a new purpose, a new direction, a new life, and Christ Jesus.

So the eyes of man are never full, the Bible says. These are some incredible, incredible principles. I want to leave you with seven great truths that I've found in my own life. Sometimes I need to write a book or do something on all the things that I've learned in life. Most of them I have learned the hard way. The question is not that you learn it the easy way or the hard way; sometimes learning the hard way is the best way. The question is, did you learn it?

The first thing I want to tell you is this:

16. 1 Timothy 6:6 says: 1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain. The satisfaction that we have, what we want in life, the dreams that we have.

17. If you can't have the best of everything, I've learned that you just make the best of what you do have.

18. The secret to satisfaction is to be content with what God has given you.

19. A man who will not be satisfied with himself in Christ Jesus will never be satisfied with anything in life, because that's where it all starts.

20. He that is content has enough.

21. He that complains has way too much.

22. Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is always too little. And he that isn't satisfied with what he has will never be satisfied with what he thinks he needs to have.

Those are the truths of life. Contentment, being satisfied, and the eyes of man are never satisfied. Great truths in these two verses about us.

## X. Conclusion

First of all, fixing yourself. Quit trying to fix somebody else. Realizing that face to face, we're all in the same boat. We're here to help each other, not hurt each other. There's no Christian, no person on this planet who is better than anybody else. You might be better off, as I said, but you're not better. The fact that you are better off only gives you the great position to be able to help them with what they're struggling with, if they want to help. But the idea that we're just going to sit back and push them off, talk about them, write the little things on Facebook or social media that we don't like about them and all those things. You know what? One of these days, God's going to open up His great computer and Facebook in the sky. And boy, when He types in some things about me and you, the whole universe is going to see it. I'd be careful what you're typing.

Face to face. We see who we really are by examining ourselves, proving ourselves, knowing ourselves. Your mind, your spirit will determine your heart attitude. Your heart attitude will determine your course in life. It's just that simple. Life is not complicated. You're going to go one direction or the other, and that is going to be determined by your spirit. That's going to be determined what you lend it to. Whatever you lend it to is going to develop your heart attitude, and out of the heart is going to come attitude, and out of attitude is going to come action. That's the way it's going to work. It's just that simple. We like to make life complicated because psychologists and therapists charge you \$80 an hour, and suddenly when your insurance runs out, you're fixed. Praise the Lord.

The bottom line is simply this: we're all in the same boat. We have to help each other. We have to realize that even though I'm the pastor, I am no better than you, and you're no better than me, and we're all in this together. I just can't stand churches with a pastor or somebody way up here who actually thinks he's better than the people that he preaches to and how lucky you are to have him.

You got to tar and feather him and put him on a horse backwards and run him out of town. You'll never get anything from God through somebody like that because God always spoke through the common man. It was described in the Pharisee that didn't like him hanging out with the publicans and the sinners. It was the common ordinary man that got His first coming. It wasn't the religious leaders. It's always the common man. That's why God wrote you a common Bible to a common man that'll give you God's common purpose for your life. Put it in context. But it all comes back to what you're going to do with what God has given to you. Looking at each other, just seeing each other and ourselves in each other. Realizing that the heart is the worst thing you can ever follow, unless it's God's heart. And then realize that whatever God has given you, you take it and be content with it, and God will add to it. Those are the simple little secrets of the Christian life and its success in your relationship with God.

Let's pray. Father, we do thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus, we love you. We thank you, Father, for all you do for us. Thank you for these good people. I thank you, Father, for the fact that we all understand basically what I said today. Sometimes, Lord, it's just good to be reminded. These are good people here. They help people. I know we all get our nose bent out of joint sometimes, Lord, it's just the way life goes. But Lord, sometimes we need to be reminded that we're no better than the person sitting in front of us, behind us, to the left or the right of us. We still struggle in the same areas, and those who have overcome can help those to overcome if we just allow those three basic principles to give them grace, to show them forgiveness, and to help restore them. Help us, Lord, to examine ourselves, to prove ourselves, and most certainly to know ourselves. We'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you, you're dismissed. Amen.