

## I. Introduction to Proverbs 29 and the Depth of God's Word

Well, yes, you probably have guessed it by now if you haven't got your Bible this morning, Proverbs chapter 29. I know we're a ways from this yet, but I'm thinking about, I've always wanted to do this and it would be a great book. I'm thinking about once we finish up Proverbs here, in the next four or five years, I was thinking about teaching the Gospel of John. I think that that is such a powerful book and there's so much from where we're at right now that we can learn from that. It's just one of the key books, and in doing that, I can weave in the first four books of the Bible for you in the New Testament. I just think we would learn a lot from that. But we are focused on Proverbs 29 today. It's something we can all pray about.

Last week we looked at three amazing verses. Proverbs is just an incredible book. If I would be honest with you today, I think when we finish Proverbs, we could most generally likely just start over again and come through it again. But we won't do that. It's been an amazing book. I don't know of another book in the Bible that meets us on the level of where we're at and really helps us grasp the principles of life that we need. It just deals with so much that impacts all of us.

Last week we looked at Proverbs 29:11-13. In verse 11, we talked about, as we know from Proverbs, a wise man and a foolish man. We talked about the wise man having the ability to use truth, but to use it the right way. I talked about the depth of God and getting to the point in your life where you really understand the depth of the Word of God. The Bible calls it the unsearchable riches. It's endless. Honestly, we could go through Proverbs now and start again, thread through the middle, and God would show us just as much the next time as He showed us this time. That's the beauty about the Word of God.

We talked about, in life, the physical life around us, there's three dimensions to it. We talked about that. The Bible talked about in Ephesians 4:19, the height, the breadth, the length. I showed you how that they really deal with God in a way, dealing with the mercy of God, the love of God, the historical aspect of God, and all of those things. The downside of that is the truth is that most Christians are not even three-dimensional. They're just one-dimensional.

I know most of you ladies probably, and a lot of you guys, you probably never really went deer hunting. I know we have a lot of hunters here, but they don't understand what I'm saying. If you really want to do a successful deer hunt, you've got to get in a deer stand. The guy who just walks through the woods, he may get lucky and get a dumb deer, or he may just stumble into something. But you can't see because everything's one-dimensional. Once you get in a deer stand, just 10, 15 feet up, those three dimensions come alive, and you can see everything now where on a ground level you can't. That's what Christianity is for most of God's people, ground level. They never see the depth of everything around them, the dimensions of really the Word of God and the Lord, much less ever get to that fourth dimension, the spiritual dimension.

It talks about being filled with the fullness of God, understanding how to use what you have, that depth, that you don't just puff yourself up with it and talk about all the knowledge and what you

do know. But you learn how to use that. You learn how to read circumstances and situations and people. Then you call upon the depth of what you know to be able to hand fit that to what you need to do. It's really the key to preaching.

I am excited with Charles' new ministry over here that he's doing for us down there at the rest home, where we've got some really young guys going to be preaching for the very first time. I think that's just great. I really do. I've talked to several of them and they've got good verses. They've got good material that they're going to try to develop. I think that as an entry level, that's exactly what we need to do. Got some of the older guys that are going to help them and work with them and encourage them and show them stuff. That doesn't get any better than that.

But I want to tell you something. Preaching is not nearly as much as the text that you have or what you know or don't know about the Bible. Preaching success is your ability to use the resources that you do have. Being able to inject something here, put something in here. Don't just stay along the party lines of your message, but be able to get off the depth that you have. I've always thought, and I like to listen to preachers, and I've always in my own mind, because I am one, you automatically just grade them as what you think how good they are. I always enjoyed sermons. I know the guys that preach here, I know what Danny preaches and Bob preaches, I listen to them when I'm out of town. A good sermon is one you can come away and get four or five other sermons out of. There's so much depth to them. That's the key.

Now, I don't expect you young guys going down to the rest home down there to take them down to Gap Theory and put them all that stuff together. But it's a start for you. As you do that, God will open up more doors for you. As you learn the Bible, my job is to show you how to use all of that. Understanding how to use what you know when you build that level of depth in your life.

We talked about not teaching all the Bible you know. I didn't give you this verse last week, but it's one of my favorites. It's found in Deuteronomy 29:29.

*Deuteronomy 29:29*

*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

What a great verse that is. That verse shows you that there'll be many things as you get into the depth of God that God just kind of puts his arm around you and gives to you. He'll show you. I've always had the picture in my mind of somebody studying myself, late at night or throughout the day or whatever. You're sitting down there by yourself at a desk or a table and the Bible's open and you're pouring over. I've always likened myself, I love the, I think I saw a picture one time of this, of the Holy Spirit of God, the Lord Jesus Christ standing by you while you're seated there with his arm around you pointing and showing things to you in the Bible. The things that God gives you as you get into the depth of the Bible, they're yours. They're yours. There's something that you and God, together God gave that to you and you want to share them with your children. In time you'll learn how to share some of those things with the people that you're working with.

*Ephesians 3:19*

*And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

These people would never even understand what the fullness of God is. They would think that just being full with the Holy Spirit, like the day you get saved, they would think all kinds of things. But in reality, here again, Proverbs chapter two, going back to our book of Proverbs, we talked about this way back when we came through chapter two. Proverbs 2:1-5 will tell you the five steps of getting the fullness of God. It's incredible stuff.

In verse 12, you know how that leadership is so vital in the lives of God's people, pastors to their churches, parents to their children, and how God intended an unbroken chain of truth being passed down through the New Testament church. It's called the Timothy principle in 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul says:

*2 Timothy 2:2*

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

God designed Christianity to be an unbroken chain of truth. Forget all the other heresies that pop up. Forget all the other goofy stuff that people get into. It means nothing. I showed you a couple of weeks ago how heresy is important to God because it establishes what the real truth is at an unbroken chain of biblical truth that is established through history than is established through the Word of God. It just doesn't get any better than that. That's what God intended. We've seen over the weeks how that has all fallen apart during the time in the last 50, 60, 70, 80 years.

## II. God's Universal Light and the Dangers of Historical Bias

We looked at verse 13, how that God is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. I didn't give you this last week because I was trying to move through some things, but I think the greatest and I told you how that God in his own way in his own time. I gave you four things that God will give a revelation about himself through. One of them was the heavens. The heavens declare the glory of God. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

God down through history. You see, we get so locked into being a Baptist with our Baptist teaching and our Baptist tradition. We just think that American Christianity is the only way that God ever did it. This is where the failure of missions come in. American missionaries tried to go into foreign countries and make everybody there little Americans and get out of their own culture. Of course, that's such a sad state, but that's what happens today.

But I've known for many, many, many, many years that God does dealing with man what he wants to do. The book of Proverbs again tells us how that God's spirit touches man's spirit and gives him the light that he needs. I don't think for a moment, you ever stop and think of what was happening in North America while Jesus was doing his deal over there in the Middle East or as Europe was forming in the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh century? Ever wonder what has happened around the world? I mean, do you really believe that all those other indigenous

people just died and went to hell? I mean, I know they didn't have a Baptist church to go through. There was no Jonathan Edwards or no David Brainard. We think because of the fact that they didn't have what we have that they all got lost.

History is a, believe me, I'm a student of history. History is a very, can be a minefield if you're not careful because people read history and they forget the fact that the writer of history is writing it from his perspective. Sometimes his perspective is good and sometimes it's not. You got to weigh all history out in the light of the Word of God and what he's given you.

Now I'm going to tell you something. He was the true light, the lighteth every man that cometh into the world. I don't think for a moment that every American Indian in America during that time died and went to hell. I just don't. You see, we tend to think of the Indians as savages. We think of Custer's Last Stand and the brutal battles that the Indians did and how they massacred the white man. But let me ask you a question. If somebody broke into your house at two o'clock in the morning, wouldn't you kill them? I mean, the Indians lived in that land for what, centuries? Then the white man comes in, going to boot him out, make some promises he doesn't keep, put some on reservations and starve them. What would you do? I'm not justifying it one way or the other. I'm just saying, you've got to be careful with history.

I know that in Kansas City, you've got good people and you've got bad people. Do you think with the American Indians, you didn't have good Indians and bad Indians? I know. The white man said the only good Indian is a dead Indian. That's not true. We get to the point that we get so sterile in our thinking. I guarantee you that all the American Indians, and I'm just using them for example, men over the world, he is the true light. When God can't get him a Baptist church, a Baptist preacher, thank God for that, when God can't, he'll get him the truth somehow because he's the true light that lighteth every man coming into the world.

You ever hear of the NASPEC tribe out in Oregon? When the pilgrims showed up here and got on the East Coast after about here, about 70, maybe 100 years, the NASPEC Indians from Oregon made a 2,500-mile trip to the white man. You know what he asked? He wanted to know if they had the book that told the story of the son of the great white father. Now, how did they get that? You see, we get the idea that because they rode horses that lived in teepees and ate buffalo meat and that they were savages. They ran around half naked in loincloth. Well, that happens in Kansas City every Friday and Saturday night. You kidding me? And yes, most of them are savages too. I mean, come on. Human nature is always the same. I don't care if you're a Chickasaw, a Chickpaca, or a Sioux, or whatever, or you're a vice president of Sprint.

There were tribes here when the white man came that wanted to know about the son of the great white father. You never read about that. Somebody said, where do you learn that stuff? It's a conspiracy. They hide that in books. I know this. The American Indian talked about a great white father. That's about as close to God as you can get in Revelation 1. He talked about the great, all-knowing spirit. That's about as close as you can get to the Holy Spirit of God in John 16. I know this. When he went out on a hunting trip and he shot a deer, the first thing he did, he laid his bow and arrow down and got on his knees to thank the great white father, great spirit for bringing the

deer to him. That's more than most Baptists will do this afternoon when you sit down over your measly lunch. And they're heathens? He's the true light.

You see, we as Baptists, and I'm just picking on Baptists. I pick on everybody else here in a little bit. We think, we're so conceited, we think that if it didn't happen the way we have it happen and the way we do it, that it's wrong. That's just so stupid, absolutely stupid.

### III. Proverbs 29:14-16: Principles of Righteous Rule

Those were three great verses and three incredible verses. Today, we want to move into three more. We're moving through this thing like a laser beam. We're moving through Proverbs 29:14-16. We will look at a few more verses and again, we will glean out of them what God has for us.

Now let me read it for you and then we'll pray and then we'll get into it.

Proverbs 29:14-16

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.

We have fun with two things. Eating. We eat all the time. We eat good stuff. I've been in some Baptist churches where they make a big deal about a banquet and it's a hot dog. The pastor calls it a tube steak. You're kidding me. It's a weenie. And charges \$3 for a weenie. You're kidding me? And they boil them. I'm going to tell you what. The person who boils hot dogs, God has already consigned them to a special place in the lake of fire. I ain't giving you here. Boiled hot dogs are the worst in the world.

The second thing we have fun with is the Bible around here. We enjoy the Bible. We enjoy each other because the Bible gave us each other. We wouldn't be here today having fun and doing what we do if God wouldn't have gave us the Bible. That makes everybody here special. That makes everybody here special. You visitors today or people checking on our church makes you special. God could have sent you to do a quick trip Baptist Church down the road here.

These are three great verses. Today you're going to learn some stuff. You're going to learn some stuff about your Bible that I think will help you get up to another couple levels. You're paying attention and then you're going to learn some good practical stuff. I think that when we're all said and done today in a practical way, inspirationally, we're going to have some doctrinal things here. But I want you to come away with four great principles that I want you to get down today as we work our way through these verses. We're going to look at some things doctrinally and then we're going to look at some things inspirationally to kind of set our context. But you'll go out of here today learning some things. That's my goal. I want you to learn some things about the Bible but I also want you to learn some things about life.

### IV. Doctrinal Understanding of the Millennial Reign

Verse 14: "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever."

Now doctrinally, no question about this. Most of you probably already figured this one out. Doctrinally this will be a reference to the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. His thousand year reign that we know about laid out clearly in the Bible. You'll find it probably the easiest way to find it is in Revelation 20:1-9. He goes through the whole thing there in a general sense.

As you grow in your Bible and you get to hobnob with people about the Bible, you're going to find that basically there's three different teachings on this millennial reign of Christ. You need to know them. I remember when I first started way back in the day learning the Bible. This was one of the first three things that I learned. I got them down. I still have the notes from those many, many, many years ago.

The first teaching that you're going to find is what we call amillennialism. Somebody who believes amillennialism, and this would be the Catholic church and other churches like that, they don't believe that there's any thousand year reign. They believe that it's a spiritual reign that started when Christ went back to heaven and that we're living through it right now and there's no thousand year period, but it's up till Christ comes back. So let's call it "a." "A" means none or no or no millennium.

Then you have what we call post-millennialism. Post-millennialism is people believe that we make the world a better place to live. We clean up all of the corruption and make the world safer, better, and all of these things. Then when we get to the world to a high point, then Christ comes back. That's called post-millennialism. That'll be your Protestant churches. We call them the kingdom builders. They preach the social gospel. They're always trying to, you'll see it in politics. They're always trying to make the world a better place to live. They talk about peace, peace, peace. They've never learned a great lesson that there'll be no peace until the Prince of Peace comes back. That's how they work.

Then we have what we call pre-millennialism. Pre-millennialism is what the Bible teaches. That means that Jesus Christ is going to come back, kick the fire out of everybody on the planet, and then he's going to establish the thousand year righteous reign before eternity begins.

Now, this is a great example. Pre-millennialism is a great example of established truth through established history. The true Bible believing church has believed that for centuries. It's been a solid doctrine that's been taught. In fact, it is so clearly taught in the Bible that I just don't know how you really could miss it unless you just really wanted to.

The definitive passage, we talk about the millennium. The definitive passages on it in your Bible will be Ezekiel 40-48. I tell you that all the time. You'll find that in those eight chapters that he goes through every aspect of this thousand year reign. Clarence Larkin's books here that we have back in the bookstore, probably in my estimation does the greatest job laying it out on a chart wise. In fact, when I put it in my Bible years ago, I just took what he had and laid it all out and worked it all out and put it in there. It doesn't get any better than that. But it's a, those eight chapters really lay it out.

Having said that, the chapters before it, Ezekiel 36, 37, 38, and 39, are all built into Ezekiel 40-48 to show you the pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ezekiel 36 and 37 deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel under the thing of the dry bones coming back alive. Ezekiel 38 and 39 deal with the tribulation period and all that's taking place there. Then you have the second coming in Ezekiel 39 and then in Ezekiel 40, you've got the millennium. Everything in the Bible points to the pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's an incredible thing.

Every time that you get into your Bible, you'll see it over and over and over again in every kind of picture that you want. This will be the main theme of the Bible. I told you this Thursday night, most people think the main theme of the Bible is salvation. Well, I'm not lessening salvation and salvation is certainly one of the sub-themes of the Bible, but it's not the theme of the Bible. The theme of the Bible is the day of the Lord. Over a thousand times in the Old Testament you have a reference to that. Here again, Baptists can't seem to get that. But for me, it's pretty understandable.

The greatest day on God's calendar was in the day he came down and the sun came down and the world took him, beat him, cussed him, spit in his face and slapped him in there, crucified him, put a spear in his side and killed him. That wasn't God's—that's my greatest day. That's the day he took my sin. But that's not God's greatest day on God's calendar. No, no, the greatest day on God's calendar is the day his son sits down on the throne in Jerusalem and is crowned King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. That's his day. That's called that day, the day of the Lord all through the Bible, over a thousand times in the Old Testament. That will be the beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6-7 that we talk about, the establishing of his government.

In your Bible there will be—this will be the kingdom of heaven. We talked about this Thursday night a little bit. Defined for you in the book of Matthew. The book of Matthew is about the kingdom. You will find 52 references in Matthew on the kingdom of heaven, more than any other place in the Bible because it defines what that kingdom is.

In the Old Testament, here again, this will be typified by two men if you want to study it out. It will be David and Solomon. David and Solomon are both types of Christ. David is a type of Christ with a second coming. He defeats all the last enemies of the nation of Israel, wipes them all out, kills all the last ones, gets rid of every one of them. He reigns for 40 years and then Solomon comes to throne. After he does that, and he reigns for 40 years, and during Solomon's reign there's no wars, no battles, no enemies, all peace. See, David is a type of Christ with a second coming, wipes out the enemies, Solomon is a type of Christ in the millennium, peace for 40 years. It's all through the Bible.

The Bible tells us this will be a righteous reign. Revelation 19:11. It will be a reign of righteousness. It will be one that there's no corruption, that there's nothing, anything done wrong. It's an incredible time period. Zechariah 14 is a great chapter on it. Here's a good chapter for Baptists. Zechariah 14 in the millennium, clearly, all these nations that are left, and you know what? They're coming into Jerusalem during the millennium, keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. What? And of course, the answer to that is found in Colossians 2, which most people couldn't find and their life depended on. In fact, you'll want to get down, just go back one chapter.

Zechariah 13:2 says in the millennium, if somebody comes up and starts to preach and tell somebody about Christ, their parents thrust them through and kill them. You've got to figure out why that is. You might learn something about the Bible doing that. It's quite incredible, quite incredible.

Revelation 12:5 says it's going to be a rod of iron reign. That means there's going to be no tolerance for anything that's wrong. It says he will rule all nations with a rod of iron. Rod of iron means it's going to be strict, strict for righteousness. Wouldn't it be great to live in a place where nothing was ever done wrong? Nobody ever lied. Nobody ever cheated. You could take your car to get it fixed and the mechanic wouldn't rip you off. I mean, you could do whatever you had to do and nobody would, nobody would call you on the phone trying to sell you something that's illegal. You wouldn't have these guys calling up saying, hey, I'm from the Highway Patrol Protection League for Funds of Widows. We'd like you to send us \$1,000. None of that would happen.

See, this will be the utopia man has been looking for and trying to build all down through history. All down through history, man has tried to make the world a better place. He's tried to come to this point where he gets that because he's been a kingdom builder. They reject the Bible. They think the very idea of evolution, the man is evolving up and what's the end game in that? He gets to the place where, I mean, come on. We all, you've seen the sci-fi movies. We all get to that advanced place in the future where we're smarter, that we've done away with war, we've done away with disease, we've done away, of course by that time you've evolved where you've got no ears, no eyes and you're just a plant lit in a pottery someplace, but that's, the world's going to be better. A perfect society. That's what man wants. He wants one that's free from war. He wants one that's free from disease. He wants it to be a paradise, but he doesn't want God connected with it.

He's an amillennial or he's a post-millennial. He's a kingdom builder. He wants to work hard at making the world a better place. He wants to get away with social issues or race issues. He wants to get away with this. He wants to take all the guns away from you so they'll end violence. He wants to do all the things that he can. He wants to give everybody healthcare so everybody, that's all going toward that mindset.

Back in the 1700s when the British Empire was really ruling the seven seas with her vast, vast Navy. Of course she explored, and you got to remember now that she was a Bible believing nation at that time, believed the Bible, everything about it. When they got down to the South Seas down there, around Tahiti, those places, New Georgia, those places down there, Guadalcanal, all those paradise places that were just seeming like a paradise. Big palm trees, big parrots squawking all the time. Just a, I mean, warm breeze all the time, water rolling in. You know what they, who believed the Bible, nicknamed those islands? The Solomon Island chain. Because they knew that Solomon was a picture of that in the kingdom. Incredible. Incredible.

You know, after World War I, and World War I was probably the first war, I mean, the Civil War was terrible, no question about it. But it paled in comparison to the death and the enraging of World War I. World War I was just an incredible, incredible waste of human life. I mean, it was one of the most terrible battles that, in fact, it had been called the war to end all wars. They

thought that man would learn the lessons from that. I mean, millions and millions and millions of men killed. I got a buddy of mine who loved World War I, and he studies it, and he travels to all the battlefields in Europe that are still there. He showed me a picture on his last trip a while back of a line that's all covered over with dirt. You can see on this line about 200, 300 bayonets sticking up out of the dirt. He explained to me that these French soldiers were in a trench, and a bombardment came in and buried them, and to this day they left them bay there, and all you can see is they're holding their rifles with the bayonets up out of the dirt. Terrible war.

After World War I, around 1919, they come up with the idea of the League of Nations. The League of Nations was the forerunner of the United Nations. The League of Nations was nations that were going to not have any more war ever again. How'd that work? World War I, World War II, World War I, World War II, we dropped the atom bomb, so somebody said, I know what, we really want to make this work, we need to change the name. So now it becomes United Nations. You know what the United Nations, their building is in Washington. You know what they did? They went over there in the Bible in Isaiah 2:4, and they put the verse up there about beating your swords into plowshares and your weapons of war and the pruning hooks. They take a verse out of Isaiah that is given to the Lord during the millennium, and put the word on their building, and then put the verse down there and they wouldn't know war anymore. Noble effort, 275 wars since the United Nations began. You ain't going to fix it. You're not going to fix it. Today, the United Nations is a bunch of nations that are against the nation of Israel. That's all they are. They're set up for the Antichrist.

Now when Christ comes back and he establishes his righteous rule of iron, there'll be no war, there'll be no United Nations, there'll be no government, there'll be no presidents, there'll be no queens, there'll be no disease, there'll be no politics, there'll be no churches, there'll be no preaching. It'll be Jesus Christ on the throne, David sitting as the prince ruling the whole world with a rod of iron. That's what I'm looking for. Revelation 19:11 says:

*Revelation 19:11*

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

When he comes back and establishes his kingdom, it'll be a kingdom that nobody is going to contend with. Now understanding that in your Bible, there's a great contrast to that. We know that the Antichrist is the fake kingdom that comes in before the Lord. He lasts for seven years. He's called the Antichrist. He portrays himself as Christ. In fact in the Bible, you got to be careful because the Bible tells you very clear in the book of Revelation that there's two Christs. You got to be careful with those things because most people will follow the wrong one and God says, he calls it his Christ. Another place it calls it the Lord's Christ because there's the Lord's Christ and then there's the Devil's Christ, the Antichrist.

He sets up his false kingdom first and he comes in and he sets up a false kingdom. He claims to be God. He sets in his seat in the temple showing himself that he's God. This is called the Abomination of Desolation. He portrays himself to the world that he is God. Now at this point, all the kingdom builders are going to go crazy because now they have thinking that they have

brought the world to a great place and here he is. It's all working together as a plan. Of course we know that he's not the Christ, he's the Antichrist and after seven years tribulation then we find the real Christ shows up, the Lord Jesus Christ, Revelation 19:11.

Now that's typified back in your Bible again by Saul and David. Saul was the first king that Israel got and he was a bad king. He wasn't God's choice. David was God's choice and he's the second king. Somebody said, why does the Bible always do it that way that he gave you Saul first was the bad king and then David is a type of Christ with the second coming and he's the good king. That's because the Bible says your first birth isn't any good and it has to be your second and you must be born again. See how that works? All the way through the Bible. All the way through the Bible.

## V. Inspirational Application: Righteous Rule in the Family

Now inspirationally, here we go. This will be a general truth of how New Testament Christianity should really operate. Christ reigning in our lives and we taking care of each other as God's people and Christianity being established forever in this dispensation of the church age. The poor here will be the spiritually poor and physically poor being ministered to by God's people through the church. The throne here, inspirationally, will be the kingdom of God.

Two kingdoms in your Bible. One is a spiritual kingdom, one is a literal kingdom. Your whole Bible is widely divided around those two kingdoms. The kingdom of heaven is a physical kingdom given to the nation of Israel. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom given to us. Luke 17:21 says that the kingdom of God is in you. Romans 14:17 says that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It's a spiritual kingdom.

Fundamentally speaking, it will deal with the, through the churches, as we've talked about this before, families being established through the righteous rule of the parents as the Bible talks about in 1 Timothy 3:4. Good spiritual, God's spiritual kingdom going on and on and on bound through the generations. Sure, and we've talked about it before, God's plan in the Old Testament was to reach the world through families. God's plan in the New Testament is to reach the world through families. Now there's going to be a lot coming up on this the rest of this morning and next week and a week after because we're moving into a section of Proverbs that really, really, really is going to help a lot of you young parents. A lot of you singles that someday you will. And even some of you parents that are older parents that you're having kids.

## VI. The Rod and Reproof: Discipline and Consequences

Now let's look at verse 15: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

In our spiritual application, we see the importance of a righteous reign in our families. A rod of iron with our children. Now let me talk for a moment about the importance of a rod. I know we live in a day and age where the whole mindset is to pamper your child, find out what their favorite color is, work through all their issues, corporal punishment, whipping them is off the

scale in most places. When I grew up, as some of you older guys grew up and women, you remember in our days in school, the principal's paddle was feared more than the atomic bomb. But I remember, I never got one, but I remember when somebody would go down to the principal's office and you knew he was going to get a whack, he'd open the doors, you know how it echoes down through the halls of them big old schools? We'd all be listening for the rifle crack. Sometimes you got one, sometimes they got two, sometimes they got three. I don't remember any getting more than three. Well, by that time they were prosthetic on the ground and they couldn't get up anyhow, but I'll mean tell you. They found devious ways. They took a paddle out of wood about that thick and that wouldn't hurt enough, they drilled holes in it. It's like a hollow point bullet. They do much more damage. I don't know what them little holes do on the seat of your pants, but I guarantee you, it made a difference. Can't do that anymore. You try to do that today?

I was in math class one time and I was probably in the eighth grade, ninth grade, eighth grade. We had a teacher, his name was, he was an ex-marine. Mr. Miller. Mr. Miller was tough. I'll never one time when the teacher went out of the room, all the kids would go crazy. We had this rough girl in our school. There were several of them, but she was a gang. She would be a gang girl there, but she was a nice girl, but no, no, she was really rough. She was rough. She would beat both guys up if she had a chance to. So anyway, Mr. Miller goes down to the office for something and the place is going crazy. I'm sitting there watching all this stuff, and she stands up, takes a ruler and a penny, throws it up in the air and whacks it, hits the blackboard. Just as she did, Mr. Miller came in. He grabbed her by the hair, ripped her out of that seat and drug her down to the principal's office. Try that today. You're laughing, but that's why I'm who I am and that's why I'm who you are. I mean, come on.

The world calls it corporal punishment. That's a military term. Within a company, you had a captain over the company. You had four platoons within the company. Each one had a first lieutenant and then you had a first sergeant over it all. Then you had staff sergeant, buck sergeants, and then you had a corporal in each one. When somebody had to get punished, they gave it to the corporal to do. His job was to administer punishment, whatever it was, corporal punishment. Where it comes from.

I'm just going to tell you right now, you can do whatever you want to do. You can read Dr. Spock. You can read, everyone will read and all these stuff. You cannot biblically train your child without corporal punishment. I'm just telling him. Proverbs 13:24 says that if you, oh, this is the great way they don't understand, that if you withhold that, you hate your child. Now most parents were not with their kid because they say, I love him. The Bible just takes the opposite and says if you don't hit him, whip him, whatever, put him in the right direction. If you don't spare for his crying, the Bible says here it comes, you will deliver your soul from hell. There's a value in it. I mean, it's just that simple.

Now I want to look at verse 15 and for a few moments here, I want to talk about the two aspects of disciplining your children based on Proverbs. There's two things in verse 15, the rod and reproof. Now you need to get this. The rod will be the action of the discipline. The reproof will

be understanding the consequences of the discipline. Verse 15 says that it takes two, rod and reproof, and when you use them both, it giveth wisdom.

Now let me give you an example you can all and I can understand. You and I have gotten into this in our lives. Sure we have. It's a great principle. God will forgive us in a heartbeat for whatever we do. But He won't necessarily take away the consequences, will He? You take a guy that drinks alcohol all of his life and he drinks it for 30, 40, 50 years, he gets right or gets saved and God saves him in a heartbeat. And maybe he gives up the alcohol but he dies of cirrhosis of the liver. You see God will forgive you but He won't give you a new liver. I mean I see people all the time that have had so many drugs in their life that they're brain dead. And I believe they get saved but you know what? God doesn't come down and He regenerates your soul but He leaves your brain cells the way they are.

You see your children as we need to learn that there's consequences and when we do things wrong. We break the rule. We have to get that only through reproof. I mean you take somebody who gets into debt because they make bad choices or they do this or they just live a lifestyle. Now they got three marriages, three alimony payments, kids all over the place. They got to work two jobs. I've seen them to the place where they made \$3,000, \$4,000 a month and \$3,000, \$3,500 that went to alimony. And they got \$500 left. But they're saved now. They're right and they want to do what's right. But the Bible says in Galatians 6:7:

*Galatians 6:7*

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

You know why He does that? Now I'm not saying He won't get you out of it in time. The greatest thing about God is after He saves you and we got ourselves in a deep mess, He will throw you a shovel. But the angels are all busy. You're going to have to dig it out yourself. It's a thing where, you know, every time, you learn your lessons. Every time you say, I can't do this anymore. Every time you don't have enough money for the end of the month. Every time you have to do this or you have to deal with an ex-wife or every time you have to do with this or a doctor bill or this or that, you will remember what got you there.

We like to just, with our children, we like to just, when they get into trouble, like ourselves, we think that we just, okay, I gave you the rod. Now everything is okay. There's no consequences to your action. There's always consequences to your action. That's the reproof. I'm telling you, now many parents will use the rod, but they'll not follow through with the reproof. Hey, I know lots of parents that won't even do the rod. They're goofy, but they come to the place where, oh, I'm going to make my kids stand in a corner or I'll make my kid, I'll give them a time out. I'll do this or do that. Well, that takes so long. I mean, a good whack across the rear end, boy, at 150,000 miles a second is a good way to get their attention.

Our kids, your kids, my kids, need to know that there's consequences to them breaking the rules. Just using the rod and then going on like, oh, nothing happened. Nothing is great. They forget about it. That's why they go right back into it again. Listen, you need to establish a throne, a throne of righteousness, a righteous rule, a rod of iron that they understand when they violate that

rule, that go against that rod, that there's consequences to it. The reproof will be the lesson that they'll learn because of what they did.

For instance, parents will do, okay, you're grounded. Take away from running out or her running out with her friend. I'll get that. Pretty good. When I was in my age, it was, go to your room without supper. Now, that affected us back then. Well, you know how my grandma cooked. I could tell you a story sometimes. You'd be better off in the room. But anyway, that won't work today. Send it into your room. You kidding me? You got your own TV set. You got your own stereo system. You got your own Xbox. You got a, who wouldn't want to go to your room? That's great punishment. Well, I'm going to take away your cell phone. I'm going to take away your Xbox.

One of my favorites, have them write a thousand times a day. I will not. See, that was big in my day. When we in school, when I got in trouble for talking or whatever, you'd have to write a thousand times. I will not talk in class. To me, that was great because I learned my lesson. I've known parents that make their kid write out a Bible verse, depending on what they did a thousand times, 500 times a day. Let me tell you something. You have a kid write out 500 times a day, a Bible verse, I guarantee you one thing. He'll remember that Bible verse. And every time he writes it, when his hand starts to cramp up, when he says, I can't do this anymore, when he says, I miss my friends, I can't watch television, I got to have my 10,000 in a day. When I do this, when I do that, it'll be a reminder that there's consequences to your sin, a break of the rules. Sin and disobedience has to cost them something. That's reproof, or they never learn the lessons if there's no cost involved.

## VII. The Shame of Abandoned Children and the Domino Effect

Now look at the last part of the verse: "But a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame."

You better get this one. Your children need a righteous reign in your family, spiritual leadership that deals with a rod and reproof, not only the discipline of action, but the discipline of consequences for those actions. Over the years, I've seen many parents, dads in particular, abandon their kids and leave them to themselves in the most formidable years of their lives. Many of them preachers. They're so busy dealing with everybody else's issue, they fail to see that their kids go through, every kid goes through the most crucial, volatile time of their life when they need an established rule and an established throne of righteousness that they don't get. When kids needed that leadership the most, dad was out with the boys. He was bowling. He was doing this. He was fishing. He was going here. He was going there. Or he was out there preaching, and he was doing this, and he was doing that. He was traveling all around the country, all around the world, giving everybody else what they needed but his own kids. He abandoned. Then, honestly, they scratch their head and wonder why when their kids are 17 or 18 they want nothing to do with the parents.

Kids have always paid a price. Many times over the years, and this is true of so many of you, we take a kid to camp, and there are kids that will come to camp that their mom and dad, I think of

the little guy out there in Harrisonville, you know, that you got these kids that come to camp and their parents care nothing about them. They come to camp and they fall in love with the Bible. They get saved and they want to do what's right. You know as well as I do. When they go back, I try to do everything I can to offset that. That's why I did the little accountability groups after this last camp, because I wanted to have something that we could keep in touch with them, and we could keep being there for them because they are in the most crucial time of their life, and they're going back to a mom or a dad or whoever, a grandma, whatever, who cares absolutely nothing about God in this church and that kid will just get swallowed up again.

I've watched you guys, I've watched you guys be their dad, be their mom. I've watched you take them in. I've watched you spend time with them. Hey, in my many, many years, many a young man I've had to become a dad to. Many a young gal I had to become a dad to to keep them from the world. And you do it too. It happens all the time. It's a thing where we, you know, I look at kids, you know, that if it wouldn't have been for you, you disciplined them, not their parents. You taught them the Bible. It wasn't their parents. You had to help them through the issues of life. It wasn't their parents. That's what the ministry is. It's taking the poor, taking the ones who are helpless, defenseless, who the world is just waiting to swallow them up. And you doing what mom and dad have failed to do.

I see it with you all the time. I've seen moms and dads lose any influence in their kid's life. I think it's a tragedy. I've seen moms and dads fail in every aspect of their children's life and they still wonder why. The bottom line is when we fail to establish them into a righteous kingdom, a throne of righteousness, an unbroken chain of biblical truth that you are taking what God gives to you and you give it to your children, Deuteronomy 29:29, in those vital years letting them see within your family the peace, the mercy, the grace, the love, the warmth, the biblical principles, a righteous rule but a rod of iron that they grow up understanding. Look, there is consequences for what you do just like there is for you and me in our relationship with Lord. That's why God has a judgment seat of Christ for us and a great white throne judgment for unsaved people. There's consequences.

The fathers abandon them. Mothers are so weak that they can't stand up and do what's right and they abandon them. They're oblivious to it but they're too busy fulfilling their own needs, what they want, making millions of dollars, making money, buying this, getting that but the truth of the matter is the most precious commodity they have, they abandon. I want to tell you something folks, just having kids doesn't make you a father. In some cases, I get it, a guy says, well I married a wife and she had these kids or I married a husband and he had these kids and they're not my own kids, they're biological so I don't have any, no, no, no, don't give me that. Let me tell you something, I have 75 people in this church that I have not anywhere to do with their biological birth but they are my children. Don't give me that.

Verse 16: "When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth; but the righteous shall see their fall."

Now, doctrinally again, this will be the Antichrist and his seven-year reign that ends in his fall but going back to our context, inspirationally, here again is a great solid general truth that can be

applied in almost every aspect of life today in the context families and our children that he's talking about here. You see, when we leave our children to themselves to do their own thing, the wicked most surely will pick them up. Your kids are prime target because the devil knows that if he can destroy the family, Christianity will go nowhere. So he knows, he's targeted, he's got the crosshairs this morning on your kids.

Just like in the millennium, there is no sin, there's no fooling around, there's no stupid stuff, there's no nothing, you know why? There's a righteous reign, a rod of iron, a throne is established. Now, I know you can't stop at all in this old world and I understand Jesus is not on the throne yet but I won't tell you what, a righteous rod of iron in your family, a righteous rule, a throne established for righteousness will go a long way when you understand how to use the rod and reproof. They're going to make mistakes, they are but they need to understand that there are consequences to it and when they don't, they keep on making the same mistakes.

When you leave your child to themselves to do their own thing, you can count on two things happening. One of them with their own family if you have multiple kids, we call this in dealing with people's problems in families the domino effect. The oldest one will always lead the other one right down the same path. Most young boys idolize the older boy, girls the sister. They want to be like them and when you allow them to be under themselves, you don't have a righteous rule that they see Christ in them. The domino effect is going to take place, you're going to lose the oldest one, then the next one, then the next one, then the next one, and then the next one right down the line. It's called the domino effect. It's just that simple.

The second one will be the other kids that you allow your kids to associate with. We are who we associate with. It's just that simple. Hey, as a young man when I was probably 12, 13, or 14, maybe a little older. Now my parents were good parents. They were. My dad worked hard, worked two jobs. My mom worked two or three jobs. But I don't know all what happened. They started out in church and were charter members of the Canton Baptist Temple and then something happened. I don't know what it was. I know my dad smoked cigarettes all of his life. It may have been and he was helping in the church there doing some things. Probably they said you can't do that in the smoke. Well, my dad got mad. Well, no, no, my mom got mad. Whenever my mom got mad, then dad did whatever mom wanted to do. My mom got mad. Quit going to church. We lived right across the street from the church. Some of you have seen my original house that I grew up in. Right across from the church. It ain't there anymore, but that's, I mean, it's a charismatic church now, but it's the same building.

I never forget when I was nine, 10, my mom and dad wouldn't go to church anymore. My mom would dress me up, usher me out the front door and kiss me on the cheek and say, you know, you go to church. You know, there's a difference between just sending your kid to church and taking your kid to church. My mom never understood that, bless her heart. I love my mom. My mom was a good mom. My dad was a good dad. Gave me everything I could ever want. Sacrifice for me. I'm not downing them in any way, shape or form. I'm not. But I will tell you this. They never established a righteous rule. They never established a throne of righteousness. When I got in trouble, I got a whippet. And I've gotten a lot of trouble. I was a goofy little kid. I did all kinds of stupid stuff. I would shoot birds with my BB gun in the backyard. I remember one time I got the

idea of taking a, Steve Bracken will love this one. I took a 12 gauge shotgun shell that was empty, filled it up with gasoline, poured it close and put a little thing on it and light it off just to see what it would do. Me left the gas can right there where it was. Almost burned the garage down. My mom is gone. My dad is gone. My sister comes out the back door and there I am, fireman Bob with a garden hose. Only get up and try to put that fire on. I did a lot of goofy things. I did.

But I want to tell you something. The young man, 12, 13 and 14, even though my parents were good parents, they never established any kind of biblical rule. In every filthy, godless thing I ever learned, I learned from an older boy. I did. I learned by association. I remember being in the junior high class at church, listed as a servant. I had three or four buddies on each side of me. They were telling dirty jokes and doing this and doing that. I fell right into that. They taught me every filthy thing that I knew. They cussed, they smoked, they drank, they told filthy jokes. The peer pressure, I was just a kid. I'm just like every kid. I wanted to fit in. Nobody ever established a righteous rule in my life and I just went along with it. I fell right into it. Boy, I looked back on that in my own life and learned the lesson from it.

## VIII. Four Principles for Training and Preserving Your Family

I want to tell you right now, one of the things that I try to do with you, like I try to do with my kids, and I try to do with everybody in this church, is I try to build a baseline of biblical truth into your life that you'll always have as a foundation in your life. I can't underestimate the importance of a baseline of truth in your children's life when they're from about two or three years old up to the time that they're 10 and ongoing, building that baseline of truth. When the bad times come, and they will. Don't kid yourself. They will. They're going to be no perfect child. They're all going to get into goofy stuff and do things that are wrong that you're going to say, how can my son do that? They do that because they have an old sin nature. The way that you correct that and deal with that, a righteous reign, a throne, a rod of iron, a rod and reproof through a baseline of truth.

Let me tell you something. Your weight of the 15, 16, 17, it's almost impossible. It's like trying to put water back in a boulder dam after the dam breaks. Hey, I deal with people with issues all week long, and I know so do many of you who work with me. It's an absolute truth. If I'm dealing with somebody who has been in this church, hey, we all do stupid things. I'm not criticizing anybody. We all do dumb things. I've had to deal with people who were good people who did some really stupid stuff. I have to deal with it and pick up the pieces. I'm going to tell you, at the same time, I deal with people who don't come to church, don't do anything with the Bible, don't care about anything, and they get into message and they call me. I have to deal with them. I'm going to tell you right now, it's a lot easier to deal with a person who has a Bible base of truth in their life than it is with somebody who has nothing because you have nothing to work with. With the Bible base, I only have something to fall back on. It's a lot easier dealing with people and their problems when they have a baseline of truth. If no baseline, you have absolutely nothing to work with. Many times it becomes almost impossible. I'm not saying that you can't, but it's 100 times harder.

This is why. There's a method behind my madness. This is why I push everybody that comes in to get into discipleship one, if you haven't had a foundation in discipleship two. This is why I started the people ministry to take you to the next level. This is why I started the Bible with the truth for you singles to bring you up to the next level. I got one goal that will help you through life more than anything else. It will build a base of truth in your life that when the tough times come, you have something to fall back on. When you don't have it, you wind up in a psychiatrist office. You wind up in a therapist. You wind up here. You wind up there. You have a problem with you. You have a problem with your kids. You have a problem with you. You won't want to do with it. So you'll take them in there who will charge you \$100 a session or \$80 a session, and you'll be amazed how quickly you get healed when your money runs out.

If you're saved this morning or if you're unsaved this morning, there's only one thing that's going to fix your problem, and that is the book that God gave you. It's the only thing that's going to fix you. Me to you and you to your kids. The higher you go in life in the Word of God, the deeper you go. It's the only book on the planet that as you go up, you also go down. You're a building. You're God's building. Everybody knows if you take a building and just build it 60,000 feet in the air with no foundation, it's going to fall over. With God in the Bible, the higher you go, the deeper you go and the wider you go. You build on that foundation the rest of your life.

Then the last part of the verse there, "bringeth his mother to shame." Another great truth of life. I've dealt with it all my life. I've dealt with kids, with parents, with problems, almost you name it. I haven't gotten in a new one for years. Moms always take a wayward son or daughter much harder than dad does in most cases. There's some reason for that. One of the reasons is she carried that little child for nine months. That child breathed her oxygen, got her blood. She carried him in a most intimate way and then she gave birth to that little child. There's a bond there that you just can't walk away from. I get that. I understand that. I mean, she dressed him, her or him when he went to school in the morning. She gave him a bath. When dad was off working, when he fell on his bicycle, you put a little bandaid on his ouchie and you held him when he cried. When he was afraid of the dark or she was afraid of the dark, you went in and turned a little light on, held him and said there was no such thing as boogeyman.

You see, in the early years, mom leads the way. I'm not saying it's a team concept. Dad does what he does, but let's face it. Mom has all of the responsibilities there. So dad's out working. When that child picks up around 12 or so, the dad kicks in and he takes it the rest of the way together as a team. But it's understanding what each one's rule is, how mom and dad very early has to establish that throne. They establish that rule that they had a kid understand. Hey, look, there are some things that are non-negotiable and when you break them, there's consequences. A kid growing up just getting the rod without suffering the consequences, it's a terrible thing.

That it says, "but the righteous shall see their fall." You can see it coming. I can. I would give anything in the world to go in and knock on some parent's door and say, hey, look, this is where you are headed with your daughter. This is where you're headed with your son. This is where this is going to wind up. Can't do it. Can't. And before you say, oh, Bob, you could do it with me, let me just say one more time, you can't do it. You say it now because you don't have any problems. Parents are the weirdest bunch on the planet. That's why they need the Bible. That's why they

need structure. That's why they need to get out of the mindset of worldly parenting and get into the biblical concept of establishing a throne of righteousness, establishing a kingdom, establishing an unbroken chain of truth. If your kid knows, hey, you know what? This is not God's. This is God's house. We live by God's rules. We follow this. This is what we do. And I'm not going to tolerate you breaking those. That's not going to happen. There's got to be consequences. Honestly, all you can do in both cases, this is what I do. Just stand by and watch it fall and always try to be there to help pick up the pieces. It's just parents don't get it today. They just don't. They just don't. A lot of parents have had such a lawless lifestyle themselves. Their kid just follow right into it. So many parents will just not follow through with what they need to be done with the rod and the reproof. They just won't. They always think that their child is above what somebody else's child has done. Boy, that is a terrible thing. Every kid in this world has an old sin nature.

In our text today, doctrinally, yeah, I get it. It's the Antichrist. No question about it. But inspirationally, I told you when we started, there's four great principles for training up, protecting and preserving your family to the plan of God. Not your plans, God's plan. The unbroken chain of biblical truth, the Timothy principle.

Now the first thing I'm going to give you to do here and I'm going to give you these four, I'm going to go back and pick them out. The first things I'm going to give you, the first one, this is for you young parents. For you young parents who are having kids and you got young kids. I'm telling you right now, the first thing you got to do is you got to establish the throne. You got to establish a righteous rule for your family.

1. First Timothy 3:4 says when it talks about the qualifications of a pastor or a deacon, it says that one that ruleth, there's a rule involved, one that ruleth well, his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. I wish I had time to go through those words. Own house having a children subjection to all gravity. Wow. Then he says over there in 1 Timothy 5:8:1 Timothy 5:8

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. You have to establish the throne. You have to establish the throne.

2. Second of all, you have to establish the rod and reproof. You have to. You have to have an action of discipline and you have to have a consequences of their actions. You have to use the rod to discipline them, but the reproof to teach them the lessons of the consequences of what they did wrong.
3. Third thing, you never abandon your kids in their most crucial time of their lives and leave them to themselves. Somebody else will pick them up. It'll be a teacher. It'll be a gym teacher. It'll be a scout master. It'll be somebody, it'll be an older boy, an older girl still fall in with it and they will go right down that road. If you do, there's a specific process to be able to turn that thing around if you can.
4. Fourth thing, make sure you only allow the right influences in their lives. Know who your child is spending time with. Don't just assume anything. You know, one of the greatest assets of our church is our youth ministry. Zach and Jenny do a phenomenal job. Zach works a full-

time job, yet he hardly misses a kid's activities, that sports thing at school. He worked with these kids. Jenny worked with these kids. I mean, they do it because they don't get paid. They do it because they love kids.

Another great aspect of this church are the young men and the young women who, you know, you're in your 20s or so and how you take and mentor these young kids. I watch it all the time. I watch you singles. Some of you guys, as far as I'm concerned, are the finest young men on this planet. I watch you young gals. Some of you are the finest young ladies on this planet. I watch you. I watch you take these kids that don't have anything and just put them under your wing. You invite them to places that you're going to do this. You'll talk with them. You'll say, you know, most guys your age want nothing to do with kids like that. They're below your status, but not you. You see and understand. You grow, see and understand the value. You've learned your lessons well. You've taken what we've given you and you've applied it across the board. And now, you know, you see these kids. You take them in. You encourage them. Where they would be laughed at at school for something, you take them in and love them. Make them feel important. Make them feel... See it all the time.

I want to tell you something. I take no credit for that because you can't teach somebody that. You can't teach somebody that. That is somebody who just lays out the Word of God and you on your own grasp it because you love God in that book and you let God change you to put you in that kind of a mindset. It's just incredible to me. I see you spend time with those young kids and you encourage them and you talk to them. You go after them and you invite them. I watch you young girls do the same thing. You teach them the Bible. You disciple them. You have special little things that you do that you invite them over. You have it to bring them there. You can't teach that. And you show them by example the importance of living a life for God. It goes on all week long.

You parents need to keep the bad associations out of their lives and allow the best of the best of our church to help you. Hey, I've watched parents get a couple of you guys in gowns and sit down and say, hey, my son or my daughter is having some issues here and they're struggling with some things. And I need you to help me. I need you to just kind of help work with us. I want you guys to do that. I want you girls to do that. I mean they got enough confidence that they know that if they're struggling and they want their kid around good wholesome men and young ladies that you're the ones that they want them around. To me as a pastor, as your spiritual father, many of you, doesn't get any better than that. If I die tomorrow, if I die tomorrow, I want to be the Lord tomorrow, I'd rest on the fact that you guys got it. You understand it.

It's a thing where, you know, I use you all the time. I watch you all the time. And I'll not only say something to you, but I want you to know I miss very little and I watch you and I watch you just always there for them no matter what it takes, no matter what it may be. I can go in a heartbeat, I can come up, put them around you and say, hey, see, just get over here. I need you to go and just really draw him in a little bit. Just be there for him. He needs somebody. That's all I got to say. And I'll tell you that because nobody, and it's a truth, nobody, and I mean nobody. This is the failure of churches today and it's the failure of both youth ministries, but not here. I'll tell you a dying truth. And I mean nobody can reach another young person like another young person. The question is, you can't find that and have the character, the qualities and the things that the rod of

iron that you put into your life, the discipline you put into your life, the throne that you have in your world of righteousness. And you take that and you give to them. You're going to find that some in there are going to do it for good, some are going to do it for bad. You know what? So we have to build a baseline. We have to build a baseline.

The first thing, without ever telling anybody anything, when I started this church, I had one goal. I looked across this thing and as it grew and it came in there, I would watch everybody that came in and I would assess them talking with you, getting to know you, being your friend, us doing things together and hanging out together and eating together. My goal was to get you on whatever level you were, the baseline that you needed. Because I knew that if you're ever going to do anything in this church, if you're ever going to do anything for God anywhere, it's going to be the baseline. If you don't mind me saying this, Troy, you've had your tough times in life and I'm so glad that you're here today and I love you more than you'll ever know. But you know why you're here, Troy? Years ago, we built a baseline, didn't we, buddy? And no matter what happened, no matter what took place, the baseline held and here you are today. And you're more valued to now than you were when we were playing football on Sunday afternoon. You guys were kicking a fire out of me. Steve Bracken is the same way. 12 years old, first time I met him. And what a little punk he was. I mean, we used to beat him up and whip him up and marshal's alley faster than anybody on this planet. You know what? The baseline stuck. And that's what you do.

Now we're doing it all over again, guys. Now we're taking on a whole new level of kids. I know they do dumb things. I know they got problems. I'm not criticizing anybody today. We all got our issue. My point is we have got to begin to build that baseline. We've got to begin to have that righteous ring that a kid knows that it's a brick wall and it isn't going to budge. That's what I've done with you. I'm hard on you. But I'm fair with you. I'm hard on you. But you'll never find anybody who loves you more than I do. But I'm hard on you. I will hold a line for you. You know what? I love you so much that when you can't hold a line, I'll hold it for you. I'll never speak bad about you. Nobody in my presence will ever speak bad of you to me. That's not what it's about. It's about that we are in this together. And you need me, but there's going to come a day when I'm going to need you. I won't be able to walk down those steps by myself. You'll have to carry me down. Put me in my wheelchair. It's a thing where all we have is each other. But the thing that will always hold us together is the baseline we build. The moment I started this church, that was my goal. Never told anybody. Never said anything about it. I knew what I needed to do. And it paid off. It's paid off in the young couples that we have. Best in the planet. Paid off in you older people that have come back and around. Couldn't beat them any better. Paid off in you young, single people. It's a thing where it works. Because the baseline will always hold you accountable. And it will always give you something to fall back on.

Next week, we're going to take and look at the next couple of verses and we're going to see one of the most crucial areas in our lives for ministry and for your family. I'm going to take probably the greatest single aspect for this church or any church and certainly for your family and walk you down through it step by step. We'll hold up there. Let me just say this.