

## I. Review

If you have your Bibles this morning, we are in Psalms 37. Last week, we focused on verse 23, and I told you then that it was one of the greatest principles and promises found anywhere in the Word of God for us personally. I call this one a directional verse. It sets a direction in life.

*Psalms 37:23. The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

We talked about the games that God's people play, lovingly called Human Nature 101. Back in Genesis chapters 1, 2, and 3, everything is laid out the way human nature will portray itself. I showed you different aspects of that and then some other places in the Bible. **It simply comes down to so many of God's people today trying to run their lives around the Word of God instead of running their lives through the Word of God.**

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

What the verse is saying here is that the principles of the Word of God will lead you to wisdom, and the principles and the wisdom will lead you to understanding. That is the bottom line for every child of God: understanding. When it comes to the Bible and Christianity, **understanding is our ability to look at anything in life and see God's hand in it**—what He is doing, not what the government is doing, not what the world is doing, not what so-and-so is doing, but what God is doing. Godly wisdom will only come through God's principles, and that will lead to our understanding Him.

### ➤ The Principles of the Word of God Should Dictate what we Do or Don't Do

We are all familiar with this time of year being graduation season. High school kids graduate and go off to college. Everybody graduates from something, from one class to another. I thought a lot about it this week as I attended my own granddaughter's graduation. In high school, and grade school too, the public school system is built around one person: that person is called the principal. All the curriculum, all the teachers, everything that is taught and everything that gets done answers to the principal. I know that back in my day, the greatest fear on the planet was to be called down to the principal's office. That usually meant you were in trouble. I was on a first-name basis with our principal back then. The principal is the person, male or female, that everything goes back to.

In Christianity, in the church, it is the same concept: the principal, the principles of the Word of God. **Your teachers should use those principles to teach you, and you get wisdom through it, and in time, you get understanding.** So, principles are not only true for us in Christianity, but they are true in life. You go to high school, you go to grade school, middle school, whatever, there will be a principal. That principal dictates what is being done. In your life and my life, it is the principles of the Word of God that dictate what we do or what we should not do.

## II. God's Care Through Life's Journey

Today, we are going to look at another section of Psalms 37 that follows verse 23. I want to put verse 23 back in the text today, just so we can keep a context.

### Psalms 37:23-31

23. *The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*
24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand.*
25. *I have been young, and [now] am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*
26. *[He is] ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*
27. *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*
28. *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*
29. *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*
30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*
31. *The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

After we see in verse 23 that *the steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD*, you will remember I gave you six solid principles last week that you can know for sure that it is happening in your life, and to understand the idea of the way of God in your life. **Now, verses 24 through 31 will show us how God will take care of you through your journey in life.** Life is a journey, and life is never going to be easy. There are going to be ups and downs. There are going to be roadblocks. There are going to be things that the devil is going to throw at you to try to stop you from being everything that God wants you to be. The Lord ordering your steps and the hand of God in your life—that is what we want to talk about today, taking you a particular way.

### ➤ God Wants to Order your Steps in a Particular Way

I showed you last week when God led Israel, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, the Bible is very clear. He began to **lead** them. I made the comparison of how that is a picture of God leading us. The Bible says that He took them a particular way. He spared them a journey that would have put obstacles in their life that would have been way too much for them to handle. I really see in that and appreciate in that what God does with us. **When you get saved, this is why God gives you a church. This is why God puts people in your life, because God wants to order your steps in a particular way. He knows if He just left you out there and you were trying to figure it out on your own, you would never make it.** So He takes you, like He did Israel after they were called out of Egypt through the blood of the lamb, to the promised land. We talked about all this last week, but He takes you a particular way. He has a way for you

that He wants to order your steps that will protect you, that will give you everything that you need to give you the best chance that you can have to be everything God wants you to be.

### III. The Hand of God and His Promises

You need to understand that there will be no leading of God in your life without the hand of God in your life. The two go together. When I got saved, God promised me two things. When you got saved, God promised you two things. **The first thing He promised me was the promise of my salvation.**

*Titus 1:2. In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

God promised me salvation, and that was the promise that I am going to spend eternity with Him. But the second promise was the promise of verse 24.

*Psalms 37:24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand.*

**That is the promise that God, after I am saved, is going to take care of me.** He is going to get me through life. He is going to get me home to heaven, and He is going to get me there.

*Philippians 1:6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ: (the rapture of the church)*

So when God saved you, He begins a work in you. He is going to do that work in one of two ways. He is going to do that work in you with you being in fellowship, but do not doubt for a moment that He is going to get the job done even if you are out of fellowship.

#### ➤ Vessels of Honor and Vessels of Dishonor

In the Bible, you will find over in 2 Timothy 2:20 where the Bible talks about God having vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. When you are a vessel of honor, God will take your life a particular way, and He will give you everything that you need so that He can get the honor and glory out of your life, and you get the blessings of God. Now the alternative to that is you do not go God's way; you go your way. You do your thing, not His. Then, as a vessel of dishonor, God, through the hand of chastisement and dealing in your life, uses it. The Bible says no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. If you are saved this morning and you love the Lord, everybody sees it. At the same time, if you are saved this morning and you do not love the Lord, everybody sees it. God uses it. He will use it one way as a vessel of honor. He will use it another way as a vessel of dishonor. But He is going to get us home to heaven no matter what. You either get there in a golden chariot that takes you up like Elijah, or you will get there in a wheelchair, but you will get there. The choice is yours and mine to make.

#### ➤ OT and NT: The Principle is the Same, but the Example is Different

He says in verse 24, "*Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*" Now the first thing I want you to see here is the difference in the Old

Testament, the way it says things between God dealing with Israel and how He deals with us. The principle is the same, but the example is different. Where it says "*upholdeth him with his hand*," that could never be the church. The principle that He will always keep us is true, but this is to Israel.

In John 10: 26-29, and boy have I heard this so much, the Bible talks about how that you are in the hand of Christ, and Christ's hand is in God's hand, and nobody is going to pluck you out of His hand. Everybody uses that. I have heard it all my life put into a New Testament Christian format, as the proof of eternal security, that you are clasped in the hand of God. When people teach things like that, pastors, they do a great disservice to the Word of God and the things of God because it procures bad teaching and bad doctrine. **You know why I am not in the hand of God? And you know why nobody can ever pluck me out of God's hand? Because I am not in His hand. I am His hand. I am in the body. Israel was not. Israel is in His hand.** I am part of His body. I am His hand. He would have to cut His hand off to get rid of me, and that is not going to happen.

You see, how many times have you heard somebody say about somebody in life that really has done a great thing, "I would cut my right arm off for that guy"? Well, I understand that guy means so much to you and your right arm means so much to you, but you are willing to cut off your right arm because of what that guy did. You know, Jesus Christ was God's right arm. You know what God did? He cut off His right arm for you and for me. That arm grew back. Now we are part of the arm. It grew back. We are grafted in, the Bible says. Ah, yeah. It is the difference between good Bible doctrine and bad Bible doctrine. God's people many times get confused over it because they do not get it.

*1 Corinthians 12:12-24* says that I am part of His body:

12. *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also [is] Christ.*
13. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*
14. *For the body is not one member, but many.*
15. *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*
16. *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*
17. *If the whole body [were] an eye, where [were] the hearing? If the whole [were] hearing, where [were] the smelling?*
18. *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*
19. *And if they were all one member, where [were] the body?*
20. *But now [are they] many members, yet but one body.*

21. *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

22. *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*

23. *And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely [parts] have more abundant comeliness.*

24. *For our comely [parts] have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that [part] which lacked:*

➤ The Foundation of His Principles & Promises will Keep you - Even when you Fall

**An old preacher said one time, "When you fall, and we all fall, when you fall, make sure you fall on the principles and the promises of God because you cannot fall any lower than that."** That is some good advice. Then you get back up.

*Proverbs 24:16. For a just [man] falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.*

We see it without ever knowing where we got it. We make the phrase, "You cannot keep a good man down." No, you cannot when that good man has the goodness of God, because when we fall, and we do—seven times, you get back up again, and you keep going.

You know, in dealing with people, I have learned this over the years: when somebody falls and people have struggles, people get out of fellowship, they fall. Let us face it, it just happens. But I have found out if they have a foundation in their life, if they had the Book in their heart and they had a foundation of the Word of God, even though they fell, it is always easier to bring them back because you have something to work with built on the foundation. When you have somebody who comes to church, never really does anything, never really gets in the Bible, and they fall, it is almost impossible to get them back because you have nothing to work with. The foundation of His principles and promises will keep you even when you fall.

#### IV. The Clarity of Hindsight & Growing to a Spiritual Maturity

Verse 25 says, *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."* You know, and I have told you this on multiple occasions: the older you get, the more clearly you should see things. We always use the expression, "Hindsight is 20/20," meaning looking behind, you see more clearly than you saw when you were looking at it. That is true in life. The Word of God will give you 20/20 hindsight. When you have 20/20 hindsight, if you use that, then you can see the future, and you see things more clearly that maybe you did not see.

Historically, this is David's testimony, and if you know anything about David's life, he went through some things and he saw some things. David wrote this obviously in the later years of his life when now he sees things more clearly. But inspirationally, it is for us. The older you get, you ought to see things more clearly than you did. You ought to see things more clearly when you are

50 and 60 than you did when you were 20 and 30. You know, when you are young right now, most of you are young, you are told some things about God. But when you get older, if you stay with it, God orders your steps, and the hand of God is in your life. In time, you will see why you were told those things, because life is full of experiences. As you go through those experiences with the principles and the promises of God, you get understanding. Now you can see things that you could not see when you were younger.

You know, I have told you this before, growing to a spiritual maturity, learning to see how God works as you grow through life, you are going to find that as you do that, there are certain principles, certain passages in the Bible, but certainly certain principles that become established in your life. Through them, God will establish you in your going.

*Psalms 40:2. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and **established my goings.***

### ➤ What God Ordains, He Always Sustains

I would say the biggest problem that God's people have, and they are not bad people, I do not want to suggest they are. Many of them are very wonderful, nice people. But the problem in their life is they have never been established in the things of God. There is no real foundation in their life. When your steps are ordered by the Lord and His hand is in your life, the older you get, the more clearly you can see how He takes care of you. You can see the big picture around you. It is an incredible concept that you see why He says He has not seen the righteous forsaken. **In all my years in the ministry, I have never seen a child of God who was in God's way with God's hand in his life not taken care of by God.** I have learned another great principle: what God ordains, He always sustains. And He gets us through. This is true of Israel, which is the direct application here, but it is also true of you and me.

### ➤ Always Stick with the Principles of the Word of God

I have seen some of God's people go through some very hard times, some tough times. But the hand of God was always there, and their faith was built on that foundation of the principles and the promises. I am going to tell you right now, folks, there are times that you are going to go through in life where you are not going to know what to do. Your emotions are going to pull you one way or another. People are going to tell you, "Do this, do that." If you are not careful, that is the seedbed for terrible decision-making. I do not care what anybody tells you. I do not care what your emotions tell you. You stick with the principles of God. The principles of God are emotionless. The principles of God care nothing of what this person says or what that person says. The principles of God are the promises of God built on the foundation of God that never changes. You will always fall back on the principles. You will always go back to that concept. It is not always the way we expect it to go, or we want it to go. That is the beauty about the hand of God in your life and God ordering your steps. You have got to get out of the mindset that it has got to go the way you think it is going to go and let God be God. Don't focus on the way that it is going. Focus on the principles that God gave you to tell you how you would go with it.

## ➤ Sometimes God Changes our Course

Years and years ago, I read a book, and it was written by a pilot who was a Christian. The name of the book was *Under the Shadow of His Wings*. He was making the point in the book how God will guide us through everything in life. He was a pilot, and he said, "I took off from someplace in Texas for a three-hour flight to someplace in Alabama or whatever the case may be. A straight course three-hour flight." He says, "I filed a flight plan, followed all the rules, took off from the airport in Texas and was flying along." He says, "I flew for about 45 minutes, and then the radio control guy who was tracking me told me to shift my course to this degree heading." "So I did. I am thinking to myself, 'That is taking me off my direct course,' but you have got to do what they tell you to do." So he shifted his course and was flying. About 30 minutes later, that same voice came on, was tracking him, gave him another course heading, which took him another direction. He is thinking now, "I have got to get where I need to go. This was purely a four-hour flight." He flew that course for a while. Then the guy came back on and gave him another course correction. Finally, after wasting, in his mind, two or three hours, which made his flight now much longer, the guy brought him around and put him back on his course, and he landed. But he landed four hours late. He was really upset; did not understand it. **When he got inside, he found out that there was a terrible storm that he was flying into that he could not see.** Somebody on a radar screen saw his plane, saw the storm, and without him knowing it, directed him through different courses. That storm would have torn the wings off his plane.

You know, sometimes in life, God changes the course, and we do not understand why, but He is bringing us around some storm in your life that would defeat you and destroy you. Just like he listened to the radio control guy, you and I have to listen to the principles, and God will get you home. God will get you around the storms of life so you do not have to go through the storms of life. It is an incredible concept. First and foremost, I have seen it in my own life. Everybody goes through tough times, but in all of my trials, which are relatively nothing compared to what some people go through, I am still standing. **God got me through the storms, and He will get you through the storms, and the older I get, the more I see it, the more I understand it, and the more I love Him for it.** I also can say today, as David said, "*Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken.*"

## V. Maturing Beyond Begging Bread

Look at the last part of verse 25, and I think this is very powerful: "*Nor his seed begging bread.*" **Now what a great principle on spiritual growth, the maturity of the believer, becoming established in the way, and God's hand in your life.** Now, what I am about to say, please do not take this wrong. Listen to everything I have to say. We know that there are seven stages of spiritual growth. We know that the Bible says when you first get saved, you start out as a baby, and then you grow through the process, or you should grow through the process. The last one is the elders, the aged, someone who has been established in the church and the Word of God, mature in the Word of God, who now can handle the Word of God. At some point in your life, you should not have to have somebody give you the principles for your life journey. This is what he is talking about, "*nor his seed begging bread*"—your weekly handout from somebody

teaching you the Word of God. Right now, it is 100% okay. That is the way it is supposed to be. **But the ultimate goal that I have for you, and the reason why I have the intensity for the Book and the principles that I keep putting to you, is to help you grow so in time you can help others grow, getting you to the place where you can stand on your own two feet** when it comes to the issues that we are going to have to face—the issues of making good decisions.

Right now, we deal with and we help a lot of people. That is the way it is supposed to be. We work with them. **We give them the Bible. They could not figure it out on their own. If the Bible is bread, we give them the bread. We help them work through their issues using the principles of the Word of God.** You in your life, in time, you see the difference. Some of you work with them in your lifeline groups. Some of you work with them one-on-one through discipleship or maybe the small groups helping them.

➤ Growing Through the Word of God not Around the Word of God

*1 Peter 2:2. As newborn babes, desire **the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:***

That is what a baby does. A baby cannot feed itself. A baby is totally dependent on somebody feeding that baby. But then he says that you may grow thereby. You cannot stay a baby. My goal is never just to, for the rest of your life, give you bread—our weekly handout of the Word of God to help you with this, to help you with that. But in time, as you grow, in time as you establish yourself through the principled life, you have now, I say it all the time, that working knowledge of the Word of God that I talk about.

You can see men and women in this church. They have a solid understanding of the Word of God. They have a principled life. They are heavily involved in helping me with God's people who are struggling. Honestly, they can handle just about any issue they are dealing with. They will get into a situation, discipleship or counseling, and they do not call me up and say, "Hey, what do I do with this? What do I do with that?" Oh, every rare once in a while there may be something that is really over the top. But 99.9% of it, they know what they are doing. They know what they are doing because they grew, they principled their life. They got to the place where they did not have to rely on somebody disciplining them for the next 540 years. They learned to stand on their own two feet. They took the Word of God. They built a principled life. Now they are in the position to help somebody else get to where they need to go. It is just that simple.

Nobody works with them. They work with others. They, through growth, have matured to the place through the Word of God that they can stand on their own two feet. That is my goal for you. **My goal for you is that you can get the victory that you so desperately want and that you can grow to that place where God will also establish you.**

But you know what? They have to face the same issues that you have to face. When they got to the place that they are, their problems did not go away. They will struggle with the same issues that you struggle with. They will have to deal with the same issues and problems of life in their life journey that you right now are struggling with. **But they grew through the Word of God, not around the Word of God. God established them through a principled life.** Now they do not need to call me up to find out, "Well, I got this and that." They know now what the Bible

says. They are invaluable in the ministry because they have grown to the place where they do not have to wait every week for somebody to give them the Bible. I say it again, right now, that is 100% for a baby young Christian. But you do not want to stay there.

### ➤ There Has to be a Growth Process in Your Life

This coming Thursday, when we do the Book of Mark...this is a great book in connection with where we are at today. I don't know if you know, but the man who wrote the Book of Mark is named John Mark. In the Book of Acts, when Paul took his first missionary trip, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with him. Barnabas was John Mark's cousin. So Paul said, "Sure." They got into the missionary trip, and John Mark bailed on him. He ran home to Mama. He could not handle it. He left the team short. So, on his second missionary trip, Barnabas wants to give him a second chance, and he says, "Let us take John Mark." Paul says, "Nah, nah, we are not going down that road again." The Bible says that Paul and Barnabas got into such contention over it that they split. Paul took Silas and went here, and Barnabas took John Mark and went there. John Mark, when he started out, could not cut it. Much later on, when Paul was in prison in II Timothy, you know what he says? He says to Timothy, "Hey, when you come, bring John Mark, for he is profitable to me in the ministry." John Mark grew through his immaturity. He grew through it so well that he was not bailing out on missionary trips. God chose him to write the second gospel in the Bible: Mark. It clearly shows me there must be a growth process in your life. You cannot be begging bread the rest of your life for the issues that you have. Right now, 100% okay. That is where you are at. As newborn babes, you desire the sincere milk, but you have got to get to the meat at some point. You have got to come to the place where you can stand on your own two feet. This is my goal. This is the goal of the church. This is why I have people who have gotten there who were just like you when they started, but you can see where they are at now.

Listen, there is probably a day coming when all of us are going to have to take our stand alone. My job, the job at this church, is to prepare you for that day or that time so you are strong enough to take the stand and be there for others and not be beggars of bread for the rest of your life. I do not mean that term in a sarcastic way. I use it in a biblical term. You are a baby. You cannot get the bread yourself. Somebody has to feed you. But you need to be in time where God, through the hand of God and Him ordering your steps, establishes you. He will establish you in three ways: **He will establish you in the Book, He will establish you in this church, and He will establish you in the ministry to others.** It is a simple case of Romans 15:1.

*Romans 15:1. We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

But you do not bear your infirmities for the rest of your life.

## VI. Two Great Principles that Should Be in our Lives

Look at verse 26. "*He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*" Now verse 26 shows us two great principles that are found in the Word of God that should be in our lives.

## ➤ Principle #1 -- Showing Mercy to Others

The first one is our showing mercy to others. You know, people that you come into contact with are not always going to meet your approval. We have a tendency, in time, to develop an attitude toward people, and that attitude will obviously limit your ability to help them. There is something I try to never forget when I look at people or deal with people, and there are people that I look at that I am not happy with who they are, what they are, or what they do; yet, I always try to give everybody the best chance I can. The thing that I never forget in dealing with people when they do not meet my approval level, and I have a very low threshold—it does not take much to get my approval, but I never forget that the first time God laid eyes on me, I did not look too great either. I was completely in contrast to what He expected. When He first saw me, He had to say, "Oh boy, here we go again." But He never quit. He never gave up on me. He showed me mercy. I am just glad that He did not deal with me like so many of God's people deal with people they do not like.

### ❖ The Example of Mephibosheth

You know, a great example of this is found in 2 Samuel chapter 9 in the famous story of Mephibosheth. The name Mephibosheth means "breathing shame." He is an enemy of God. He is an enemy of David because he is in Saul's line, and Saul was an enemy of David, and Saul is a type of the anti-Christ. So, David had every right to have Mephibosheth, who was the last of Saul's seed, killed. But he did not. He showed him mercy. He showed him grace. Through the story of this whole thing, Mephibosheth winds up sitting at the king's table eating bread for the rest of his life. Now you could take that story anyway you want, turn it upside down, inside out, historically, doctrinally, inspirationally—but I was Mephibosheth. I was breathing shame toward God, and yet God took me in, gave me the chance, and now I sit continually at His table, not begging for bread, eating His bread.

You know, I have learned the most important thing I need to do when it comes to people. It will not be what I see when I look at them. Man looks at the outward appearance, but what I feel when I look at them should be compassion. Me looking and seeing what they could be, not what they are. When God first looked at me, He saw me, not what I was, but what I could have been. Now maybe they will never get there. Maybe they will burn you. Maybe they will stick a knife in your back. Maybe whatever. But they do not make it, not because I did not give them a chance.

*Hosea 4:1-2. Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for **the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land**, because [there is] **no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.***

*2. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.*

In Hosea chapter 4, which is a great book on the day and age that we live, all dealing with the second coming, by the way, it is a great chapter on Christianity today. He says there that God has a controversy with His people. Now historically that is Israel, but inspirationally it is His people today. The reason why He says He has a controversy with them, He says, "because there is no

truth in the land." That is true with Israel and certainly true today. But when you read that passage, do you know in that verse what the first thing that goes when truth goes in Hosea chapter 4, verses 1 and 2? It is mercy. **There is no mercy when there is no truth.**

### ➤ Principle #2 – Lending Your Child to the Lord

The second great principle will be the word, "lendeth." Now this lending, if you notice it very carefully, has to do with something that is connected to your seed being blessed. The principle here will be found in a key study in your Bible all the way back in the book of 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2. It is found in the story of a woman named Hannah who in time has Samuel, who becomes one of the greatest prophets that Israel ever had. In 1 Samuel chapter 3, I have told you many, many times and showed you, here you have a picture of how God will call you into the ministry, step by step of ordering your steps. It is an incredible study. But in chapters 1 and 2, you have one of the greatest pictures of as parents, what we should be doing with our children.

### ❖ The Example of Hannah

Now first off, when you begin to read this story, Hannah is barren. She has no children. She is one of the seven barren women found in the Old Testament. Each one of them pictures the nation of Israel producing no fruit. She prays for a child. She is a godly woman. In her supplication to the Lord, she makes it clear that the only reason she wants a child is for him to give service to God. This is one of the greatest models for parents and their children and God using them. When we do our child training coming up (we have got to get through all this craziness until we have some time that we can focus on it), it is going to be built on this study right here. I want you to look at her life as a mother who wanted a child to serve God.

You will find there are four parts to her dealing with the Lord:

1. Her sorrow.
2. Her prayer and supplication.
3. Her attitude of surrender.
4. Her victory and then the song that she gives to God for the man child.

You will find within this story, she is attacked for wanting that. You know, she is over here praying, and she is not praying out loud. She is mumbling her prayer. You can see her lips move. You can hear she is saying something, but it is not audible. The one man who should have understood what she was doing looks at her and thinks that she is drunk. Who that man was, was the pastor of the church. You say there was no church back then, shut up, let me make this point. It was Eli. He was the leader of the priesthood. Just like there are pastors today in churches who will see moms and dads who want to raise their kids for the Lord and care nothing about that.

I have watched a phenomenon over the years. Never said anything about it, but I note everything. I try to observe and learn from everything. Over the years, no matter what church I was associated with or what pastor I was talking to, when people leave a church, for the most part, almost without any variation, they have all lost their kids to the world. I know guys who left this church because I would not make them a deacon. So they went to a church where the first thing

they did was make them a deacon. They've got kids who are homosexuals or lesbians, or kids who are producing more kids. The only verse they got in the Bible was in Genesis, "be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth." The Bible says you cannot be a deacon with that kind of situation. So they left here because, "Well, I want to be a deacon, and you will not let me be a deacon." So you know what kind of church they went to? Almost without a doubt, when they leave, they have lost their kids, they find a church where the pastor has lost his, so they never have to hear a message again on families ministering together.

Now, if you are a pastor and you have lost your kids to the world, how in the world do you get up in your pulpit and tell your congregation how families need to minister together? They are going to look at you and say, "Well, where is yours?" Eli. You know why Eli could not understand what her prayer was? Look at Eli's boys. Every one of them were priests; pastors. They were the most godless group you ever saw in your life. There is the pattern. There is the model. I do not like it any more than you do, but what do you do? Pick and choose. That is what you do.

The key to it all was her attitude and understanding about the child that God gave her through the supplication in the four parts.

*1 Samuel 1:27-28. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:*

*28. Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.*

Then once Eli gets his head out of wherever it was...

*1 Samuel 2:20. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.*

You see, this is based on Psalm chapter 37. Hey, take it or leave it. I would say wherever your children are today is based on who you lent them to. It is just that simple. In our upcoming child training, we are going to talk about this very concept of lending your child to the Lord. I am telling you, it is the idea of understanding the blessings that are connected with that because he says it in the verse. He says, "*He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed.*"

## VII. Two Primary Inheritances in the Bible

Look at verse 27, 28, 29, three verses that kind of go together.

*Psalms 37:27-29. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

*28. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

*29. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

Now, the context most definitely here is to the nation of Israel, and God taking care of them through the tribulation and then God establishing them in the land. Verse 29 is a reference to

Israel's millennial inheritance, which if you note coming down through here, and you ought to mark this in your Bible, he refers to this six times in this chapter: verse 9, verse 11, verse 18, verse 22, verse 29, and verse 34. In this Psalm, the inheritance is found in five things as you come down through it.

1. The meek.
2. Those that wait on the Lord.
3. Those that keep His way.
4. The righteous.
5. The ones who are lended to the Lord and are blessed of Him.

Yet these five areas, inspirationally, are in our life in a spiritual inheritance. You are going to find that in the Bible, there are two primary inheritances. **The nation of Israel gets the inheritance of the land in the millennium physically.**

**And in Romans 8:16-17, we become a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, and we inherit everything that He is spiritually.**

*16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

*17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.*

Israel, their inheritance is the kingdom of heaven; the church, the kingdom of God. Just that simple.

## VIII. Making God Personal in your Life

Then verse 30 and 31. Here lies the key to a good man's steps being ordered by the Lord. We talked about this last week.

*Psalms 37:30-31. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*

*31. The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

Now last week, I showed you verse 31 was the key to God ordering your steps, the Word of God, through the principles and the promises. That is true. Now today, we want to develop that idea even a little bit further since we are here today. Now look closer at verse 31. "*The law of his God is in his heart.*" Did you see that? Did you read that? It did not say the law of God was in his heart. It said the law of **his** God was in his heart. That is a personal thing. **That is more than just a blanket statement that the law of God was in his heart. It is a personal thing.** The law of **his** God. He has made God personal in his life. That is a deeper relationship than most of God's people have today, is it not?

When you have that, two things will be in your life. Your mouth speaketh wisdom because that is the principles that you go by. The second thing, your tongue talketh of judgment. Why judgment? Look at verse 28. "The Lord loveth judgment." See, this is not judgment to judge

somebody. This is not judgment of God coming down and judging somebody. **This is our own judgment.**

*1 Corinthians 2:15. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*

Your ability to judge, to make the right decisions based on the principles and the promises of God by the hand of God in your life and Him ordering your steps. You speak wisdom based on your understanding how to judge what is right and what is wrong. Then, and only then, he says this, "none of your steps shall slide." Now we call that backsliding today. Backsliding is not a New Testament concept. It is an Old Testament concept to Israel, but it fits.

*Psalms 37:23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

You know, in dealing with people, God's people, I showed you this in Exodus chapters 34 through 40. You are going to find three types of people you have to deal with after they get saved. They are not necessarily bad people. They are not wicked. Many of them are really nice, good, solid people. But the key to dealing with them is your ability to understand them, and you are going to find, and some of you already know this because you have worked with me now for many, many years, and you have dealt with all this, but you are basically going to find three types of people, saved people, that you are going to bump into after they get saved and you begin to work with people.

## IX. Three Types of Saved People

1.) **People who never grow spiritually.** You are going to get people who get saved, and they never grow spiritually in anything. They do not move from one spot. They stay a baby the rest of their life. Would you think this is odd? Every Sunday morning before I get up here, I make my rounds through the little kids' classes. I say hi to all the workers and say hi to all the kids. I always go into the nursery. You walk in there, you know, and all the little kids are playing on the floor. Some of the mothers are holding their kids, giving them a bottle over here. Some of them are in the little cribs over there. What would you think if you went in there and said hi to all the little kids and, "Hi guys, how are you doing?" And they are saying, "Hi, Pastor Bob." Well, they are babies, they do not say that. But they smile. And you walk around the corner, and there is a crib with a 30-year-old man in it. Big hairy legs are hanging over the crib. He does not fit in it at all. His head is sticking up at the top. There he is with a diaper on. Are you visualizing this in your mind right now? He has got a bottle in his mouth. Is there anybody here that would think that is a natural thing? I am telling you, that is the physical nursery, but every church has got a spiritual nursery. You see, you think it is strange there, but nobody has a second thought about somebody saved 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years, and they are still sucking on the bottle. Still wearing a diaper. You are going to find people, good people. They are not bad people. Most of them never cause you a problem. You will find them in churches across the country, saved 30 years and still a baby. I have seen them get saved, and 20 or 30 years later, never grow an inch spiritually. You know, one thing about babies that is consistent: they have a zero threshold of understanding, and so do they.

2.) **People who start to grow but stop.** You are going to find people who get saved and start to grow, but at some point, they will stop growing and go no farther. Many of them struggle with issues all their life. I feel sorry for them. I really do. Some of them, I have seen it, they get right two or three times a year. They will show up in church for a while. They are good for two or three weeks, then they are gone, and then they are back, and then they are gone. They just struggle. Now these folks will come in three flavors, like your favorite ice cream. 1.) There will be people who have a total disregard and no structure in their own personal life. 2.) They just never got the world completely out of their life. 3.) They just simply have no real desire to get to where God wants them to be. Now for all these people, and others, you go into Matthew chapter 13:1-23, where it talks about the parable of the sower, putting out the Word of God and why some people get it and why people do not. There they are. Unfortunately, these two people groups will be the majority of God's people across Christianity today.

I will tell you another phenomenon that I have witnessed. You look around our church, and you see how many young people are in it. Every pastor, every missionary, everybody who comes, who sees this church tells me and asks me the same thing. "I have never seen anything like this. Most churches, 60 and older. They cannot get young people to come. Nobody wants to be part of it." For them to come in here and see the sea of faces of you guys who are in your 20s and your 30s and you young couples, they always ask me, "How in the world do you do that?" "Because we do not see that anywhere today." How do you explain that to somebody? That is like trying to explain a nuclear bomb to a three-year-old Eskimo. I know the answer. I told you from the get-go, I am not interested in just building your average Baptist church. I told you from day one, my goal and my job is to build a Philadelphian church in the Laodicean church age. That means you have to build Philadelphian Christians in a Laodicean church age. It comes down to how you build them. It is just that simple. This church, please, we are far from perfect, but this church operates on a higher operational threshold than most churches. You are held to more accountability here. Some people do not like that. I get it. I have said it from day one. This church is not for everybody. I get that. I am looking for young men and young ladies who want to be above the average Christian mindset.

I will tell you another phenomenon: there will be older Christians come in here, you know, 50, 60 years old; they are looking for a church. They will come in here and they will maybe come a Sunday, maybe come two Sundays, and they never come back. They are not bad people. They just don't want a Christianity on the level and in the tempo that we are dancing to. That is why older Christians have been in that Baptist mindset of legalism, stupidity, and they cannot break free from it. If you want to build a church today, you better have a plan to get the minds of the young people who have not been tainted by that yet. Then you can train them the way you want.

Now, having said that, we have a host of older people here today. You are obviously something special. But let us be honest, most of you, when we first met 40, 45 years ago, you were where these young people are. You just could not get rid of me. You are here today, but you were there back then, and you bought into it and stayed with it. That is where you are at. I look for certain things in young men and young ladies. When I see those things, I understand it is my job to develop them. I realize that not everybody will make the cut. I get that. Not everybody wants the

level of intensity that it takes today to build a Bible-believing New Testament church. I am okay with that. I realize that. In the military, you have your regular army guys, and then you have your special operational guys, the special forces, the Navy SEALs. They are a cut above your average soldier. They experience things. They work at an operational tempo far above the average grind of the soldier in the military. It takes something special in somebody to get to that point. That is what I am looking for. Like the old song, "300 men will test today, but only two win the Green Beret." I look for that specialty. I give everybody a chance. Sometimes people come in, they start to grow, and they realize, "Whoa, that is way over the top. I just do not want to go that far." I understand that. That is the Christian world we live in, but I also understand you're proof of it. There are young men and young ladies out there that have the guts to take their stand and recognize truth when they see it and take their stand for the Lord. That is what I am looking for. I am looking for a certain kind of Christian, probably two or three out of a hundred today. But that is what I am looking for. Believe me, it takes a special kind of man or woman to make the level of ministry that is needed today to get the job done for the Lord. Too much mediocrity in Christianity. Too many pastors that just get into the pulpit, tickle their ears because it is a job, never build families, never build individuals, never build anything because they have no vision of building something elite. But in the stench, and the rotteness, and the godlessness of the Eli's and their sons, you get the job done.

3.) **People who get saved and never look back.** They grow through those seven stages of spiritual growth like a hot knife through butter. They thrive on intensity. They operate on a level of personal high discipline. They build in their life the three great key commodities of the Christian life. They have the right foundation: salvation. On that foundation, they have built two things: the principles and the promises. The third thing is that they do it through an accountability and a responsibility through God's structure, a New Testament local church. In time, they grow. They mature. They get established. They endure a hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. They do these by the three things that I gave you last week that got me to Kansas City. God ordering their steps to a structure of a New Testament local church, a pastor who knows how to get them to where God wants them to be, and then they see and understand the model church for the New Testament Christian, Acts chapter 13, and off they go. God ordaining your steps through His hand in your life to get you where He wants you to be.

## X. Four Qualities I Look for in Leaders

I am always on the scout for anybody who I see that has the remote inkling to be a leader. These are the four things that I look for. When you see these four things, then you let God be God, but you are going to put the things in their life, and then you watch them, and in time, through these four things, they get established. That is the key, folks. I am glad that you are saved. I am glad that you are baptized. I am glad you have got the right Bible. I am glad you do not smoke, chew, or go with girls that do. I am glad for all of that. The real question is, are you established? If you are not established yet, will you be established in time? Or will you be a beggar of bread the rest of your life?

1. **Self-Discipline**. Without discipline, you're nothing. Self-discipline will be the starting point for leadership. And maybe you're not disciplined, but you can become disciplined. With the Word of God, you can become everything that God wants you to be. The question is not God and the Book. The question is how bad do you want that? What are you willing to change, take out of your life, change about your life to build that discipline?
2. **Determination**. Somebody who doesn't quit. Somebody who doesn't get their nose bent out of joint because of the fact that they didn't get something the way they wanted or they didn't like this or they didn't like that. All that tells me is how shallow you are. When you understand the ministry here, the global outreach that God has given us, it demands determination.
3. **Accountability and Responsibility**. Do you blame others for your problems? And what and who are you accountable to? I've seen Christians all my life who blamed everything that they did on somebody else. What I look for is someone who takes responsibility for their own actions. I'm not saying you've got to be perfect. I know you won't be. You're going to make mistakes. I understand that, but do you take responsibility for it and who and what are you accountable to?
4. **Dependability**. The job of a pastor who knows what he's doing is to allow people to be part of his ministry. Most Baptist churches today, and I have been in this business for a long time, the pastors trust nobody. Their church is run by the pastor and maybe two or three or four of his key henchmen, the spiritual mafia. In some cases, they're the deacon board. In some cases, he builds a little group of people that he does trust. You get to do nothing. You come and you sit. The job of any pastor who knows what he's doing is one word: delegation. Building you to the place in your life, when you're established, nobody has to feed you bread anymore, you're standing on your own two feet, and now like John Mark, you are profitable to me in the ministry, and you can get something done for the Lord. That's how you grow. That's why these churches are full of spiritual babies. When it comes to the Bible, I would put you older ones up against five or ten of them any day of the week. It's not that they're bad people, it's because they've got a Looney Tunes pastor who keeps it all to himself, never delegates, never teaches, never trains, and never builds people—defrauding the people of God by the Eli's.

## XI. Summary

This year, if you have any kind of spiritual perception at all, you can see in just six months how God has opened the doors to the world for us. We talked about it. Probably the overall reason is that not only are the steps so many of you are taking are ordered by the Lord, but the steps this church is taking are also ordered by the Lord. And I understand that is because of the steps that you are taking. But this year you can see out of our conference just what, six months ago, the open door to the world for us. The 20 years plus of teaching the Bible on a level that I have taught it and building a Philadelphian church with Philadelphian Christians is paying off. **This church is nothing more than two things. It is a boot camp for new Christians, and it is an SOT, special operations training, for those that want to go the distance.** God keeps sending

us the best. You young men and young ladies who are bringing in your friends that are young men and young ladies, because of your caliber and quality of character, you are bringing in people like that. They see it, they hear it, they want to be a part of it. We can build in their life and get them to the place where they too can have a piece of the action.

You older ones, you are something special, stuck around all this time. We saw Costa Rica. We have got 30 kids coming from the Dominican in July. Week after next, Sam is going to be here. We have got a team going to Africa with Kevin and Kathy. Mark and Patty want to put a group together to go to the Dominican next year. There are some 20 plus missionaries that we either support financially or give them all the teaching material that they need. There are 250 Filipino pastors down in the Philippines someplace out in the jungles who are teaching the Word of God today because of what you supplied to them. God has been good to us, but to whom much is given, much is required. I am like the Marines, I am always looking for a few good men. For each of you, allowing God to order your steps and have His hand in your life and to establish you in His Word and then His work, you are the best of the best. I want you to know I am proud to serve the Lord with you.

It is a thing where I have watched this thing grow from just 14 or 15 people to where it is today and the outreach that God has given us, not because of me, but because of that Book and the men and women that are sitting out there this morning who just didn't want to be normal. You wanted to be a cut above the rest, and you put the dedication, you put the self-discipline, you put all those four things in your life, and here you are today. It is only going to get better.

Everybody is worried about the world. I do not care how bad the world gets. The worse the world gets with a church like this, you see, we do not keep the ones that are not going to cut it. They are gone. The worse the world gets, the better you will be because you understand it. It would be like being in a football game when you are down eight points, and you only have 30 seconds on the clock, and you have got to really make up some time. You know what you do? You do not give up. You dig in, get down, you force a fumble, you get that ball back, you score, and then you get another score, and you win the game. We find a way to get it done. That is what I love about you. That is what makes you special. That is what makes you a cut above the rest. That is what makes me proud to be associated with you.