

# Proverbs 21- Decisions Determine Destiny

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman emphasizes that our decisions shape our destiny, urging reliance on God and obedience to His Word amidst societal challenges.*

**Duration:** 1:05:34

**Scripture:** Proverbs 21:13

**Topics:** "Faithful Living", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and highlights the consequences of wandering from the truth. It encourages repentance, obedience, and giving with a cheerful heart as key aspects of a faithful Christian life.

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## Transcript

Dear Heavenly Fathers, we open your word tonight that you will give many of us hope. Lord, others I pray that you would challenge and convict. Others, Lord, I pray that you would give restoration and peace in the midst of the storm that they're going through.

Lord, I do even want to pray for healing tonight. Lord, we know that you can heal. We believe in your healing power.

Lord, I pray for those tonight who came with sickness or disease. Lord, that you begin to touch their body. Your word is so powerful that it can go out and make disease just vanish.

Lord, I pray that you would restore, Lord, even broken homes. Lord, just begin to bring a healing sense to this congregation, Lord, physically, spiritually, emotionally. Lord, I also pray that you would just give me precision with your word, Lord.

Give me clarity. Give me direction. Lord, as I always pray, I need you tonight, Lord, to help discern your word of truth.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, you guys can have a seat. And welcome to West Side Christian Fellowship if you haven't been here before. And I've actually been going back and forth all week on if I should clarify some things that I said last week briefly.

I don't know how many of you were here, but I talked on a very hot topic last week, which isn't uncommon, and that is on guns. What does the Bible say about self-defense? And I made some comments, and I went against those who worship the guns, gun worshipers, which we can fall into that category, not trusting God. And what happened is the media picked it up, and it was ran, even I just heard on Glenn Beck, it was ran underneath, you know, pastor says stop worshiping guns and stop watching O'Reilly and Hannity.

And, you know, our server was shut down for a while, and I think there was like a thousand views on the sermon just in that one day, and people emailing all upset at me. And what I told them and what I want to tell you too is read, watch the entire message. Don't just go off of a short little clip or an 800-word article.

But go back and watch that message on if there's confusion about gun control and where we're at in a society. Because I do believe that the church can speak on these issues. We can speak boldly, and we can speak authoritatively with the Word of God.

These things aren't things where we can cower down and hide from, because the Bible speaks volumes to these issues. But I do want to clarify, I'm not encouraging people to go out and arm themselves, and, you know, in this fear factor, I'm actually coming against that. I was saying, listen, it's good to protect yourself.

I believe in protection. The whole point of the message is what people missed is the heart of the message was, what did I say? Our prayer closets are empty while our gun safes are full. We're trusting in Remington and Smith and Wesson, but not in the God of the Bible.

That's where our help comes from. So the whole message was just to challenge people to put it in its proper perspective. Self-defense is biblical.

I mean, there's a plethora of examples in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, I find it's ironic that Paul says, Timothy, if you don't provide for your family financially, you're worse than an unbeliever, and you have denied the faith. So if I don't provide for them financially, I'm worse than an unbeliever. But if I want to provide and protect physically, I'm a warmonger.

It makes no sense. So that was the whole thrust of that message, was not coming against, you know, O'Reilly and Sean Hannity. I was saying watch less of them and spend more time in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

And I will say that again tonight. Turn off, if we've got three hours a day for this and feeding our mind and feeding our mind, but no time for this, that's why we're in fear factor mode. That's why we're worried and we're scared and all these things.

And there's, I mean, meteors are hitting the earth now. Look at the news. But see, that's why we have to say, where does our trust rest in? Where does my trust come from? Where does my help come from? It comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth.

So I was encouraging people, stop scaring your family to death. You can be well-armed, but start leading them spiritually. Sure, you can have these things for self-defense, but don't worship these things.

Your protection is not in Smith and Wesson, Browning, and Glock. It's not. Your protection is in God and God alone.

So yeah, and the people I upset, I think they needed to be upset. If, you know, what's that old saying? You throw a rock into a dog pile and the one that makes a noise is the one you hit. So I have a feeling that a lot of these people were worshiping their guns.

How dare you? And they were saying, we have a second amendment riot. And we, you know, we had this. And I mean, I was getting emails all day long.

And I finally just started sending them to Randy and said, Randy, you want to handle these? Normally I don't, you know, you can just blow people off. But some of the people, hey, listen, you might want to listen to the message. And some people appreciated that and they had a better understanding.

But man, they just wanted somebody to rail at. So I want to clarify that. I went back over the message and there's nothing I would take out because I am challenging gun worshipers.

We're putting more emphasis on the weapons than on God. And as we're seeing a decline, really, do you want me to tell you what the problem? We do not need gun control. We need sin control.

If you look at when I was raised up, we would go target practice shooting and all these things, Royal Rangers, Boy Scouts, 30, 40 years ago. I'm only 43. When we were younger, you wouldn't see any of this stuff.

What happens is you'd see little bits here and there. Now there's mass shootings. There's people hiding out in Big Bear.

There's shooting 20-kilo guard. This is ridiculous, people. This is a world out of control.

When they remove the fear of God, when they remove God from everything in the government, everything in the school districts, they remove him from everything. Don't talk about Christ anymore. Don't name the name that saves.

Begin to remove him. Begin to remock his word. He removes that shelter and safety of protection.

So what we're seeing is a direct result of the spiritual condition of our people. It's not a gun problem. It's a sin problem.

It's a nation on the brink of destruction walking away from the very God on which the foundation was built. That's the problem. And pastors have got to stop being motivational speakers and start being confrontational and say, this is what the word of God says.

It's okay to say, listen, this is wrong. Stop worshiping your guns and start worshiping Christ. The problem is not gun control.

It's sin control. We have a moral problem. It's absolutely alarming.

If you look at what's happening to society. We've got to do this. No, we've got to do this.

The nation has got to break and get on her knees before Almighty God and cry out, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from her wicked ways, then and only then will I heal their land. As we're disregarding him and removing him, we have no time for him. We don't want him to be involved.

Now we have soft core porn on normal television. Everybody's addicted to this and addicted to that. We don't want God in anything.

We remove him from our schools. We'll talk about Buddha and Hare Krishna, but you can't talk about Jesus Christ. When you start to remove all these things, Romans 13, God gives them over to a debase and corrupted mind.

So would God judge America? Folks, he's already judging America. This is what judgment looks like when he removes that hand of protection and safety. And again, I'm not an alarmist.

I didn't want to say a lot of this today, but I'm a realist, and this is what's happening in our culture. That's why I get passionate about this issue, because I want to tell people it's not gun control. It's sin control.

It's moral control. You're either restrained by the Bible or by the bayonet. You're either restrained by the strong arm of man or by the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

Evil has to be restrained one way or the other. So that's what's happening in our culture. And I think if more pulpits would say that, in love, of course, and call the nation to task, instead of cowering from these issues, because what happens, oh, I'm going to lose some people.

I better not say that. So then I become a motivational speaker. What would you like to hear today, guys? That God loves you? You're just going to be healthy, wealthy, and wise? All you have to do, just keep going forward, brother.

You're the head, not the tail. You're above and not beneath. You'll be great.

You'll be prosperous. What do you need to hear today? What do you need to hear? Just tell me. I'll tell you what you want to hear.

No, I can't tell you the truth. I'll lose half the crowd. Well, see how that works? See how that works? And that's what's happening.

The church is almost on the side of removing God, because when you say nothing, you say something. The church doesn't realize that. When you say nothing, you say something.

Well, we're not saying all this right, but you're not saying the other side either. And so once this hit the news, and all these different things, and people are getting upset, they don't admit the heart of the message is return to God, and he will return to us. You're going to see this get more perverted, more shootings until the nation either breaks or is destroyed.

That's the consequences. Man, she and I want to come feeling good, or leave feeling good. Well, there's hope.

There's hope in Christ. That's why I show up. That is our only hope for our nation.

It's the only hope for the church, to turn back around and turn back to him. So anyway, hopefully that clarified some of that for those out there. With that said, we're still in Proverbs 21.

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Proverbs 21. And what we're doing, if you haven't been here before, we're going through the book of Proverbs, week by week by week, because there's a lot of wisdom

in there. And I want to just throw this out there.

I really beat this up many months ago, but it bears repeating. When we're talking about Proverbs, what have we been learning? That the power of Scripture lies in the doing of it, not in the hearing alone. Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only deceiving yourselves.

We have a lot of people hearing the Word of God, oh yeah, but not doing it. Do you realize we have millions of sermon downloads? Not here, I mean nationally, a day. Bibles are on their phones.

The Greek, the Hebrew, Sermon Index, all these different things. We have more access to the Word of God than ever before. You can just pull up a word and it tells you the Greek meaning and the sound of that word and how it's spelled and history and commentary.

We have all this stuff, so why is it so chaotic? Why is nothing working it seems like? If there's so much power in the Gospel, why is it not working? Now of course it's working in some people's lives, don't get me wrong, the remnant is small. I understand, God is moving, don't get me wrong. But as a nation, if we've got millions of sermon downloads, everybody's hearing the Word of God.

They can quote the Word of God. They have their little Facebook little pops up, here's a verse for today, here's a verse for tomorrow. We've got it everywhere, what's happening? Why aren't people being changed and transformed? Because the power is not in the hearing of the Word of God, the power is in the doing.

Millions of people have their radio set just for this and they get this speaker and they get that speaker, but there's no obedience to what's being said. There's no transformation. And my concern is that we become hard of hearing.

And I see this and you see this in little kids. Sound like a broken recorder, pick that up, pick that up. What do they do? In one ear and out the next, it doesn't happen.

And it can, listen, if we're not careful, it can happen here. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. Husbands, love your wives.

God's saying, listen, I'm trying to save your marriage right now, will you listen? Husbands, love your, I've already heard that. Let no bitterness, wrath, evil, anger, anything, let all this be removed from you. But then why do we hold on to so much bitter and anger and resentment and gossip? Why do we hold on to it then? Oh, I know what the verse says.

I just don't want to apply it. And that's what's happening. So as we look at Proverbs, I just want to remind all of you that the power of God transforming your life and my life included is in the obedience to God's word, not in the hearing of it.

And I think the church can sometimes serve as therapy. Oh, I came and heard it. Whoa, yeah, I feel bad and convicted.

Man, oh, not going back there again for a few weeks. And so we leave, what happens? Nothing changes. Because be hearers of the word and doers of the word.

That's where the change is going to come from. And that's one of my big concerns, honestly, is we know so much scripture. We've heard it, many of us.

It's just like, uh-huh, yep, yep, I know, yep. Get to a point that I can really use here. Come on, I understand all this.

I mean, look at the most popular verse ever. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. If you thought, you just took a few minutes and you thought about what that verse means, it's powerful.

But we hear it, I've heard that many times. So just be careful, just be careful because there's power in the word of God. When it goes out, when God speaks to our lives, it doesn't just come and take a baseball bat.

Sometimes they hit us over the head and then we have to do something. It's that slow, gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit. Change these areas, work on that anger.

Get rid of that frustration, that bitterness. He's convicting, he's convicting. But then it's up to us to take that step and repent to those areas.

So with that said, let's begin. The title of the message is Decisions Determine Our Destiny. Decisions Determine Destiny.

Now I wanna be careful here because I'm also aware of and we've taught about God's sovereignty. And this title would not sit well with a Calvinist. If you don't know what Calvinist is, that's okay.

For those who do know, this title will not sit well with them because our decisions don't determine our destiny. God determines our destiny, which is true. And how that all works, as we talked about a few weeks ago, is not crystal clear.

God takes sin and salvation and his sovereignty and he mixes it like a cake mix and mixes it all together, Romans 8, 28. All things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to his purposes. All things, Paul? Yeah, all things.

How does that work? I'm not real sure. Because see, on one hand, there's many passages exhorting us to make certain decisions. I mean, we could stay here for a year, really, and just read, do this.

And then there's other scriptures that talk of God's sovereignty. And we make plans, but it's God's sovereignty that prevails. A man plans out his ways, but it's God's sovereignty that will prevail.

So how does that work? Well, we don't quite know, but what we do know is obviously our plans have and our decisions have ramifications. One of the verses that sticks out is in verse five. The plans of the diligent, which means those who are diligent, they work hard, they plan, they obey God's word.

It leads to plenty. But those of everyone who is hasty, which is lazy and doesn't do anything, it leads to poverty. So the Bible's clear on that.

You work hard, you're diligent, you're persevering. God will reward that. But if we're not, it could lead to the other end.

So somehow within his sovereignty, our decisions do affect our life. If we decide to take our vehicle down and go to Hill, go right over the guardrails and down the side of the mountain, that's going to have consequences. No, that's God's sovereignty, brother.

Well, I don't know. Somebody decided to drive off the cliff. It's how that works, we don't know.

So my encouragement is try not to get polarized on one side or the other. You know what I mean? If it's all about God's sovereignty, then I don't need to do anything. Whatever happens, happens.

Que sera, sera. What will be, will be. I mean, God's sovereign.

I don't need to work on this. I don't need to work on that. This is who I am.

This is how he's created me. Almost like a puppet. Whatever, you know, God, wherever.

But then on the other side, what happens is we get too worried about my decisions, my choices. If I don't get this just right, if I don't stay right here in the middle of God's will, I'm, oh gosh, I'm destroyed. My life is over.

Well, let me be honest with you. Nobody stays right in the center of God's will. We stumble and we fumble and God calls us back.

No turn here, come back to me. There's no way you can stay in center in the perfect, in God's perfect will because we have sin in our lives that taint that direction. So that's encouraging.

So it's not all about our decisions because God is still sovereign. So a lot of times what I've noticed on this side, when we forget about God's sovereignty, what happens? We can get really worried and really fearful and really anxious because it's all up to us. I'm messed up.

But God can take those years and begin to restore those years. Dating relationships, you might have dated the wrong person. He can restore that and rebuild that.

Life isn't over, trust me. So we see that balancing of both our responsibility and God's sovereignty. So keep that in mind as we go through this.

Verse one, the king's heart is in his hand. I'm sorry. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

Like the rivers of water, He turns it wherever He wishes. And this is just what we talked about. The king's heart, leadership.

One of the encouraging things about our nation is God's sovereignty is in control. God is still in control. He knows what's going on.

He holds our nation in the palm of His hands basically. He's in sovereign control. So it says the king's heart, the president's heart, whatever, is like rivers of water.

He turns them wherever He wishes. And if you want more on this, I'm going to refer to the message I gave on February 2nd. Lord, why is this happening? So if you're wondering why something is happening in your life, why is this happening? Look at that message.

I talk a lot more about God's sovereignty and what that looks like. But I like what R.C. Sproul said on this point. Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God, but they believe in the sovereignty of man.

See, most of us believe in the sovereignty of God, right? But what actually prevails, we believe in the sovereignty of man. Sure, I believe about God's sovereignty, but I want to control things. And I believe in

my own sovereignty and that I can control and I can dictate here.

And you'll see at the end of all these points, I try to take away the key takeaway because there is so much in this chapter. So the key on this first verse is trust in God, God's sovereignty will prevail. Trust in Him, His sovereignty will prevail.

And on that note, thank God for unanswered prayers. Because many of us can look back and go, wow, thank God that didn't happen. You're thinking of people you used to date, aren't you? Thank God, or a business deal.

Or a business deal, or your old life outside of Christ. All the things, oh Lord, if you'd just make me this, and then you're like, oh, thank God that that didn't happen. Thank God for His sovereignty.

Verse 2, every way of a man is right in his own eyes. This is interesting. Did you realize that we all think we're right? So when I argue against you or you argue against me, I think I'm right and you think you're right.

Hence the argument. Whatever direction I'm going, I'm going. That's why we talked about before, accountability partners are important or people who hold you accountable or offer you counsel.

Because they can see things differently. Because as I'm going, I think my way is right. They're like, oh, you might want to check this.

You might want to rethink this. Because it's right. That's why it says every man, or every way of a man is right in his own eyes.

But it's the Lord who weighs the heart. Our actions are often tainted by ulterior motives. A few weeks ago, I was very transparent on this point.

All of our actions are tainted by ulterior motives. We take a certain way because we have a certain agenda. Don't we? Unless you're Christ.

All of our actions. So what does God do? He weighs. It says here, He weighs the heart.

And the New American Commentary says this, Yahweh's power of discernment goes beyond unmasking those who fool others. He even finds out those who have fooled themselves. That's why I love Hebrews 4.12. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.

It penetrates even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joint and marrow. It judges the thoughts and the attitudes of the heart. And this goes back to my opening.

That's why the pulpits of America are so important. That's why preaching is so important. It's God's institution to proclaim His truth.

So it does pierce the heart and weighs and balances the motives of people. We're supposed to do that. What does that word there mean? Preaching weighs.

Weighing the balance. Balancing something in the hands to assess its weight. So we want to go a certain direction, but God weighs the heart.

I've got a five pound dumbbell here. I've got an apple. What weighs more? Yeah, of course.

So God's assessing, oh, there's your motives. Not good motives. Not good motives at all.

So He weighs these motives. Why are you doing what you're doing? And that's one of the goals of the word of God is you spend time in the word of God. You should, many times, be feeling that, man, it's weighing my motives, my heart.

Let the integrity of the upright guide you. The decisions you make is integrity guiding you. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

Husbands or fathers, raise your children to fear and admonition of the Lord. How are you doing so far? That's what it does. It weighs the heart.

It convicts and it challenges. So we think we're going right, and that's what's happening again to our nation. I hate to keep bringing this in, but we think we're doing right.

The Congress thinks they're doing right. The President, everybody, and I'm not going to go against party lines here. I'm just saying everybody thinks they're doing right.

Let's just throw more money out there. Let's do this. Let's control this.

Let's tax this. Everything's going right in our own eyes, but the Lord is weighing the motives and weighing the spirit and weighing the intentions of the people. That's what's happening here.

The key for this, words can fool, but time reveals. And what I mean by that is a lot of times we can say the right thing or people can tell you the right thing, but give it some time. That's one of my favorite phrases now is time will tell.

Time will tell. Because I can talk with you after the service or at lunch, and people can tell us what we want. You tell me what I want to hear, and I tell you what you want to hear.

Oh, isn't that great? Time will tell. You got to watch that fruit develop and see what happens. That's how you weigh the heart sometimes is you let time be the great divider there.

Verse three, to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Let me say that again. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Now this was written obviously in the Old Testament when what were they doing? They were offering sacrifices. And what would happen is people would come, they would bring their sacrifice to the priest, but the heart's not right. So he's saying, listen, to be a person of integrity, to be a man or woman of integrity, to do right, to be just, one of the prophets said, what does the Lord require of you, oh man? But to love mercy, to love justice, and to walk humbly before your God.

That's all God requires of us. I believe it's Malachi. I don't want to say for sure without looking.

That's what he requires of us. But people are bringing their sacrifice to the church. Saying, oh, you're covering my sin, okay.

Bringing all the sacrifice, look, I'm bringing my sacrifice. Yeah, but you're beating your kids, you're screaming at your wife, you're bringing all the sacrifice. You see the difference here? He's saying, I don't want sacrifice.

I desire mercy. I desire a true, broken, and contrite heart. Well, that's Old Testament, Shane.

Yeah, you know what it looks like today? Same thing. We walk through those doors. Ceremonies, rituals, all these things aren't necessarily bad.

It's a condition of the heart. And I found that a lot of people, and I used to do it too, we come to church as if we are doing God a favor. I didn't say it was going to be easy sermon.

I said it was going to be from Proverbs. But don't, have you ever done that? Well, I'm going to, there's my checklist for the week. As if God's in heaven going, oh, thank you so much.

You just made me so. I'm going to do, I'm going to church to do God a favor. And that's what he's saying here.

Listen, this is why I often say, religion is not relationship, and doing right is not being right. God looks at the condition of our heart. So he's challenging us here, basically I'm just going through the motions.

And people do that. You know how I know? I say this often. Those who are getting upset right now are the ones need to hear what I'm saying right now.

If this convicts you and upsets you, it's because you need to hear it. People are either saying, amen, Shane, that's absolutely correct. God's word says it.

Or they're saying, would you shut up and go to the next verse? Jeez, what's this guy's problem? From the minute I walked in here, he's grr, grr, grr. That's called the hound of heaven. The word of God is piercing the heart saying, get back in right relationship with me.

Come back to me. Think about that. That's what he's saying there.

Do right and have justice, and don't just sacrifice to me. Jesus said, this is the key, go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Jesus said, listen, the very reason I've come is to call sinners to repentance. Not the arrogant, prideful people who don't think they need me. They've got their form, and they've got their religiosity, and they've got their sacred assemblies.

Do you want to know what something is very alarming to me in the Bible? That the most scathing words in all of the Bible are against religious people. Think about that. Jesus's most scathing words are against religious people.

The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes. John the Baptist would go as far as say, you brood of vipers, who warn judithly from the wrath that is to come. How would I like that next time I speak at a pastor's conference? You brood of vipers.

You Christian leaders, who warn judithly from the wrath to come, therefore start doing works worthy of repentance. He was calling out the religious people. Why? Because they had sacrifice and not religion, a relationship.

They had a religion and not relationship. And that's what this whole point is here. Verse 4, A haughty look and a proud heart and the plowing of the wicked are all sin.

Pride is always wrong, but we take pride in our pride. Don't we? Do you know some of the most healthy words you will ever say are these? Repeat after me. I was wrong.

I'm sorry. Very healthy words. That will keep a marriage together more than anything else.

I'm sorry I was wrong. But what does pride do? I'm not wrong. I'm not wrong.

I am not wrong. And because we're not wrong, the volume of our voice gets higher. Have you ever noticed that? If I'm not wrong, why does my voice get higher? I'm not wrong.

When it should get lower. I'm wrong. I'm sorry.

At the top of God's list, He says, I hate six things, yea, seven are an abomination to me. At the top of that list, I hate a proud look. God said, I hate a proud, I hate the look of pride.

Why? It reminds Him probably of the devil. I will be like the most high God. And He was cast down from heaven.

Pride, let me tell you this. You want a secret to the Christian faith? Be humble and broken. Because the devil doesn't have a lot of ground there.

He takes pride, which is I believe at the root of all sin, man worshiping himself, pride, I'm going to do things my way. Everything you read about in Scripture, let not bitterness and wrath and evil and anger be put away from you. I'm not going to do that.

They did this to me. They hurt me, Shane. I can't do that.

Well, okay, I'm just saying. The Bible says, forgive. I can't do that.

Pride comes in there. It's a legitimate hurt. But pride often blocks the filling of the Holy Spirit.

That's why I often say we can't be filled with the Spirit if we're filled with ourselves. That's true. Pride fills us of ourselves.

Think about it. All the arguments at home. Who's right? I'm right.

And it damages. So I'm going to work on that this week. Sorry, I was wrong.

Better bring some more humor in here, because I'm getting some looks. The key of this whole point is, and I've been using the word default lately. And the point I'm trying to get across is, when I use the word default, is we are proud by default.

What that means is, any time as human beings, if you don't do something, like make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust, if I don't fight against the lust of the flesh, by default, what will it do? Pull me away. If I don't work on humility and brokenness and repentance, and while I'm worshiping and breaking and repenting, what will happen by default? I'll get prideful and arrogant. So see, the flesh always by default, if we don't do something, incorporate spiritual disciplines, ask for God's help, and have this spirit of humility that we often talk about, by default, the flesh is going to lead me.

It's one or the other. Our choices are never free from this conflict. Paul says in Romans and in 1 Corinthians, I believe it is, that the spirit and the flesh are warring against each other.

The flesh is pulling, the spirit is pulling as well. So if you do nothing to feed the spiritual side, guess who's winning? Right here. Right here, the flesh is leading by default.

And that's the whole point there on verse four. Verse five, the plans of the diligent lead to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, it leads to poverty. Now think, this is very important.

The plans of diligent. God's basically saying the plans of those who are diligent is going to lead to success. But those plans of those who are not diligent and lazy are going to lead to poverty.

And this is what we've talked about before. I'm not gonna talk about it again, but a lot of times when we think of poverty, you think of in our nation, right? Poverty. Not everybody is poor because of bad circumstances.

Those are the ones we need to help. God has called us to, we're doing a terrible job on helping the poor because we're so concerned with our own pocketbooks. But a large majority of people are poverty because of this scripture.

So see, that's why there needs to be discernment. I need to have discernment on who I need to help and discernment on who God's trying to convict. You see how that works there? Because God's saying, listen, if you're diligent, basically saying if you work hard, discipline and perseverance pay off.

The plans of the diligent assumes that action is taking place. So God rewards diligence, not laziness. He rewards hard work, not complaining.

And He rewards serving and not complacency. You see that? The difference there? It's all basically up here. It's an attitude.

And I talk to a lot of people, especially now that are out of work and unemployment and different things. And a lot of times, more often than not, they're really just down and depressed and not fun to be around. Not everybody, of course, but my encouragement is listen, go out and there's no jobs out there.

There's jobs everywhere if you're willing to do something, maybe not even for money. Go serve the church for a while and see what doors the Lord opens. Unless I get \$25 an hour in benefits and weekends off, I'm not gonna pursue that.

Well, then there you go, sir. That's why you're impoverished. You're not gonna be working because God rewards the diligent, not the lazy.

He rewards those who work hard, not the complacent. Now, granted, there are some people who are going through hard times financially, and it's not a result of laziness whatsoever. They're very hard workers.

It's just a season in life. So please don't use a big brush and broad strokes on everything I'm saying and trying to put everybody in this one little camp. But for the large majority of people out there, they can work and they can work hard.

They just don't want to. We can get a couple checks a month, stand on employment for a long time, go doctor, can I stay on disability for a while? Yeah, oh, good. And just, oh, woe is me.

And there are legitimate cases. Please don't misunderstand. But there are also, the Bible talks about working hard and being diligent and prosperous.

And that's just one scripture. I can think of numerous other ones. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

It's in that diligence and working hard. And all the verses that we covered in the first 20 chapters, many of those deal with poverty and laziness and working hard. So that's a biblical principle that will always pay off.

You might not get paid immediately, but you're in right spirits because now you're filled with the Spirit of God. You're serving, you're helping. God will open doors.

He'll bump into somebody. He'll get employment elsewhere as long as we're following these biblical principles. The problem is we want the results now and I'll obey later, right? I want the results now and then I'll obey.

God says obey and then the results come. The power is in the doing, not the hearing only. And we often forget that joy is a byproduct of the Christian faith, right? But joy is often a byproduct of obedience.

It's not until I do something that joy comes, right? So God rewards that hard work and that perseverance. Verse 6, getting treasure by lying or getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death. In a nutshell, how do you acquire things? By lying or dishonest gain or by integrity? It's that verse we quoted earlier, the integrity of the upright will guide them.

Listen, let me tell you a secret right here to knowing God's will. How many of you guys want to know God's will about something? Always remember this verse, the integrity of the upright will guide them. Because a lot of times we don't use integrity.

Integrity is that word, it's like, it has sturdiness, it's integrity. You can trust it. So when we make decisions according to God's will, that can help to guide us.

A lot of people make business decisions that aren't wise, date the wrong person they know they shouldn't, but the integrity of the upright will guide them. Allow integrity of right decisions to guide you. Verse 7, the violence of the wicked will destroy them because they refuse to do justice.

In a nutshell, they'll reap what they sow, will they not? The violence of the wicked will destroy them. A violent lifestyle will destroy them. And on this note, I just thought of this as I was preparing this point.

Do you realize that your thoughts become your words? Your words become your actions. Your actions form your habits. Your habits shape your lifestyle.

And your lifestyle determines your destiny. See, a lot of it's right here. Our thoughts, our thought life.

We reap what we sow. Verse 8, the way of a guilty man is perverse, but as for the pure, his work is right. And basically, this is a summary of honest and dishonest people.

The difference between being open and honest versus hiding our actions and having ulterior motives. And the whole key takeaway from this is perversion distorts. And all perversion is, you hear that word sometimes, perversion, perversion.

That's perverting. That's taking the right course and perverting it and making it the wrong course. This is why we refer to anything outside of sex between a man and a woman as a perversion of how God has designed it.

It's okay to say that. That's what it is. It's a perversion of how God designed it.

And that's what that means. You're taking what is right and you're perverting it and readjusting it so now it's a perversion. And the prophets would say, woe be to that nation who calls good evil and evil good.

What are they doing? They're calling good evil and evil good. They're perverting it. Once we begin to call good evil and evil good, we are on a slippery slope.

The violence of the wicked will destroy them. Verse 9. Oh, I'm not ready for this one. You guys protect me.

Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman. Oh, Lord, it doesn't stop there. Verse 19.

Better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman. Why isn't he nailing the guys on this? Well, of course, this can apply to guys as well. Proverbs is written probably to his son giving advice to men.

Listen, and this is true. Listen, if you have not married yet, let me just throw this out there. Better to dwell in the corner of a housetop than with a contentious and angry woman.

Better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman. Why is that so powerful? Just be careful who you're dating because anger is a very destructive force. See, our homes are supposed to be holy sanctuaries, not breeding ground for Satan.

We're supposed to go there and be nurtured and protect and grow, not angry, disgruntled people throwing things and furious and yelling at each other. It's better just to go dwell in the wilderness than to deal with that. And it's an encouraging thing if this verse is convicting, that's good.

Because a lot of us need to work on this. What is contentious? Well, let's define it. Causing disagreement or controversy.

Do they cause disagreement or do they cause controversy? Are they given to provoking argument? Yeah, well then they're contentious. And I would even encourage you, not maybe after this sermon, but at some point when a person is open, to say, listen, I love you so much. Can we work on this together? Because this will destroy a marriage.

It will destroy it. And if you're single and you have not met somebody yet, make sure they got this issue of anger harnessed. Because it is a time bomb waiting to explode.

What anger is, it's like you're lighting the wick on the dynamite. And it's just a matter of time. It's just a matter of time before that hits.

And it's not pretty. This is why we can yell at each other on the way to church and get in here and walk in. Pastor, good to see you.

Oh, love the church, this and that. How'd that happen? We just yelled at our spouse on the way here. We just kicked the dog and cussed at the kids.

What's wrong? So if something's haywire and I got ya, it's time to repent. This is a very destructive attitude. The problem is, many people never change in this area because they're never confronted.

That's why godly confrontation can be good. It confronts them and say, listen, this is not right. And there's people I know I could confront that I see this in them, but I know it's gonna end a friendship.

They'll probably stop coming to the church. See how we have to balance this? But sometimes you need to speak the truth in love and say, listen, this is not right. I want you to be a better person.

So you have to, what I've noticed, men and women alike, we take pride in our anger. We have excuses. Oh, tons of excuses.

Instead of just saying, what does the scripture say? Repent of it. We say, oh no, sir. And we allow that anger to take over.

The key here is contentious people are unhappy. Repentance must take place, but it's difficult because contentious people are always right. That's why this is so hard to work through.

We can talk about it. We say, yeah, we need to work on that. I know somebody needs to work on that.

But the reason it's not repented of often and why it exists for years and years and years is because we feel we're right. I'm not that way. I mean, they deserve it.

You see how they treated me? You see what I have to deal with? We never just say it's wrong and confess it. That's why the beautiful words, most beautiful words ever spoken in a marriage are, I'm sorry. I was wrong.

Should we try that again? I'm sorry. I was wrong. It's very healthy.

Now, don't say it was sarcasm because it doesn't work. Oh, Shane said I'm sorry and I'm wrong. Yeah, whatever.

That does not work. Your decisions will determine your destiny. Happy wife, happy life.

Isn't that true? Happy wife, happy life. Next time, I'm not going to promote a marriage series because everybody misses for eight weeks because they don't want to hear it. I know that they just didn't show up for eight weeks.

As soon as we announced we're having a marriage series, it was exactly a year ago. Just don't want to come and hear that. Why? Marriages should be stronger, not weaker.

So instead of having defense mechanisms put up and the walls we build to protect us end up imprisoning us, remember? We should allow them to drop and ask for repentance and forgiveness. We loved our spouse when we first met them. What happened now? What happened now? Valentine's Day, we buy roses and court them and just, oh, it's like a sales pitch.

But then when you get married, oh, I've got it now. It doesn't matter anymore. But see, we have to go back to that.

Remember, remember, and go back to that. I know it sounds corny, but fall in love again is a true statement. And where does it begin? Start remembering back and remembering and remembering and bringing you those things.

Memory is powerful. Memory is powerful. Emotions are powerful.

They get us to go back and say, oh, Lord, I need that. Probably one of the most special days I've had in probably my life was yesterday. I was able to take my seven-year-old daughter to a father-daughter dance.

And it was, man, getting choked up. She's seven. I just used to hold her a few years ago at two.

And remembering and watching her, just like, oh, Lord. But he used that to reinforce the importance. And then, you know, I chose Stephen Curtis' song, Cinderella, to dedicate.

Oh, my gosh. And then somebody else chose, I Loved Her First. And it's like, what is this? This is emotional wreck.

I'm emotional wreck. It's a roller coaster ride of emotions. But I left there being a better father.

Did I want to go to that? What do you guys think? I didn't say anything. I just asked a question. Did I want to go to that? You can ask Morgan later.

But was I looking forward to it? Absolutely. And then I got the text today that my daughter told her that it was the best day she's ever had. And I'm like, wow.

But see, that melts you. It breaks you. Because if you're not humble and broken, you can become arrogant.

Kids, leave me alone. I'm too busy. I'm building a church.

I'm leading a ministry. I'm speaking nationally. I'm getting all these mean emails and all this stuff.

Leave me alone. I'm too busy. When they're saying, Daddy, Daddy, another dance.

Daddy, teach me. Daddy, show me. You see, that's why emotions are good and God-given.

If they bring us to the foot of the cross and allow brokenness to take place. Same thing with marriage. The problem is we get caught up in all the bitterness and anger and all this and this and this.

And we just dwell on it. Go back to those early years. Go back and allow that to be the foundation that restores.

We have to do that often because the devil will come in. And the first thing he's going for is your faith. That's why Jesus said, Peter, I pray for you.

Jesus, you pray for me? Yeah. Oh, wonderful. No, it's not wonderful.

Jesus said, I pray for you that your faith fail thee not. Jesus Christ prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail him. Listen, he's coming after your faith first.

And if he can't get that, guess what he's coming after next? Your testimony. And if he can't get that, he is going to destroy your marriage. Listen, some of this might seem dramatic and change so intense in this.

When you see as many broken families as I do, you won't think it's so funny. There's not a week that goes by. Somebody's not just separating.

Somebody's not divorcing. Affairs here. Affairs there.

This man, this. He beat his wife. It's all over.

It's an epidemic. I'd have to check the statistics, so don't quote me on it. But I think it's the first time in our nation's history that kids are being raised more by single parents than by those with a husband and wife.

Where does it end? Where does that end? It ends when people finally break and repent and call on the name of the Lord again. And have him be the foundation of their lives and of their marriages. Have I mastered this area? No.

Like I said before, woe be to the preacher who does not try to practice what he preaches. And we have date nights and we try to do these things that build that because the enemy just comes in and wedges that, puts a big wedge in there and just starts wedging us apart. He's going after that.

Have you ever thought he's going after your children as well? A wake-up call. He wants, he doesn't. God desires godly offspring.

The devil desires rebellious offspring. So the marriage to me is almost like the security that keeps everything together. Christ being the foundation, the word of God being our, basically our owner's manual.

But then the marriage is the glue that keeps that together. And husbands and wives have got to go back to that. Back to that brokenness and repentance and loving the spouse.

Not thinking it's a ball and a chain, but genuinely loving them. Christ died for the church. And that's how we're supposed to love our wives.

It says for husbands. So after that big rabbit trail, let's come back to, where were we? 10. The soul of the wicked desires evil.

I got to really hurry. Holy cow. I'm so glad you guys like our sermons.

Because I have a lot to say and I can never get through this. I could have stayed right there in the opening, back with the direction of our nation. But I had to get through this.

Verse 10. The soul of the wicked desires evil. His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

Well, our desires reveal our heart. A man that sows that which he reaps, or reaps what he sows. I got it backwards now.

You're going to reap what you sow. And there's a lot more to this one, but I'm going to have to go on to number 11. When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise.

But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge. We learn and choose differently because of physical pain. And I'm wondering, why don't we do that because of spiritual pain? Have any of you, on

purpose, gone and touched the oven anymore? Just one time.

That's all I need to do it. But when it comes to the spiritual life, why do we need to keep going through it, and going through it, and going through it? We learn from physical pain, but not emotional and spiritual pain. Let me take it again, and take it again, and take it again.

A few months ago, we went bowling for the first time. I took my kids. It's really hard to take little kids bowling.

But my little daughter, she's three. I'm glad you weren't there to see this. She threw the ball, and it went, like, right there.

Like, crazy. And I go out there, and I didn't know they oiled those floors. And I was just, boom, bam.

And I hit right on my side. It was all bruised the next day. And I just kicked that ball down the thing.

I was so mad. It's like, golly. Holy cow.

The kids are laughing. Well, here's the point. I'm never going to do that again, ever.

Now, when we go bowling, I stay at least a couple feet away from that red line. I've never felt anything that slick in my life. It was like I was on, within a second, I was down.

Man. Everybody's looking at me. The kids are laughing.

I kicked the ball down there. Like, how did that happen? I get up like, yeah, I knew that was going to happen. I knew it.

Andy, I did. I had to go get that ball. But see, we learn from physical pain.

So what he's saying here, some people need to get bit by the rattlesnake before they'll listen. The other people just need to, hey, that thing will bite me. Take wisdom.

You don't need to learn by experience, necessarily. That's what he's saying here. So you'll remember that bowling analogy forever, I hope.

Because I sure will. But the point is, why do we learn from physical pain? My kid only had to get his hand stuck in the door once. That's it.

But spiritually, we keep coming back again. Devil, hit me again. Hit me again.

I can't seem to learn. Just keep hitting me again, hitting me again. We don't learn.

God's saying, listen, wake up. Wake up. When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise.

But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge. Verse 12, the righteous God wisely considers the house of the wicked, overthrowing the wicked for their wickedness. That's self-explanatory.

Verse 13, whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard. Some are experiencing hardship today because they don't give. They are reaping what they are sowing.

Some people, do you know that most, I don't know what the national statistics are, but it's like 10% of the church actually gives to the work of the church. Very, very small numbers. Or, because you can tell we don't promote money much here.

We don't make it an issue. We want people to just, you know, give as God has put on their heart. But at the same time, I should be able as a pastor to tell you, listen, you want to reap what you sow? Have a giving heart.

Learn to give and help people. Even if it's not here, there's tons of people in need that you can help. Well, but my bill's too shabby.

Well, guess what? We live in mansions compared to 95% of the world. If we live a little bit below our means, we could give a lot more. The problem is when the raise comes, so does my standard of living.

When the income comes, so does my standard of living. So God wants us living here and being blessed, but we want to live up here so we don't give to anybody. I saw this all the time in real estate.

Somebody qualifies for \$300,000. Guess what they're going to buy? A \$300,005 house. I'm just going to barely qualify.

I'm going to barely scratch for the next 30 years. I'm going to barely make that payment right there. That's what I qualify for.

Why not buy a \$220,000 house and put away \$600,000, \$700,000 a month? Wow, that's not fun. Well, that's what God, standard of living. The more you own, the more owns you.

Garages are full of toys, but we can't help people out. Or people are going through hardship. It says right here, if you're going through hardship, it might be because you're not giving to people.

Not a lot. The Bible doesn't talk about giving that we're burdened. It means giving out of a cheerful heart.

So \$25 to somebody might be the same as \$2,500 to somebody else. That's why God looks at the heart. But I know this.

I've seen it. I could preach a whole series on sermons on giving and make you feel really convicted. But that's not the goal.

I've seen God move in our own life by giving and giving back to God. He just opens. I can't even begin to explain the doors he opens.

So I've seen it firsthand. I know it works. It isn't some gimmick.

It isn't some sales pitch where I say, give me \$1,000. You'll get \$100,000 back. No, you might not.

But the washer and dryer might last another couple years. The tires on your vehicle might last another six months. You might get this unexpected raise at church.

He works all these other things to those who put others first and help to bless them. But that could be a whole other sermon. But the key from this whole point is giving is the thermostat and the thermometer of the heart.

What? How can it be both? Think about it. It's the thermostat of the heart because it regulates the heart. A giving heart increases that heat and that passion for God.

But it's also a thermometer. It gauges our heart. You can look at somebody's heart by their giving.

I'm just being straight, honest. No ulterior motives. I don't care if you give here, give anywhere.

I'm just telling you, if somebody doesn't give, whether it's here at Grace Resources, Pregnancy Resource Council, Helping Families in Need, people on the missions field, if they don't give anywhere, I would really have you check the spiritual condition of your heart. Because somebody filled with the Spirit of God, a byproduct if they want to give and help. Now there are seasons that we go through that you can't sometimes.

But the overall lifestyle should be that of giving. It's a byproduct if somebody's filled with the Spirit of God. So if we're not giving in our church, huh, two and two together makes me think that many people aren't filled with the Spirit of God in the church.

That Spirit-filled life that many people aren't experiencing. That was verse 13, right? All right, verse 14. A gift in secret pacifies anger, and a bride behind the back, strong wrath.

Well, you can read what the New American Commentary put there at your convenience when you get home. Because we won't have time. Verse 15.

It is a joy for the just to do justice, but destruction will come to the workers of iniquity. And this is what I already talked about earlier. Joy is a byproduct of obedience.

It's not the motivator of it. Here's what we forget. Sometimes, sometimes we want to have joy and peace and all this stuff before we're obedient.

When actually those things come as a byproduct of obedience. In other words, of course we would do it if we already wanted to. That's easy.

It's when we don't want to do something that the reward comes later. That's how God tests and weighs the heart. I'm going to end here with verse 16.

I have a lot to say on this one too, but it's going to have to be condensed. A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead. Wow.

Have you guys ever thought about this? It's not that I'm so hardcore. It's just the word of God is. I mean, I get all this people.

Oh, that's a hardcore church. That guy's more. How do you put up with that? And he's, well, he's in there, man.

Let's just, it's just the Bible. I'm just reading the verse of the Bible. Now I don't mind those titles if it's true, because we can't, we do focus on certain areas.

You know, we're not, we're not, well, I'm going to get off on a rabbit trail, but let's focus on this verse. A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead. As soon as I wrote that down, I thought of James.

If anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. Now there's two views on that verse count Calvinism and Armenianism and different how they would read that differently. But I'm just going to say, if anybody wanders from the truth and somebody brings him back, you save a soul from death.

And I want you to read tonight that scripture underneath it. That puts that verse in context. He's saying, listen, a lot of you are sick.

A lot of you are going through things because you need to confess. You need to confess things. Remember Elisha, he says, the prayers of effectual fervent man availeth much.

The effectual fervent prayers of a man of God availeth much. And he's putting that context. And he says, if anybody wanders from the truth.

So my whole point with this was going to be, if you are considering the truth and pondering it, this is a strong warning to embrace it. Think about that. Jesus said, strive to enter the narrow gate for many people will seek to enter and they will not be able to enter.

And that word seek there, again, I've talked about before, is a pondering. It's a contemplating. It's a thinking about.

Many people, this could be, he's contemplating the truth. Yeah, what Shane's saying makes sense. What my family members have been telling me makes sense.

That makes sense. I'm pondering it. I'm contemplating it.

I'm gravitating towards the truth. But if you wander away from that and somebody turns you back and says, no, you save a soul from death. So if you're pondering truth, don't turn from it, wander away from it.

Finally embrace and say, Lord, I give my life to you. I submit to you tonight. I repent of my sin.

I need Christ. I need him to save me and secure me. And another warning goes out to those.

If you are warning, I'm sorry, if you are wandering, if you're a Christian and we're all inclined to do this, Shane, you too. Yo, yeah, absolutely. If I don't say buried in the word of God and broken and humble and make prayer and worship part of my life, I can wander just like everybody else.

Why? Because the same flesh in me and the same flesh in you governs by default. So if you are wandering away from the truth, this is a strong warning to come back to that truth that you were wandering from. That's what he's saying.

He's pulling back the wander. Come back. Return.

Return to me. And this morning, many of you heard that song by casting crowns. East is from the West.

And I wrote down what he says. He said, I stand before you as if I've never sinned. But today I feel just one mistake away from you leaving me this way.

Jesus, can you show me just how far the East is from the West? Because I can't bear to see the man I've become rising up in me again. How far is the East is from the West. And that's what he's saying.

Jesus, will you show me again how far is the East from the West? You say you've forgiven me. Can you show me again? Show me your redemption. Show me your love.

And it takes the human heart to break again and say, Lord, I'm seeking hard after you. I don't want to wander anymore. My wandering days are over.

I'm coming back to you. And I'm coming back to you tonight. And that's what this call is.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/49esLqtuALg.mp4>

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