

Welcome, everybody, to the seventh-day Sabbath. Over here in Australia, at the moment it's rather cold, and we're having some strong winds and a lot of rain, so we are in the depths of winter.

In *Part 1 and 2* of this sermon series *Understanding the Proverbs*, we looked at the understanding of some of the proverbs. The title of today's sermon is *Understanding the Proverbs*, and this will be *Part 3*.

The purpose of this sermon series is to "see" on a spiritual level, the Proverbs, so that we can apply the spiritual understanding into our life, so that we can then live the Proverbs, which is that living of wisdom.

We'll pick up the sermon series now in Proverbs 10, if you'd like to turn to Proverbs 10:17, because we're going to continue with this aspect of correction. **Proverbs 10:17—He who keeps**, now, the word "keeps" there is "takes heed or observes." **He who keeps instruction**, and the word "instruction" is "discipline or correction," because we are of a life (being called into the Body of Christ), we are of a life that is about discipline, correction, and instruction. So this proverb is saying (on a physical level), **He who keeps instruction is in the way of life**. So this particular way of life on a physical level is the right way to live on a physical level, and it will lead to a happier physical life. Now, on a spiritual level, "He who keeps instruction," he who heeds (observes discipline, or correction) *is in the way of life*." Now, the way of life that we know is a way that leads to life-everlasting or eternal life. So there are two ways to live life on a physical level, and that is to choose human good or evil. There's only the two ways of life to live. Well, it's the same on a spiritual level. We can either choose the good way of life, which is God's way, God's thinking, or we can choose or yield to the way of evil, which is the natural carnal mind's way, and that has (of course) been affected by the inspiration that comes through the transmission of an evil thought which comes from Satan, "the prince and power of the air."

Now, for us, brethren, we should take heed and observe the correction, the discipline, the instruction that comes from God's Church, that comes from within God's Church, and it comes from God and *that* is what will keep us in the way of life, the way of living righteousness. Because it requires God's holy spirit to be able to live righteousness. Now, anyone that is willing to heed, or listen, or observe the correction (the instruction) that comes through God's Church *is in the way of life*. Because if they are to implement this into their life, if they are to take heed to this direction, this instruction, this discipline that is given, it will lead to life-everlasting in Elohim.

Now, continuing on in that proverb. **But**, so now this is the opposite to someone who listens, who takes, heeds, and observes, **But he who refuses**, now, this word "refuses" is "leaves or forsakes, or won't listen," **But, he who refuses correction goes astray**. Now, on a physical level this is exactly what happens. Anybody that refuses physical instruction will leave, or refuse to listen to, or forsake, or won't listen to any type of correction, which is that discipline or that instruction, goes astray, and it leads to death. It actually leads to death on a physical level.

Now, many have tried to refuse to listen to the instructions of the law of the land, and *that* has led to death, has led to their death because they refuse to follow, to submit, to yield to the correction or the instructions that have been outlined by man's governments. They just simply won't listen, and because they won't listen, man responds accordingly. So on a physical level there is a discipline for anybody who

refuses, or forsakes, or won't even listen to any type of instruction, discipline, or correction. It will affect their life.

For us, brethren, it's about listening on a spiritual level. We are to listen on a spiritual level to the directions from God, the advice that God gives, and the discipline, and the correction. If we reject this spiritual direction, or advice, it will lead to our death, a second death. We have been called into the Church of God for the purpose of choosing, yielding to, taking heed to, observing the discipline and instruction. Now, if we ever refuse it, if we leave it or forsake it, or we simply won't listen to this correction, this discipline or advice given or instructions given by God's Church—because, actually anything that comes through God's Church *is* from God—we will go astray, because it leads to a death, which is a second death.

So it's up to us, brethren, to choose to obey this particular proverb. Whether or not we're going to heed the instruction given or we're going to refuse the instruction given is a personal choice. It's something that we have to choose in life.

**Proverbs 12:1—Whoever loves instruction**, so this is the person that loves this discipline or correction. Now, often, because of the natural carnal mind, we see discipline as something like cruelty, and we see correction like almost a cruelty. But it's not. It goes back to this word about instruction because discipline is instruction, and correction is instruction. *Vise versa*, instruction is discipline and correction, or discipline is instruction and correction. They are all interlinked because they're all connected and they lead to a particular outcome. So, **whoever loves this instruction**, he loves it because he "sees" that it is the only way to live life. Now, that's on a physical level. So somebody that actually heeds this and enjoys it in the sense of realizing they are wrong (on a physical level) they will actually have a more fulfilling physical life, because God has laws in place on a physical level, that if we transgress those physical aspects of living life we will have to pay a penalty. So, this whole aspect of loving this instruction or taking this discipline and correction, will lead to a better life. So, **whoever loves instruction loves knowledge**, because they understand that this instruction given is about getting more knowledge, coming to see things on a different level.

On a spiritual level, **He who loves instruction**, from God through His word, through the Church—so anybody who loves this discipline of self, this correction of self on a spiritual level, he loves it because he actually "sees," he actually *understands* that this is the only way to have eternal life. *This is the only way*. Because we have to understand to come to "see" that this instruction, this correction that always comes through God's Church, or this discipline which leads to us coming to understand that we have to have self-discipline, this actually is wonderful knowledge to have. We will, therefore, love knowledge. Because we have knowledge when we are first called. We have a grounding of knowledge, but it's all of the natural carnal mind. We have no spiritual knowledge at all, none, zero, zilch, nil. We have none. Any knowledge we have is corrupted and polluted because of "the prince and power of the air" who has broadcasted falsehood to our thinking. So when we come into the Body of Christ we can love instruction; we can love this direction that is given from God's word. We will then *love knowledge* because this knowledge, this coming to see the "A-ha! *That's why!*" of a matter, the understanding that is connected to the knowledge. We start to see how God thinks about a matter.

So knowledge is the way that God thinks. This true spiritual knowledge is the way that God thinks. Then from that we take the next step (by the power of God's holy spirit), we then begin to "see" the why of the knowledge, why is it this way.

...but (now the contrast)...**but he who hates correction is stupid.** So anybody on a physical level who hates any type of correction, instruction, or discipline (in other words, they're leaning on their own understanding) *is stupid!* Now, that word "stupid" is "foolish." Now, the word "foolish" really in the Bible often refers to simply somebody that is using *human reasoning*, of working out what is right is wrong. They are *foolish* because they are leaning on their own understanding, the way that *they* see it.

Now, one person can see a matter one particular way, and another person can see it another particular way, and they'll often get into debate and argument about it, and neither of them are necessarily right, because it's based on natural thinking. Now, within God's Church we *are* actually "stupid," we are "spiritually foolish," if we hate or *despise* any type of discipline or correction or instruction that God gives. Now, we should come to see that any type of correction or instruction given from God to us is done out of love for us. It's in our best interest. Because we have this natural carnal mind that must be transformed, that must be changed, and we must yield to this instruction, discipline, and correction that comes from God.

Now, if we *refuse* this knowledge of this way of life, this correction or this direction that is given through this instruction from God, if we actually come to *hate* it and we don't like it because it's affecting self (because that's what it does), if it affects us "too much" and we hate it, we are actually "stupid" or "foolish" on a spiritual level. Because this is the only way to life-everlasting, and it is through God's Church, it is *through* God providing His loving instruction to us, this loving discipline, this loving correction, because we have to be transformed, we have to change the way we think. And that's why we are in the Body of Christ, the Church of God at this time.

**Proverbs 13:18—Poverty and shame**, and we're going to look at this both physically and spiritually. So on a physical level, **Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction.** Now, that word "disdains" is "refuses or ignores because they are right in their own eyes." The attitude is, "Don't tell me how to live! Don't tell me what to do!" Now, what will happen to this person who has this attitude, which is this distaining of this correction? They are going to ignore any type of instruction or correction. They're going to refuse to listen because they're going to hold on to their own human reasoning, their own integrity, and they have this attitude of, "Don't tell me! Don't tell me how to live! Who are you that you can tell me *anything*?" Well, it says, what will happen to that person is that "poverty" will come to them on a physical level, "and shame," because they're going to hold on to their integrity and at some point mankind will dish out correction to them. In other words, someone is going to adjust their attitude for them. And in the end, if they refuse to, it does lead to a physical death. They end up doing something and they *hate* the correction, they ignore any instruction, they continue down their own path. They actually end up in poverty and they end up in shame because people don't want anything to do with them.

**But he who regards a rebuke**, someone who actually respects and takes heed to an adjustment in life, a rebuke or this correction **will be honored.** They will be glorified in the sense that people will respect them because they're willing to change or adjust their attitude.

Now, let's look at this on a spiritual level. Spiritual poverty. What's spiritual poverty? It's somebody that has been called into the Body of Christ, the Church of God, has God's spirit at some point living and dwelling in them. Now, because of this particular proverb, it says that "spiritual poverty," because they refuse to listen, they will go into spiritual poverty. Now, to be "spiritually rich" is to have God's mind living and dwelling in us and thinking the way God thinks, having the power of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. Now, "spiritual poverty" means that we're going to be cut off from that flow, we're going

to go *down*. Because when we're in poverty, we're actually going down in a wealth. Well, to have spiritual wealth coming from God (true spiritual wealth, not our own integrity, but spiritual wealth) is a wonderful thing. So "spiritual poverty and spiritual shame will come on him who distains" (who refuses, who ignores), "any spiritual correction." Why do they do that? Because they're right in their own eyes. Because we are right in what we think is right and wrong, what we think is right and wrong on a spiritual level. "I don't agree with it. Don't you tell me that this is right, because I believe that you're wrong!" In other words, they can't take any type of spiritual correction.

**But he who regards a rebuke**, a spiritual form of correction, he who takes heed to any type of rebuke, or correction, or instruction, or discipline, God says, **he will be honored...** he will be honoured. How are we honored in that? Because the end result is spiritual glorification. We'll be changed to Elohim.

Accepting and heeding God's correction will lead to honor, spiritual wealth now and spiritual wealth in the future. Now, what is "spiritual wealth?" "Spiritual wealth" is the amount of God's thinking living and dwelling in us, the amount of God *in* us, God and Jesus Christ. The amount of the Word of God (the Logos) living and dwelling in us. So this "spiritual wealth" is able to be had within a person now, today, based on their attitude towards correction, discipline, and instruction.

So we have this opportunity, brethren, where we can now take on any instruction and not ignore or refuse to listen. And there comes a point where God says He will honor us with more of His holy spirit. We'll begin to think more and more the way God thinks about every matter in life.

Proverbs 15:5; still going down this path of correction, which we looked at in *Part 2*, and we're just continuing this flow. Now, correction is the most important part within our life. *If we ever desire spiritual growth, if we ever desire to be more like God, we have to take correction, because without correction (we'll see other proverbs), we are on a path that will lead to nowhere. It'll lead to death, which is nowhere, nothing. So correction has to be part of our life. Now, this is all about coming to understand that without correction we will be staying within our own natural carnal mind. There will be no adjustment to our thinking. So we have to learn to come to understand that correction is the best thing for us.*

Now, the natural carnal mind *hates* that concept, that correction is the best thing for us, because it's right in its own eyes. But for a member of the Body of Christ, we have to come to see on a spiritual level that instruction, correction, and anything with regards to adjusting our thinking on any matter of life is the *best* thing for us. And it's always done out of love *for us*. It's the *best thing* that God can do for us, which is correct our thinking!

**Proverbs 15:5—A fool...** So we'll look at this on a physical level. **A fool despises his father's instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent.** Now, that word "prudent" is "aware and shrewd." So we know correction, that when it's given, if it's given the wrong way, sometimes it's very hard for a person to handle it. But if it's done the right way and it's explained the right way, people will adjust to it. This proverb is saying that "A fool," someone who just simply won't listen, "despises," he hates it that his father is even telling him what to do, but if he's willing to receive it and take that correction (that adjustment) in the end, on a physical level, it's being showing that he's actually shrewd. He's very prudent. Because he's going to learn from it. He will learn from this instruction, if that instruction is given in the right way.

Now, on a spiritual level, "A fool," it's actually somebody that does not have God's spirit active in their life, *or* they are refusing to yield to God's thinking. That is being foolish. Because if we refuse to yield to God's holy spirit, we are actually stupid, we are being a fool, to do that. *But* that's our potential. So, "the fool despises his father," –who is our Father? Yahweh Elohim! So it's only a fool that would despise or reject His Father, God the Father's instruction, any instruction coming from God! Now, we'd have to be stupid! We'd have to be a *fool* on a spiritual level to despise it. Now, "to despise it" is to hate it, actually *hate* any type of correction. Now, the natural carnal mind does not like instruction or correction, and it actually *can* despise it. Now, it despises it because it works up different thinking in its mind.

If, for example, the person giving any type of discipline or any type of instruction is looked down on by the person who was supposed to receive the instruction, well, this isn't going to go well. Because the person just simply isn't going to listen, because they don't have any *regard* towards the person giving the instruction. So this person is being very stupid on a spiritual level to despise or to hate any instruction that comes from God the Father through His Church. "But," the opposite to this, "But he," which is us, brethren, "who receives correction from God is prudent." Now, what does "prudent" make us? It makes us spiritually aware. Spiritually aware of what? Spiritually aware of sin within ourselves. Not within others—we can see sin in the world, it's everywhere. The world is just totally polluted. It's very sick. It's obvious that the world's polluted. But the natural carnal mind, we often deceive ourselves and we just simply don't "see" how we are as individuals, how we are as individuals. So anybody—brethren, that's us, anybody—within God's Church, the Body of Christ, who receives any type of instruction, any type of correction, any type of discipline from God the Father (by the power of God's holy spirit, because it's by inspiration that this correction can come to the mind), if we receive it and take it on board, we become spiritually aware of ourselves and we become shrewd in the sense of our behavior. Now, the word "shrewd" can actually be misinterpreted because of the English language, but "to be shrewd" means "to be wise," to know ourselves, to come to know ourselves, who we really are, what we're really like. To know our motives and intent (for example), that is being aware and that is being shrewd, because now we know the way we are, we know how we respond in certain situations.

So this proverb is making it very clear, if we despise or reject anything to do with God the Father's instruction *through* the Church, by the power of God's holy spirit, and we reject that thinking, well, we are being stupid. But if we receive that correction, by the power of God's holy spirit, by *inspiration* of God's holy spirit we are being prudent, we are being very aware on a spiritual level and we're being shrewd, because now we have the opportunity to live correction, because we've been adjusted in our thinking.

We know of correction on a physical level, and we know what it's like. We all have been through some form of correction or discipline. Now, I grew up in a family where discipline was handed out with the belief that, that discipline being correct, based on my mother and father's understanding of what they believed correction, or discipline, or instruction should be. Now, it was never *nice* to receive that because no human enjoys any form of correction. Now, that's just normal within life. No human (no child, no adult) likes any type of correction on a physical level. Now, we *understand* what correction is, which means it's the adjustment of the thinking. Now the important part of that knowledge, of this correction, is to come to understand it. We're to come to understand that we can "see" that correction is spiritually good for us and it is to our advantage.

Now, on a physical level correction *is* good for us, and it *is* to our advantage. Well, much more on a spiritual level. So we have the knowledge that God is going to correct us because He loves us. Now, we have the understanding, the "why" of the correction, we have the understanding that this is the best

thing that could ever happen to us. It's actually spiritually good for us and it's to our spiritual advantage to be corrected. Now, wisdom is when we take that correction and the understanding *why* this has had to take place, and then we make the adjustments in our thinking, and then we live a new way of life. We become a new man/woman. We become *new* in the sense of the way we behave, the way we think because of this adjustment in our thinking, because of this correction.

So we all need correction, and one thing guaranteed within the Body of Christ is correction is going to continue to come. And it's going to go through the 1,000 years and it's going to go through the Hundred-years as well. It's going to be that whole period of 1,100 years of continual correction, because "the natural carnal mind is hostile against God" and it has to come into unity with God. Now, the only way that can happen is through correction or discipline.

**Proverbs 15:10**—Just taking this one step further... **Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way** (the path). Now, on a physical level, *if*, for example, instruction has been given on a physical level within a family (for example) and that person refuses to *heed* that particular instruction (because the instruction was done for the good of that person), it says now in Proverbs 15, "Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way." Now, this way that has been outlined to him (maybe within a family or a way of life), if he is willing to forsake it and completely leave it, the only way to bring this person to some level of reality is actually "harsh discipline." It's just not words, it has to be a lot *harsher* than words. There has to be a consequence.

Now, on a spiritual level it's slightly different, because "harsh discipline is for him who forsakes/leaves God's way." He leaves the path of righteousness. So anybody who is willing to forsake the ways of God and walk a different path, the harsh discipline that must be dished out is disfellowshippment, because it's in their spiritual interest. So disfellowshippment is a "harsh discipline" with the hope of repentance for someone who leaves God's way. Because this is the best discipline for them. Disfellowshippment is done out of love.

Now, most people struggle to see that, because when they get disfellowshipped they normally can't "see" that it was done out of love. But it is "harsh discipline," but it is actually done out of love, and that love is with the *hope*, the desire that that person will repent from leaving God's way of life. And the desire is that they *return*, that they actually *repent*!

So there is a time for harsh discipline on a physical level, and there is definitely time for harsh discipline on a spiritual level.

Continuing on in Proverbs 15:10—**and he who hates correction will die**. Now, somebody on a physical level, if they hate the correction, they end up not wanting to follow the laws of the land. Well, guess what? The law of the land, no matter what that law is, will deal with them on a physical level.

On a spiritual level, "He who hates correction," anybody that has had the opportunity, and the blessing, and the mercy to have fellowship within God's Church and they come to *hate* any type of correction, it will lead to a second death on a spiritual level, because all correction is only done out of the interest of the person.

There have been times where I have actually physically been corrected, and I see that as a form of discipline, and I must say, I didn't *enjoy* it. And I realize at the time that I needed to take that correction and that my mind was fighting against it. But deep down I knew that the person that was dishing out the

correction and the adjustment to my thinking was actually doing it because they loved me. They were doing it because they loved me.

Now, children in marriages, within families, don't always see that the parent is doing discipline, or correction, or instruction because the parent loves them. And unfortunately, the natural carnal mind does struggle to actually discipline out of genuine love. They're often done out of frustration or out of selfishness. And we may get an opportunity to look at aspects of discipline within a family as we go on or we may not. We'll just see how we go in this sermon.

**Matthew 7:13**—Well known scripture, and we're just looking at this slightly differently with regards to correction. **Enter**, or strive to enter **by the narrow gate**, now, that "narrow gate" is "straight." Now, when we look at a narrow gate, we can see that it's something that leads to a narrow path, and at the end of it there is a very narrow opening to walk through. And why should we *strive* to live this way of life, because it is a narrow and difficult path that we're going down. Why should we do it? Because, or **for wide is the gate**, now, you can see this big, wide gate with a big, broad path, **and broad is the way that leads to destruction**. Now, this "leading to destruction" is "death." So "wide is the way of the natural carnal mind," the way of selfishness, "and broad is the way," it's a way of life, it's the way that we live our life. It's actually *easy*! Now, why is it easy? It's easy because there is no fight going on within the mind...no fighting at all. So this "broad and easy way" is the natural carnal mind, "the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes." They are the things that are just natural, and there's no resisting to them. So there's no fight going on with regards to "the lust of the flesh." None whatsoever. It's broad, it's easy, and you just drift down this path.

Well, this scripture is saying we should *strive*, which means we're going to have to *fight* the self, we're going to have to *fight* against our natural carnal mind and resist this broadcasting that goes on in our thoughts. And we have to fight against it because it is a *narrow path* that we're on and it is a narrow gate that we have to enter to enter the Kingdom of God, to enter righteousness, to enter Elohim.

Continuing on... **and there are many who go in by it**, this "easy, broad way." Well, that's the majority. The "many" is the "majority" of mankind, because they're not called to anything different. And some even go beyond (sense of sin) where they yield to it and they enjoy it so much that they cannot be redeemed. And God knows those people who have gone too far in their thinking. They've never had God's holy spirit, but they've gone too far with regards to the pleasure of sin, so much so they've seared their mind so much that they are facing a second death and that's their only opportunity, is that second death, because that is the best thing for them, because of God's love for them. Why would you have any being that is in a state of evil or a state of getting pleasure from the sufferings from others, the getting pleasure from sin, and that's all that they desire. Why would you allow them to have life? Hence, we know that Satan faces this same death, which is a death for eternity, because it is the best thing for him and it's the best thing for some of mankind who have gone down this broad path with this broad gate, and they've just gone too far in their life.

Now, the majority of mankind haven't gone that far, because there is a choice with the natural carnal mind between good and evil. Some humans live human good, and some live human evil. Now, living human good is still selfish. Anybody that does any type of human good out to the benefit of others—it may be helping other children, or helping other people, or doing what would be seen as "good acts" to people—the natural carnal mind cannot do any righteousness of and by itself. Only God in a person can live righteousness. So only God's good has to be powered by God's holy spirit. So any good coming from man still has an element of selfishness in it. Now, the mind can't always see it, but it's there. Now, it may

be just taking back to self. It may be an aspect of pride or to be seen of others, or it's just a false humility that is within a person.

So this "broad way" can lead to two different paths, because man has the choice between good and evil on a physical level, but both are actually sin because of "the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes." So no matter what man does, whether it is good or evil, sin is connected to it. It's about degrees. It's about the degree of sin building up within a human.

**Verse 14**—Now, why should we strive to go into this narrow gate? **Because narrow is the gate**, because it's actually a difficult path, **and difficult is the way**, this is the way of God, God's way of life. It is difficult because we have to learn to fight, to overcome the self. Now, that is a difficult task. We have to learn to yield to God, **because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way**, it's difficult being a member of the Body of Christ, the Church of God—PKG at this time, to live in this world, this present evil age. It's difficult. It's difficult for some people that are single because of the pollutions that are around them and the evil that's around them and the pornography and all the other things that go on. To be single is difficult. It's no different than somebody that is married in God's Church to someone that is not being called at this time. Life can be difficult. It's a very narrow path that we have to walk on. *But*, all of that said, **it leads to life!** So although it's narrow, although it's difficult at this time, and although we are required to fight and discipline the self by the power of God's holy spirit, it leads to life! It leads to life-everlasting, **and there are few who find it**. Well, brethren, we are part of that "few." We have been called from the many to be part of the few who find this way of life. And once we understand it and we accept what God is really doing with us, and we know that having the knowledge of this way of life is one thing, and we understand why we have been called into the Church—to live a different way of life, to take correction for the rest of our life. Until the day we die we're going to have to adjust our thinking to God's way of thinking, from our own natural mind to God's way. Well, it's a difficult path that we're on, but it does lead to life and we are one of the few that have found this path, because God has called us to it. We never sought God. We never "found" God. God called us, and no one, it says in scripture (in John 6:44), "No one can come to the Father unless they are called."

Well, what a blessing. What a blessing! Now, we shouldn't worry about what other people think, whether they think we're foolish or we're kooky or in a cult. Who cares! It's all irrelevant what they think. Who cares what anyone else's opinion is. The only opinion that we should worry about is God's opinion, the way God views us, the way God *thinks* of us, whether we're yielding to Him, whether we're on this narrow path or we're not. And if it is difficult for us at any time in life, we know that this path leads to life, because God's called us to walk on this path, not to veer across to the ditch to the left and the right all the time, but to try and stay on the narrow, difficult path, which will lead us to life-everlasting. So it's difficult because it requires a personal choice to resist sin and fight the selfness of our natural carnal mind. That's why this path is difficult. It's not *natural*...it's not natural.

**Proverbs 23:26**—**My son, give me your heart**, which is your inner thinking, **and let your eyes observe my ways**. Well, we can see that, that a father would say, "Well give me your thinking," give me your way of thinking about matters, "Give it to me. Let me teach you, let me instruct you, let me correct you. Let your eyes," in other words, what you decide to do, what you look at, what you decide to do, "observe my ways, the way I have taught you. This is the way to walk in life." Now, this is leading to something on a physical level, which is, "Listen to me as a son/daughter, listen to me and you'll have a happier life. Because if you follow my instructions this will lead you to a happier life. You'll have a more fulfilled life, if you do that, my son."

**My son**, this is God speaking, **My begotten sons**, which we are, **give Me your heart**, "give Me your *inner thinking*. Get your motive and intent and give it to Me. Let your motives (let your intent) be My motives and My intent. Give your inner thinking to Me," to God the Father, "Let your eyes," now, it's what we look at, what we *think* about, because our eyes are windows to the mind. So, **let your eyes**, in other words, what we're going to look at, **observe My ways**. God's ways. So let's look at God's way of being, God's way of living. And when you look at the 10 Commandments we will see these are God's way, and we should be observing these ways of God.

So God is saying, "My son/My daughter/My begotten sons, who have been called at this time into the Body of Christ, give Me your inner thinking. Let your eyes (let your intent) observe My ways," the ways of God, the Word of God, the Logos of God. "Let that be," and guess what, "and it will lead to life." You'll have happiness. You'll have happiness in this life on a physical level, but also joy on a spiritual level, because we've given our thinking to God, we've committed our ways to God.

Verse 27, back to the physical. So this is now the "why." So this is the father talking to the son on a physical level. Why should the son give their inner thinking and their eyes (where they're looking) to observe where the father is telling them to walk? Why? **Verse 27—For a harlot is a deep pit, and a seductress a narrow well.** So that's the reason the son should follow the father's instruction, because "the harlot is a deep pit." Now, the harlot will take you down spiritually. It will take you down physically, because if you go into the harlot, it's the beginning of a path (the way that we're walking), that will lead to a deep pit. Now, if you've ever fallen into a deep pit, you can't get out, or it's difficult to get out, "and a seductress," someone that is tempting or enticing to draw a person (the son) away "is a narrow well." Well, if you fall in a narrow well, guess what? It's very difficult to get out because it's so narrow you'll get stuck in it. So if you go into the harlot it's actually going to lead you to get stuck in a particular way of life.

**Verse 28—She also lies in wait for a victim**, so she's waiting there and she's looking to try to get a victim. Now, in today's society they'd say that "the harlot," the prostitute, "lies in wait for the victim." They wouldn't say "victim." You wouldn't be able to use that word. You'd have to say, "She lies in wait for a customer," **and increases the unfaithfulness of men.** Well, yes, she does. Because this temptation that she puts out, the flaunting of herself on a physical level *will* increase the unfaithfulness among men. Because men are weak. Men are weak when it comes to women, and men are weak when it comes to sex—very weak in the mind.

So let's go back now and look at this on a spiritual level. So we looked at it, "My Son," God is saying to us, brethren, that we should observe His ways, we should give our inner thinking over to God. And the reason we should do this is because "for the harlot." Well, "the harlot" is false religion or false doctrine, "is a deep pit." It will take you down deep, down *spiritually*! Now, we've looked at this process that has happened before in *Part 2*, which is about the harlot. And now this is a proverb that is telling us quite clearly that this will lead to a deep spiritual pit, one we won't be able to get out of. "And a seductress," ...now, what is a "seductress"? Well, it's a tempter. And we know who the tempter is. "And Satan, the enticer to sin," if we go down this path and we are enticed to sin and we yield to it and we give into this false doctrine, this false religion, this false way of worshipping God, any error, if we give into any error, "is a narrow well." Because we're going to get stuck in it. Once we're enticed, once we're in it, the deep, narrow well of Satan's deception, Satan's falsehood and the lies (in this error, we're caught in it), it is difficult to get out of it.

Now, many a people have gone down this path believing their strong. And we've covered this before, "beware, lest you think you're strong, be careful lest you think you're strong, lest you think you can stand against these things," because the reality is Satan is more powerful than we are on a human level. But we have our strength if we go back to Proverbs 23:26, "My Son, give your heart," give your eyes, "observe My ways," because, "greater is He that is in you," God the Father, "than He that is in the world." Anything to do with the world, God the Father is stronger, if we *yield* to it, if we observe *His* ways, if we do what we are told to do.

Now, today's sermon really is spiritual instruction, it's spiritual correction that is taking place, because here we can see that we are told here that "this way of the harlot," this way of falsehood, this way of error, anything that criticizes God's true Church (which is really anything that criticizes God because this *is* God's true Church), it's a deep pit, and it's like an "enticing to sin," which is "come over here and read this," and it is "a narrow well" because once we fall into it, it is so difficult to get out of it. Because once we have polluted the mind.... the mind is so precious to God. The mind is so precious to God. And we have opportunity to pollute our mind (the natural carnal mind of and by itself is sin), but once we have God's spirit living and dwelling in us, we should take great effort to guard the mind, to protect the mind, to not let any pollution come in.

So this pollution that can come in, it can come in through the eyes (because it enters the mind), it can come in through the ears (because of things that we're willing to listen to), and therefore, we need to be very careful about what enters our mind. Because once it's in, it is difficult to get it out...it is so difficult to get it out.

**Verse 28—She**, which is this harlot, which is this false ways, which is Satan's ways, **She also lies in wait as for a victim**, who does that remind you of, brethren? Satan, "like a roaring lion lies in wait for us to stumble," to stumble. So he lies in wait by this transmission of this error, by all the garbage that is out there, for somebody to become his victim—because we *can* become victims to it by a free will choice.

Now, people say that they are a victim of something. The reality is on a spiritual level, brethren, we should not be victims to anything, because it's a personal choice that we made. So in one way, on a spiritual level, no one is a victim to anything. It's just simply someone that has yielded in their foolishness to the temptation that is taking place in their life. They are actually free moral agents who have chosen a particular way of life. Because nobody can make us do anything. The only person that we can actually blame is ourselves, which is taking that personal responsibility for our own thoughts, words, and actions.

**...and increases the unfaithfulness among men.** Well, that's exactly what takes place on a spiritual level, is that the unfaithfulness that takes place among men is because of the tempting that has taken place, this seducing, this enticing to sin, and therefore, mankind falls into the trap. Well, within the Body of Christ the same thing takes place. Because we're either faithful servants and we're listening to correction, we're taking instruction, and we're *shunning* evil, and we're fleeing it, and we're not looking at it, we're not seeking it out, we're not listening to the temptations of evil and the corruption of this world and the people that are against God, against God's Church. We shouldn't be listening to any of that. Well, they're there to "increase the unfaithfulness among men," among members of the Body of Christ. *That's* their motive, because really, they are out to cause us to be unfaithful.

We understand what physical adultery is, which is many are unfaithful in marriage, but she increases their number by enticing a person to sin. And this is talking about harlots. We can become unfaithful

when we place anything before God in our relationships with God. So our relationship with God, we have to be careful not to become unfaithful in it. So we can commit spiritual adultery, which is to be unfaithful to God in the relationship that God has called us into, and at baptism we agreed to yield to God and we said, basically, "This is what I'll do. This is what I commit to do, which is to be faithful to You."

**Proverbs 16:22—Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it.** Now, we understand that the word "understanding" is "the "why" of a matter." So when a person has understanding, they know the why of knowledge. So physically, if a person has physical understanding (the why of a matter), it is "a wellspring of life to him who has it," because it is given on a physical level and they now understand why something has happened. Now, with this understanding you can adjust the way you live, you can adjust many things because you know and you actually understand why it's taking place. Well, you then can adjust.

Spiritually, "Spiritual understanding is a wellspring of life to him/her who has it." Well, who has it? Only those who are a member of the Body of Christ have access to spiritual understanding. Now, we've established before that spiritual understanding has to come from God, so this "spiritual understanding is a wellspring." Now, we know what a "wellspring" is. If we look at a well, or a spring, it bubbles up freely fresh, beautiful water out of the ground. So this "wellspring" gives *life*, and if you absorb it, it *refreshes* you. Well, spiritual understanding is this same "wellspring." It will give us "*life* to him who has it." If we actually *have* it! Well, brethren, we have spiritual understanding! And therefore, it *is* the wellspring. It will renew our life on a spiritual level! So we know the "why" of a spiritual matter, the spiritual knowledge. And we have it because we are part of the Body of Christ.

So nobody can have spiritual understanding, can have this wellspring of life, spiritual life unless God has called them to it and He lives and dwells in them. But we have access to this spiritual understanding.

**But**, something that is the opposite, **But the correction of fools is folly.** Now, why is "the correction of fools folly?" Well, on a physical level, the correction of somebody that is being foolish (and we looked at that, who that person was on a physical level), well, it's a waste of time, what it's saying, "is folly." It's just a *waste* of time.

Now, on a spiritual level, "A spiritual correction to a fool," someone who does not have God's holy spirit or is not yielding to it, well, "it's all a waste of time." So this correction of fools is a waste of time because they refuse to listen. So *any* correction on a spiritual level, any instruction, any discipline to a fool (someone who is not yielding to God's holy spirit), is a total waste of time.

Now, we should have understood this principle, brethren, because we should have seen it. I know I have seen it in my life, where spiritual correction has been given to somebody who has decided *not* to yield to God's holy spirit. And I've been aware that they have not, or are no longer yielding to God's holy spirit. But that correction has come through in a sermon, and in times past I've seen it where people have not listened to that correction. They've refused to listen because they're wise in their own eyes, they've gone back to leaning on their own understanding. Well, that correction, really, was a waste of time. Because? They refused to listen.

Now, God gives correction in His Church because there are those who listen. There are members of the Body of Christ who listen to correction, who take it to heart, who have given their inner thinking over to God. And therefore, they are willing to be corrected because they know it's done out of love for them.

Now, the best thing that can happen to you and me is correction, spiritual correction. And that's what we should look forward to. We should look forward to *more* spiritual correction, because even if we don't realize it, it's coming. Spiritual correction is coming. Because that is life within the Body of Christ. That is life within the Church of God, a place of correction—loving correction—all for the purpose of life, this wellspring of life that's going to be given to us in the sense of the flow of God's holy spirit, this spiritual understanding that we're going to gain from the correction that God gives us by the power of His holy spirit, and that we'll be inspired to hear it, and therefore, make a choice to yield and begin to change the way we think.

**Proverbs 22:15—Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.** Now, this word "foolishness," we know that any child, they just simply don't know what's right and wrong. Any child that grows up, no matter what age it is, they don't know right and wrong. They have to be *taught* right and wrong. Hence, the duty, the responsibility of any parent (whether in the Church or out of the Church), have to come to see that their accountability, their responsibility is to teach a child the way to walk. And that's what we have been looking at, these proverbs. Well, this proverb is saying, "Foolishness," foolishness because they do not know, they do not understand, they cannot work out what is right and wrong. So, "foolishness is bound up," it exists, "in the heart," in the thinking, "of a child." That is natural. We all have a natural mind that is foolish. We're born with it. And we have this foolish mind (we lean on our own understanding, our own thinking), and we just simply have it. So we're foolish. And without God's holy spirit, we are foolish. So all humans are foolish, and it's actually bound up in their thinking!

For us on a spiritual level, we have a natural mind that is foolish, but we are now children, begotten sons of God. Now, if we're left to ourselves, we have this heart that is bound up in foolishness. We'll try to work out what's right and wrong. So within the Church we still have an aspect of this natural carnal mind, but we have God's thinking in us because we're begotten sons of God.

**The rod of correction will drive it far from him.** Now, on a physical level it says, "The rod of correction," this rod (or this authority of correction), which is instruction or adjustment in thinking, "will drive it far from him." So there comes a time where we need to *increase* the level of discipline, or correction, or instruction, to drive away from the person (the child) this foolishness that's bound up in his heart because he doesn't know what's right and wrong. He has to be educated that way.

Well, spiritually, this authority (or this rod of correction) will drive this foolish thinking (this carnal minded thinking) far from us *if* we're willing to listen to this correction. Spiritual correction is for our benefit, because we don't know what's right and wrong, we have to learn it.

So this "rod of correction," which can mean a *rod* of correction, "will drive it far from him." In other words, it has to be taken out from him. He has to pay a penalty for his wrong thinking. And if he wants to keep thinking a particular way, the only way to fix this wrong thinking is with "the rod of correction," "the rod of instruction," "the rod of discipline," because it will drive it from him, because of the pain and suffering that is going to take place; therefore, he'll realize he needs to adjust his thinking.

**Proverbs 23:13—Do not withhold correction from a child.** Now, this is a clear instruction to a parent. A parent does not love their children if they withhold correction, if they withhold instruction, if they withhold discipline from their own children. Now, that would be a statement today to say. That people would say, "Well, not balanced and there's all these rules and regulations." Well, the moment mankind brings in some sort of rule and regulation about child discipline, and you're not allowed to do "this" and you're not allowed to do "that," that's a fair point to come to understand it's probably not of God,

because man's mind is natural and carnal and it's *not* of God. This proverb is saying that if a parent withholds correction (this instruction or discipline) from a child, it actually proves one thing; it proves they do not love the child and they love themselves more than the child. Now, the world would be in uproar with such a statement, but actual fact, to withhold any type of correction, or instruction, or discipline for a child—because a child can't know what's right or wrong, it's impossible, and it's only through the parent, through this discipline, this instruction and correction, that a child can learn the way to walk. Now, if a child is brought up in a family where there *is* loving instruction, loving correction, and loving discipline the child will be happier and more fulfilled. Now, if a parent is willing to *withhold* that type of loving instruction, that loving discipline, and that loving correction the child is going to grow up miserable and will have an unhappy life. But this actually proves that anyone that withholds correction from a child within a family actually loves themselves before the child.

Now, *why* is that so? Because, to discipline a child out of love, to correct a child out of love, to provide instruction to a child out of genuine love takes work on self. Now, I remember bringing up my children and I didn't do a good job in some ways and in other ways I did. And my wife would agree with that, that in lots of ways we didn't do a good job because we were too hard in some things and too soft in others. But what I did learn about childrearing, from one aspect of living and having children, was the fact that it needed to be done out of love. So all this correction, instruction, and discipline that was to be given, firstly, I had to work on myself to make sure that I wasn't disciplining out of anger, that I wasn't doing it from self. Now, in hindsight... in hindsight, I can see that I made lots and lots and lots of errors, because my discipline, my correction, my instruction was often done to please myself. It was the way that I saw it and I didn't do it out of love and concern for the child. It's just that the behavior didn't suit the way that I thought it should be, therefore, I responded in kind out of selfishness. Now, that's something I've learned, and it's hard work, and that's why we should never withhold correction from a child, and when we give it, it has to be done out of love. We have to correct out of love.

Now, there are degrees of how we correct a child, just like there are degrees in the world, in man's society, of how *they* correct an adult. There are penalties to be paid to different degrees based on the action that has taken place.

This proverb continues... **for if you beat him with a rod**, so if you "beat him with this rod," and this is talking about something on a physical level, **he will not die**, you won't kill him. So if you were to smack a child in the form of correction, out of love and concern for them, because this is now the point of becoming this "harsher discipline," because the action needs correction. The child cannot be left to itself to not think that this action is wrong. For example, striking a parent, where a child strikes a parent there needs to be stronger discipline. It can't be just brushed off to the side. Because why? Because if the child is willing to strike the parent, what will the child do amongst others who have no authority over them? They have no problem striking somebody else. Why? Because they haven't been corrected strongly enough to know that you simply don't strike another person, another human. You don't strike your parents.

So correction can take many forms. *All* correction should be done out of love. Now, this proverb is saying, well, "if you 'beat' the child," in other words, you strike the child in a loving, disciplined way he's not going to die because of it. It's just an adjustment to the child's thinking.

Now, physical correction is sometimes necessary, just like spiritual correction is just as necessary. So on a spiritual level, "Do not withhold correction from a child." Now, this can be seen that God, because He loves us, will not withhold correction. So correction comes through God, through the Church, to the

children of God. It comes through sermons. It comes through posts. It comes through reading God's word. This correction is coming. And if God didn't love us, He wouldn't correct us. But because God loves us, He will correct us.

So we can expect discipline. We can expect that God will *not* withhold discipline to the children of God. And if, for some reason, we have to be "beaten," in other words, the increased of the discipline must take place, it won't kill us. We won't die because of this extra discipline that God now, because He loves us and desires us to enter Elohim, He desires that we *change*, that God has to sometimes allow us to be disciplined in a stronger way. The level of correction now must be increased so that we might wake up to ourselves.

Now, one of the strongest disciplines that can take place is to be disfellowshipped, because it is a discipline. It's a "beating with a rod" in some ways because we're being shocked and "beaten" to the point of taken away from a relationship with God and God's Church, that we have to wake up to ourselves to come back into a relationship with God and with God's people. So this correction is out of love and concern.

**Verse 14—You shall beat him with a rod,** you'll provide physical correction when really necessary, out of love for them, **and deliver his life from hell,** which is "sheol" or "the grave." So on a physical level it says that physical discipline should be provided, in the right level, out of love and concern. Now, this takes wisdom, and judgement, and balance in this matter of how and when it should be done. But it should be done because God says it should be done. "You shall beat him with a rod and deliver his life from the grave." In other words, he'll correct his thinking so that he doesn't live a life of sin where he's going against mankind and he will actually not have to be put to death on a physical level by the governments of the world.

Another way to put this, "If he's not on the right path, correction is the *only way*." Correction is the only way. Now, if we love the child, *surely* we would correct them and to bring them back on the right path...if we truly love them—not with selfish love, with genuine concern for the welfare of the child.

Physical discipline is required for some people. The world would say that it should not be done. Well, that's a fair indication that it should be because under particular circumstances it *is* the only way to correct the thinking. Mankind goes against what God states should happen. For example... Now this is just about looking at what man thinks is right because they're leaning on their own understanding and they have said and they've made rules that you're not allowed to punish a child. Because that's man's rules because of all the human reasoning. But God in His word here, through Proverbs, says you shouldn't withhold this correction, and "if you beat him with a rod he won't die," and "You shall beat him with a rod," you'll provide this physical correction out of love under certain circumstances. Not just willy-nilly and all the time for every little thing. This is about this "harsh punishment" because the child is completely out of control in a direction of walking a particular way of life. And unless he *is* corrected, he's going to lead to his own physical death.

Well, no different than God will provide us correction because He wants us to have life. Mankind goes against what God states should happen. Now examples. Just like this discipline. God says rapists and murderers should be put to death. Now, this is not open for debate or for *human reasoning*. It's not for discussion. It's not for internet blogs. It's not for having these big meetings and, "Let's all talk about it, the way we see it." The "What do you think?" "How do I think?" No! God says that rapists in the future,

anyone that commits murder in the future, *will* be put to death and there will be no human reasoning, no debate. Because it's done out of love and concern! That's why it's actually done.

Child molesters should be put to death. It's not up for discussion. It's not up for debate. There is no light sentences of three to five years, or seven years, or eight years per child, because most child molesters, they don't get caught the first time, it's often many. Well, they get five, ten years and then they're let out again. Now they have a sex register that only the government has access to. And somebody actually at one point in Australia released the statistics of where all the sex offenders were living, and it shocked me when I actually got access to looking at one aspect, because there is a register that is from the government that tells you basically how many sex offenders live in a particular suburb. Well, it was quite shocking to realize that within suburbs there's *thousands* of registered sex offenders. Well, amongst them are child molesters, there are rapists, there's all types of perverted thinking. And a child molester living next door to children! It's insane human reasoning! Now, humans do it because they think they're showing love and concern to the child molester. They don't worry about the child that's molested and because of the *damage* done to him. But God says child molesters should be put to death and there is no human *debate* or discussion or a committee that's going to rectify that, because this is done out of love and concern for the person, the child molester, but it's also done out of love and concern for the person that's been molested!

You know, God is loving and merciful. God is loving and merciful. Man isn't. Man is not loving and he is *not* merciful. The time that man shows mercy, it's normally perverted thinking...perverted thinking! Because there's always a reason behind why they're doing it.

Now, God uses physical discipline. People would say there is nothing in the Bible where God uses physical discipline and that God *does* "spare the rod." Well, it's actually the complete opposite. God uses physical discipline *when needed*, and it's done out of love and concern for them.

Now, there's a particular event that took place after Elijah had been moved by God (which is "moved to another location," remained alive) and he would move there and Elisha took up the mantle. Let's look at 2 Kings 2:19. Now, we understand that Elijah (in many of the Bibles it says here), that he was "translated," or "transferred to heaven." Well, that's not the case, because no man has been to heaven as it says in the book of Matthew. Only Jesus Christ has ascended to be at the right hand of God the Father. So Elijah was actually moved to another location and God had protected him.

But Elisha had taken up the mantle, and now was walking to a particular location. So let's look at **2 Kings 2:19**. Looking at this, just picking up the story at this point, and we'll cut into it to get to the point of physical correction from God... physical correction from God. **Then the men of the city said to Elisha, Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren.** So they didn't have any water.

**Verse 20**—Now, Elisha is going to intervene here and it is going to point to the work of God, the miracle of God, how God shows loving mercy to people. **And he said, Bring me a bowl, and put salt in it. So they brought it to him.** Now, this would be very unusual, to bring a bowl of water and actually put salt in it, because salt makes the water actually undrinkable.

**Verse 21**—**Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, Thus says the Eternal ("Thus says the LORD"): I, it's talking about God, have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.** So from this water there would be no more death and no more barrenness.

**Verse 22—So the water remains healed to this day**, which is a great act of mercy by God, **according to the word of Elisha which he spoke**, which was God healing the waters.

**Verse 23—Then he (Elisha) went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him**, now, this word "mocked" is "to make fun of, to belittle, disrespect, to show disrespect to authority or disrespect to an elder," and of course, this is "disrespect to the authority of God," only they probably didn't know it, but they're showing disrespect to the authority of God that was working through Elisha at that time. Now, these youths came up from the city and they **said to him, Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!** So this is a mocking and a derision, which is virtually calling him "a baldy," "You're just a baldy," and they're doing it and they'd be laughing and joking about Elisha and just calling him "a baldy," "baldhead."

**Verse 24—So he (Elisha) turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two youths.** Now, this is this physical correction that has come from God. It's not Elisha that can control the bears, but God has now brought out two female bears and they have now mauled *forty-two youths*. Now, this is a form of physical correction. Correction is to stimulate self-control. And I wanted to repeat that. Correction (any form of correction) is to stimulate self-control.

So, now let's just look at this matter just a little bit more closely. The forty-two youths, they have been mauled by the bears, from God, who had sent them out. They've been now showing disrespect, making fun of God's servant. So God has now implemented and provided this "harsh discipline," this correction. It's like "the rod of authority," "the rod of correction." Well, you're going to mock God? Because by mocking Elisha they are mocking God, you're going to pay a penalty. So now the forty-two youths have been mauled. Now, let's just look. Let's just say some of them survived it, because it doesn't really say whether they lived or died—probably a lot died, maybe all of them, I don't know. But let's just take an example.

Now, let's just say some lived. Well, you imagine that if you as a young child had been mauled by a bear and you lived, now, when you saw any level of authority or you saw a bald-headed person, do you think that you'd open your mouth? I don't think any of us would. I think the scars and the mental anguish of a bear coming out after calling someone "a baldy, a baldhead," would cause us to stimulate self-control. So this "rod of correction" was the best thing for them, because now they're going to show respect to their elders, respect to authority, respect to anybody. Don't call anybody *anything*. Because? There's going to be a *penalty* to be *paid*. So God has implemented this correction on the youths of the city.

Now, let's just say many of those kids died, or maybe all of them died. Let's just say they did. What do we believe, brethren, is going to take place? We believe they're going to be resurrected in the Hundred-years. So what do *we* think they will remember? Well, I think they're going to be very nervous every time they see a bald-headed person, *but* they're going to think, "I need to show *self-control* and I need to show respect to *everybody*, and in particular God's authority within the ministry. I need to be very careful about what I say." So this "rod of correction" that God has provided was done out of love and concern for them, because now it's going to be burned into their brain, in their inner thinking, that they need to be very careful *what* they say, they need to be very careful *how* they say it, and they need to show self-control and adjust their thinking so that they can walk in a happier way of life and they can lead a life that leads to life, life-everlasting, life in Elohim.

Because to enter Elohim takes self-control. We're going to have to demonstrate self-control. So discipline, correction, and instruction is all about adjusting a thinking so that we can then demonstrate control of self, control of our selfishness, which is really what it's all about.

Now, if any one of those children had been taught by their parents in a strong and loving way to respect everybody, they would not have received this physical correction from God, because they would have known better, because they wouldn't have opened their mouths and called out. But, of course, they probably got carried away in a large group like that, and in the end it can be that you get led astray because you give yourself over (with a lack of self-control) to the ideas and thoughts of others and you get drawn into things.

Proverbs 30. Now, when we look back at the flood and many other things where God has intervened (in Sodom and Gomorrah), we realise it's a form of physical correction all for a spiritual outcome. And that's what physical correction really is about within a family. Any form of physical correction within a family, a loving family, is for a spiritual benefit. It's not for a physical one, it's actually done for a spiritual benefit. Because it's in the interest of the child to learn self-control. It's in the interest of a child, or an adult, to learn self-control. But to learn self-control must start in the family. Learning self-control, learning respect for authority (all authority), must start within a family.

Now, God has dished out physical correction out of love, as a parent, all for the purpose of a spiritual correction, because those people will have their spirit saved for another day, which is that Hundred-year period when they will soon learn, "Ah, the way that I walked then was not right. It was wrong and I need to adjust my thinking. I was corrected. I was corrected physically. I got killed, but now I've been given life again to have a new opportunity to learn to walk anew, to walk a new way of life." So, "I've received this physical correction," is what they'll think, "and now I need to demonstrate control of self."

Now, why are we in the Body of Christ, the Church of God? Why are we here? To learn self-control, the control of our selfishness. And it's all done by the power of God's holy spirit. God is the only one that can do it. We can't do it. When we're given those thoughts (by the power of God's holy spirit) our part in it is to learn to yield. And it's like when a temptation comes in, we have to learn to resist. We have to learn to fight. Now, everyone fights a different way. There are many ways to learn to fight, to overcome the selfishness and the selfish thinking that is transmitted to us, so we have to learn to yield to God and fight and resist error, to fight against our self, which is the demonstration of self-control.

**Proverbs 30:17—The eye, which is really "the intent of the mind," *that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, that's "the eye," and the young eagles shall eat it.*** So this "eye" on a physical level, this is somebody that looks at his father with disdain and he won't listen. So he "mocks his father." In other words, he mocks him by the fact he won't listen to him, he won't take any form of instruction from him, and he just thinks his father is an idiot. "And scorns obedience to his mother," so this is someone that shuns this obedience, which in other words, they won't listen to their father and they won't listen to their mother. It says now, "the ravens of the valley will pick it out," will pick out his eye, "and the young eagles shall eat it." Now, if someone will not listen to the advice of their parents, the end result will be that evil in this world will consume them. They'll be consumed by the world. It will lead to death. Because what happens when a person won't listen to authority, won't listen to instruction, they lean on their own understanding, the way they see it, it leads to a death.

Well, now, this is the same on a spiritual level. "The eye," the intent of the mind, "that mocks God the Father," it won't listen to God the Father, "and scorns obedience," it won't listen to its mother, which is the Church. So *anybody* that won't listen to God the Father, who won't obey the Church instructions (because truth comes from God to the Church and it is *God's* Church—it isn't anyone else's Church, this is God's Church), so if we won't *listen* to what God the Father says through His Church and we won't *obey* what is given (through God, through the Church) "the ravens of the valley will pick it out," will pick

the eye out. In other words, it's going to lead to death. If anyone mocks God or won't listen to God through His Church (the mother of us all), death (the second death) is the only outcome. And that's the best thing that could happen to us.

The best thing that could happen to somebody that is willful and willingly not wanting to listen to God or to God's Church, the *best* thing for them is the second death.

Proverbs 10:2. So finally after that, we're going back to Proverbs 10. **Proverbs 10:2—Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death.** So, "treasures of wickedness," selfish gain at the expense of others. So this "treasures of wickedness," it's something that we build up, something that we store. Because a treasure is something that we gain and we build up. So we build up this wickedness. "Will profit us nothing." Why? Well, it doesn't on a physical level, because once a person goes down that path *in the end* the laws that God have established—cause and effect, sow and you reap—will take place in a person's life and they will profit them nothing in the end. "But righteousness delivers from death." So these "treasures of wickedness," all the things that we can gain from sin on a spiritual level will lead to what? To nothing. It will lead to second death. It will lead to a second death, which is a nothingness. It's just darkness for eternity—nothing, unconscious forever, never to be resurrected again. There is no value in building up sin as far as the profit of wickedness, or the "treasures of wickedness," nothing at all, no value at all. It just is something physical, and it's temporary and it will pass away.

This selfishness, this selfish gain will *all* pass away, "but," the complete opposite is, "righteousness,"—what is righteousness? God's spirit living and dwelling in us. God's thinking in us, "will deliver from death." So a person that is righteous (has God's holy spirit and is yielding to it), does not face death, the second death on a spiritual level. Faith and obedience delivers us from the second death. What we treasure is where our thoughts will be, and the intent of going God's way leads to spirit life. But we have to have this intent. We have to have this motivation to do things the way God says, to follow God's instructions.

Now, we've seen that correction is necessary. Now, we know on a spiritual level we're going to be corrected. So we've been corrected to do things God's way, the way God's word tells us to do it. That's what our life is about. Now, for a child on a physical level, they have to be corrected and instructed to do it a particular way, because if they don't it will lead to death.

**Verse 3—The LORD will not allow the righteous life to famish, but He casts away the desire of the wicked.** So here, on a physical level, "the LORD God," who has set up all the laws in motion, "will not allow the righteous life to famish." Now, this is somebody that is doing things right as far as on a physical level, trying to strive to do things right. They will not "famish." In other words, they won't hunger physically. "But God (He) casts away the desire of the wicked," but the wicked is going to pay a penalty. There is a penalty for sin even on a physical level as well, because we know sin is spiritual, but when we sin, physical consequences take place around us and it's all to do with the way relationships are affected.

Now, on a spiritual level God says, "He will not allow the righteous life..." Now, to be a "spiritually righteous life" requires somebody that has God's spirit..."will not famish." It will not hunger *spiritually* because it will be fed spiritual food through God's Church. Now, how does that happen? Well, we *understand*, we know it happens on a Sabbath and Holy Days, but we understand "why." It's all about spiritual growth. It's about God's spirit living and dwelling in us. It's about God revealing Himself to us.

So if we are yielding to God, a righteous life, having God living and dwelling in us, we won't be "famished." We won't *hunger* spiritually. "But," the opposite will happen, "He (God) casts away the

desires of the wicked." So if we have selfishness living and dwelling in us and we're not willing to fight against it, we will be cast off, we will be cast away.

Now the comparison. It's between being lazy or working hard. Because it's the person that works hard that is going to be fed, and the person that's lazy will not be fed.

**Verse 4—He who has a slack hand**, and that is "idle or deceptive," **becomes poor**. So physically we know that anybody who's slack, anybody who's lazy, the only thing they can do is hope to gain by getting... hope to gain by getting. And normally, it'll involve unlawful gambling, because they have a wrong motive. Their motive is to get rich quick, because it's slack. They don't want to work hard for it. They don't want to put any effort in. So this "slack hand becomes poor." **...but the hand of the diligent**, someone who's determined, someone who's a worker, **makes rich**, becomes enriched. They become poor, on one hand, or they become rich. So this is about balance, of course, and you're either slack, we're either idle or deceptive in our idleness, or we're not, we're diligent, we're determined, and we're going to work hard to gain a living to support our family.

The diligent, the focus working person will be granted riches. Physically enriched and spiritually enriched if we are working hard on a spiritual level. The growth that we can have is in God's thinking. So if we're slack, if we're idle on a spiritual level and not willing to put in any work, if we think we're just getting away with it—in other words, we're deceptive because we just turn up to the Sabbath and that's the only time that we come before God and we don't do any prayer or any study during the week, we don't approach God in any way for the other six days (which is having this slack, or idle, or *deceptive* hand), we become poor spiritually, because God's no longer with us. So we fall back into the natural carnal mind.

"But," the opposite, "the hand of the diligent," someone who is really determined to put in the effort before God, to actually do work during the other six days in their prayer life and in their study and listening to sermons and reading posts and meditating on the posts, it "makes rich." It enriches on a spiritual level.

So we're either going to be going one way or the other. There is no dormancy within God's word. There is no standing still within God's word. There is no standing still with God's holy spirit. We're either moving forward or we're moving backwards. "The hand of the slack," or the idle, or deceptive person is going to be moving backwards, "becoming poor." And "the hand of the diligent," someone putting in the effort in overcoming in their effort towards worshipping God, "it will enrich us," with the power of God's holy spirit. We'll be thinking more like God. So we're either going in one direction or the other. And only we know at this point in time (and God, of course) where we are in life. We're either going forward or back.

**Proverbs 13:4—The life of the lazy man desires, and has nothing**, so he just thinks about it. **But the life of the diligent shall be made rich**. So here it is on a physical level, "the life of a lazy man desires," so in other words, he just thinks about it. He thinks about all the things that he could have, and what if he only had a million dollars, what if he had two millions, what would he do with it all, but he's doing nothing about working. He's just laying around thinking about what it would be like to have money, and being envious and coveting (because that's the way he thinks), because he's lazy. He just desires it but he's doing nothing about it, therefore, "he has nothing."

"But the life of the diligent shall be *made* rich," because he's putting in the *work* to work out the best way to live his life, the best way to earn a living, and the best way to spend it. Now, the best way to earn a living and the best way to spend it is clear. The best way to earn a living is through hard work and putting our trust in God to be our provider. And the best way to spend it is to do our tithe and our offerings according to God's word, and then we'll become rich on a spiritual level.

So on a spiritual level, "the life of a lazy man desires" to be spiritual. They desire to have the mind of God, but they have nothing because we just *think* about those things. We don't do anything about it. "But the spiritual life of the diligent," someone putting in effort (by the power of God's holy spirit) "shall be rich on a spiritual level." Spiritual growth requires work! It requires spiritual work. The work must be in the fighting against the enticing of sin. The work must be in the fighting *against* Satan's enticing. *That* is work! Because we have to fight!

If we are diligent in the fight (we're putting in the effort and we don't give up), we will be given much spiritual wealth. We will grow spiritually. We will be made rich on a spiritual level.

**Matthew 6:33**—Prior to that it was covering the aspect of what the gentiles seek, which is those things that are physical, because they build up their image by their wealth, and God is saying that that's not what we should do. We shouldn't seek after the physical. But in verse 33, this is what we should do. **But**, so it's the opposite, not to seek after the physical, **but seek first**, so there's a priority here of order. **But seek**, to "seek" means we're going to have to do something, we're going to have to put in effort. Because when we "seek" something we have to go out and do something. We *seek* it. We look for it. **But seek first**, now, this is a priority. What's the first thing we have to have in our life, **the Kingdom of God**. So we have to "seek first," highest priority in our life before *anything else* in our life, "the Kingdom of God." What is "the Kingdom of God"? It's spiritual knowledge, spiritual understanding, and wisdom, because they make up the Kingdom of God. It is where God dwells. It's where Jesus Christ dwells. It's the Kingdom, of God, it's where He is; it's spiritual in nature. So we're to seek it.

Now, to seek it is a big job on a human level, because it requires effort. We can't be lazy, or idle, or lay back and just think about it, we have to be diligent to make ourselves rich on a spiritual level. So if we're to seek first—highest priority—God's way of life in our life. Now, it starts with knowledge, and then it leads to spiritual understanding so that we can live wisdom. And all that part is that while we're "seeking first the Kingdom of God," **and His righteousness**, which is God's thinking on a matter, His thinking is in our minds, then (if we're doing that), then, God says, **all these things**, all these physical things prior that was discussed, **shall be added to you**. All our physical needs (not our wants), all our physical needs that is best for us spiritually will be added to us. And it's important to come to understand, brethren, that while we "seek first God's Kingdom," which is this relationship with God and what God thinks on a matter, His thinking, His righteousness living and dwelling in us, "all these other things will be added" to us on a needs basis, based on what is best for us *spiritually*. Because some things physically that could be added to us would not help us spiritually and it is far better that we have little—because if we're given much, because those that have much on a physical level, there has to be a level of understanding of how to use it, to use it wisely, because it does pollute the mind if we're not careful.

Now, there are God's people that have much, that have been blessed with their physical needs *and* have wealth. Well, that's good, because God sees this as the matter of something spiritual. It's something to learn. To be faithful, for example, is something you have to learn. To be faithful in the little means you can be faithful in the much. Now, if we're not faithful in the little, *how* can we ever be faithful in the much? So maybe just learning the lesson of being content with whatever God provides (and God provides our *needs*), therefore, learning to be content in that is a great blessing in itself.

Well, brethren, we'll stop the sermon there. □