

Topics from Proverbs: God and Man - Kent Stiles

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Good to be here, good to have the sun shine, and good to see the change of the season.

Just a reminder of God's faithfulness, right? I mean, just year after year, day after day, the sun goes down, the sun comes up, flowers die, the flowers come back.

And it's just a cycle that we see that the Lord is faithful, and the Lord is almighty, and it's just a beautiful time outside. If you would, turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs.

We're going to continue this morning. I will tell you, I will forewarn you that I don't, we're going to be going through a lot of verses back and forth, and so I expect there's a good potential. You may not be able to stick with me as far as the verses are concerned, but if there's something I read and you want to look at it in the context and see it closer, you'll be prepared for that.

We're going to go through a lot of scripture this morning. So one reason for that is that I always feel like when I speak, the one part that I can be certain cannot be an error are the words of the scripture, right?

[1 : 09] So if I fill my message with 80% of God's word, then at least 80% will be accurate, and hopefully the other 20% will go under the rug. So book of Proverbs this morning, and I think the book of Proverbs, it's a delight to ponder, but I would say at least from my perspective, it's somewhat difficult to preach.

At least that's been my experience. That's what I see. I love Proverbs. You know, one of my fondest memories as a kid is when we would go to camp and, you know, Kevin would do the proverb of the day.

You know, probably I liked it because of the reward, so if you never had done that, there was, you know, you'd go through, today was the, so what's today's date? Today's the, what is today's date?

Seventh? Okay, so today would be the seventh. So we'd be going through Proverbs 7. You'd read through it. You'd pick out a verse that impacted you or stands out to you. You'd write it on a piece of paper, put it in the box, and if that was the one that was also on his heart or whoever was directing the camp, then that would lead to something from the canteen.

So there was a material gift, but as we did that, it really led to a lot of appreciation for Proverbs that I've carried with me into my adulthood.

[2 : 19] So I do really enjoy looking at the book of Proverbs, but you might be asking this morning, why would we study the book of Proverbs? I mean, there's a lot of good ideas in here.

There's a lot of good instruction. Why would we study it here at Bethel? You know, as David mentioned last week, there are several things that I think we can glean from our benefit in looking at Proverbs here, and this is by no means an all-encompassing list, but rather somewhat limited.

But number one is that Proverbs is a book that's concerned with the development and the assessment of godly character. You know, as I look around here, I've heard most of your testimonies, and I would assume to say, if I were to ask you to raise your hand, who would like to be one who would be looked at as having godly character?

Most of us would raise our hands, correct? I would hope that we would. I know I would. And so this here is a book that is concerned with the development of that. How do we do that? You know, it's a book that offers us or teaches us how to be wise.

What is something that's lacking in the world today more than anything? Probably wisdom, right? Because where does wisdom come from? Well, we know that wisdom comes from the Lord, but men search for wisdom in the world. So Proverbs offers to teach us that.

[3 : 27] It teaches us what is good and what is right, and that's something that's much needed in our world today, correct? I mean, there is no such thing as truth anymore in our world. There is no such thing between good and evil.

It's whatever is right for you. But we know that's not what God says, and we see that throughout Proverbs. You know, fourthly, we see Proverbs is a key book for obtaining guidance. Tom is driving back from North Carolina.

Now, he's probably driven back enough to where he knows how to get home. If Deanna said, hey, meet Tom at the house in North Carolina, and I don't have an address, and I don't have a GPS, I'm not going to find the place, right?

I'm not going to stumble across it more than likely. What I want is I want the address, I want the phone, I want the GPS, I want it to tell me how to get to my destination. You know, I don't want to waste my time.

And that's what Scripture does here. That's what Proverbs does. It's a key book for obtaining guidance. And I think what Proverbs is not, so David hit on this a little bit last week, but Proverbs isn't a book that's full of doctrine or closely reasoned arguments.

[4 : 32] It's a book that's designed to affect our lives in what I would say is a practical or a nitty-gritty way. It's an intensely practical book. As Derek Kidner put in his book, he says this.

He says, Proverbs is a function. Proverbs, I'm sorry, function in Scripture is to put godliness into working clothes. So Proverbs function in Scripture is to put godliness into working clothes.

You know, you can teach your kids everything that you know, but if they do nothing with it, then of what value is it? Right? We want to see that. We want to see them take that and put it into action.

And that's what we see in Proverbs. Last Sunday in the introduction, David gave us a brief overview of Proverbs. And this morning, what I'm going to be looking at here, it sounds a bit more like a theoretical theme, and that is the idea of God and man in the book of Proverbs.

God and man. And that's really a big topic, right? I mean, if I went through the topic of God and man in Scripture, we could be here for weeks and weeks and weeks, and you don't want to hear me speak for weeks and weeks and weeks.

[5 : 35] So we're going to compartmentalize it into about 20 minutes of Proverbs. What does it say about God and man? What does it say about the relationship between God and man? You know, a survey of all the books teaching from a high level, it has the danger of being what I would say is a bit dry or academic.

And so what I want to do this morning is I want to take the first portion of our time and the majority of our time and see what Proverbs says about the topic, somewhat of a rapid fire about what Proverbs says about God and then what it says about man and what it says about our condition and the problem that we're facing, and then we'll conclude this morning by looking at how it fits into our relationship, that being between God and man.

And so that brings up an interesting thing. I want to cover this initially. Proverbs is, I would say Proverbs, again, is a blueprint on godly living, and it's essentially directed toward those, I believe, that have a relationship with the Lord.

That's where the, not that somebody who doesn't can't glean something from it, but I believe it's an instructional book, and it's something that's going to help us in that relationship, in that closeness with the Lord.

So I want to state that first because I'm not going to be speaking on it this morning in the term of a gospel passage, okay? The gospel, we know, is intertwined throughout Scripture, but that's not going to be the direction in which we're going to be looking at it this morning.

[7 : 01] You know, I think there's great benefit in searching the book of Proverbs concerning the teaching regarding God and man. And in my opinion, Proverbs contains a detailed description of God, and for good reason.

You know, after all, like I said, Proverbs is devoted to developing godly character, and if a man wants to be godly, what's the best place to look? You know, if people say, hey, I want to be just like my dad, well, do you go and study your mom?

No. You study your dad. If we want to be godly, we want to see what is God like. And so for that reason alone, we should expect that Proverbs would contain a description of the character of God.

And there's yet another reason why Proverbs has much to contribute to our understanding of the character of God, and that's Proverbs. Again, it's an intensely practical book. It doesn't deal with what I would say are delicate philosophical truths, but rather practical truth, truth that can be converted into godly attitudes and actions.

And so when Proverbs informs us about God, it reveals to us the divine characteristics which should shape our lives, if that's what we strive to be.

[8 : 13] Okay? I'm not a builder, but I do work in insurance. I do work with homes that are devastated by fires and tornadoes, and they have to be rebuilt.

Some of these homes are quite large. They range, you know, some are 1,000 square feet, and some of the houses I've dealt with are 30,000 square feet. And if I'm a builder and somebody comes to me and they say, hey, here's my picture of what I want.

This is the house that I want. You know, when we think about how we get from point A to point B, so when we think about our lives as believers, and we think about the process of sanctification, that being wanting to be more like God, what does that look like?

Okay? We know what, we see God at the end, but what do we, so what do we need? You know, if I'm building that house, I don't just order the lumber, I don't order the drywall, I don't set up the plumbers and the electricians.

I can do all that, but when they come to me, what's the first thing they're going to ask for? They want a blueprint, right? They want to see the instruction for how to build this home to go from nothing to here.

[9 : 13] How do we get there? And that's what we're going to look at, is the blueprint of Christ. To learn to be more like that blueprint for practical godliness, and specifically the one whom serves as that blueprint.

So, let's start with the description of God in Proverbs, and again, I'm going to go through verses pretty quickly here. Throughout the book of Proverbs, we see a description of God and God's character, and I think God's character is best revealed in Proverbs in a description as to what he delights in and what he hates, right?

It's been said that you can learn a lot by what a man spends his money on, or you can learn a lot about a man by what he spends his time on. Well, what does Proverbs say about God? Well, number one, it says that God loves the righteous. He loves righteousness.

In chapter 3, verse 22, it says, For the crooked man is an abomination to the Lord, but he is intimate with the upright. The course of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

Verse 9 of 15, The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but he loves those who pursue righteousness. So number one, the Lord loves righteousness, and he despises wickedness.

[10 : 19] What else does it say? It says he loves the good man, but he hates the evil plan. Verse 2 of chapter 12, A good man will obtain favor from the Lord, but he will condemn a man who devises evil.

So he loves righteousness. He loves what's good. It says he loves honesty, and he despises falsehood. Chapter 11, verse 1, A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight.

Again, we're just building his character here. Righteousness, goodness, honesty. It says he loves integrity. In chapter 11, The perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord, but the blameless in their walk are his delight.

Again, he loves integrity. He loves those who are truthful. My kids have probably heard this verse quite a bit at home.

He loves truth. What does he hate? It says he hates liars. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are his delight. What else does he love?

[11 : 28] He loves prayer. He loves the prayer of the upright, but he hates, in contrast, the religious rituals of those around, the religious people.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. You ever think about that? The prayer of the upright, he delights in that.

Your integrity, he delights in that. Your honesty, he delights in that. Now, conversely, you're lying? Not so much. Your false sacrifices?

Not so much. That's God's character. So we have God over here, and then we have man over here, right? Well, I think man has a dilemma, and according to Proverbs, man has a dilemma that has the result of two factors.

And first is that every man is confronted, essentially, in our walk with a decision. And it's going to be made decisively or by default, but it's going to be made, and the decision is whether to fear God, to be reverent of God, or to resist God, to pursue wisdom, or to follow the path of folly.

[12 : 34] Those are really the two options, right? Is to follow God or to follow, or to go through a way of folly. Proverbs 3, 1 to 7 says this, Then verse 5, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, and all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight.

Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord, and turn from evil. Chapter 122 says, How long, O naive ones, will you love simplicity, and scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?

Turn to my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you. I will make my words known to you. You see, the decision each man must make is between two ways. The first of which is the way of wisdom.

And Proverbs tells us what comes from wisdom. I mean, who, again, I think if I were to ask you, everybody here would seek wisdom. What comes from that? In chapter 3, verse 16, it says the way of life. It's pleasantness.

It's peace. That comes out of wisdom. What else? The way of security. In verse 33 of chapter 1, without fear or punishment for evil.

[13 : 58] That's what comes out of wisdom, and that's what we strive for. On the contrary, though, we have the path of folly. One who might choose evil. It says in chapter 1, verse 31, they're going to reap what they sow.

Chapter 2, 18, they're going to suffer death. In chapter 3, condemnation. So there is a path, there is a divergent path that is there.

And so in Proverbs, God is the blueprint, but man has this dilemma. And while there's no blueprint, while there's a blueprint to follow, he is, or we are predisposed toward folly, toward the way of evil.

Even in child, in children, we see this. We are predisposed, or inclined to go our own way. Most of us here, as I look around, have children, or have had children, or are expecting children.

And one thing I can tell you about children, about my kids at least, is they were not predisposed toward the blueprint of Christ. Right? I mean, I always use the analogy, and I think it holds true.

[14 : 57] If you put two kids into a closed room, and you put one piece of candy in the middle, I don't see many kids who say, no, you take the candy. No, you take the candy. No, please, brother, I would like you to have the candy. Right? That's not what happens.

They're predisposed to their own selfish interest. Okay? Because it says in Proverbs, foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

Chapter 29, the rod of reproof gave wisdom, but a child who gets his own way, or literally left to himself, brings shame to his mother. And I'd like to say that that changes as we get older without the Lord, but in Proverbs, it tells us that's not the case.

As we grow older, we tend to deceive ourselves, thinking that the way that we have chosen is right, when it's not. There's a verse in Proverbs 14 that says there's a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to, what?

Death. Right? It seems so right to us. Don't we see that in our world today? What's right? I mean, everybody has the right answer, but where does it lead? Ultimately, we know where it leads to death.

[16 : 03] The way of the fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel. All the ways of man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs his motives.

And you see, this is the problem, is that man's dilemma is that naturally, he is inclined, or we are inclined towards sin, and not toward God. It would be the doctrine of depravity.

And that our waywardness inclines us to reject the very words that proclaim to him the way of deliverance. And instead, man listens to those who will tell him what he wants to hear.

The folly. And the root of our dilemma is sin. The problem of our dilemma isn't the Lord. The problem isn't the way that he created us. The problem is that we are fallen from the perfect way in which we were created.

Fools mock at sin, but among the upright there is good will, or favor of God. It says in chapter 20, who can say, I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from sin.

- [17 : 14] And so you have God over here, and you have a stark contrast to the dilemma that we have with man, and that we are fallen, that we are sinners, that we are depraved. And yet, what we see in Proverbs is that God, even with this, God has preeminence.

Okay, not only does Proverbs speak of God's character, because that it alone is amazing, but it also speaks of his might. And Proverbs describes a God who is great.

He is great in what he knows, and he is great in his power. He is great in his character. You know, theologians will speak of God as being omniscient. What is omniscient?

It means he knows everything. In Proverbs, specifically, it goes through some of these areas in which we see God's omniscience. Number one, God knows the deeds of men, both good and evil.

So, we are a finite being, yet we have a God who knows everything. He knows our deeds, both good and evil. It says in chapter 5, verse 21, for the ways of men are before the eyes of the Lord, and he watches all his paths.

- [18 : 24] Chapter 15, verse 3, the eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good. Now, you think about that. God's eyes are upon us.

He knows everything. And that's pretty, it's pretty difficult to comprehend, right? Now, as a parent, I can watch my kids, but I can't watch them every day, everywhere they're at.

God sees us. He sees everything that goes on. I think maybe even more amazingly is not only does he see what's going on on the outside, but he sees what's going on on the inside. I mean, he sees our hearts.

His omniscience doesn't just extend to the exterior, but to the interior. It says in chapter 16, it says, all the ways of men are not clean, are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs his motives.

Right? The Lord weighs his motives. He knows what you and I are thinking. Not only does he see our actions, but he weighs the motives. And not only is God omnipotent, or omniscient, but it tells us probably that he's also omnipotent.

- [19 : 29] So we have this character that we've seen, this blueprint. We have this all-knowing God, and we also have this omnipotent God. He's all-powerful. Nothing is beyond his control. God is able to accomplish what he determines to do.

And no one, even in this context of those who decide to go their own way, nobody is going to thwart his will. You know, kings, presidents, prime ministers, those who are in power, those who are evil, no matter the position, they will not thwart his will.

And they're subject to him. In verse 1 of chapter 21, it says, the king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord. He turns it in whichever direction he wishes.

So even the wicked, even when we think that God maybe has lost control, even when we think that wickedness is running rampant, those who choose to rebel against God, ultimately God will achieve his ultimate purposes.

It says in chapter 16, verse 4, the Lord has made everything for his own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil. You know, by his will, battles are won, and even those things which appear to be matters of chance are under his control.

- [20 : 46] Chapter 21 says, the horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord. The lot is cast into the lap, but every decision is from whom?

It's from the Lord. So God is omniscient. God is omnipotent. God's sovereignty extends even into man's speech, even into man's steps.

And I paint this picture because I think so often we forget the difference between God and man. Man wants to be like God, right? We want to be in this position that God has.

There is a natural instinct to think we are like God, and yet I think we forget often how great a God we have. You know, it doesn't matter if you're his child or not, he's still God, and this is the God who rules the universe.

It says in chapter 16, verse 1, the plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. The mind of man plans his ways. This is a verse that we, I think a lot of us hold dear to ourselves.

[21 : 50] The mind of a man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. See, God is in charge of his creation, and he will not ever lose control of it.

His infinite goodness and greatness puts him far beyond the reach of man. There's this separation here, right? We have man here in our sinful state, we have God here, and he is far beyond in that situation the reach of man.

And man would never come to know the relationship or understand God unless God were to seek him out to reveal himself to them, to initiate a relationship with him.

And indeed, man cannot even understand himself apart from coming to know God. Proverbs 20, 24 says this, man's steps are ordained by the Lord.

How then can man understand his way? You know, this is probably the neatest thing is when we look at a picture of man, and we look at us as sinners, and we look at how short we fall, and we look at God and his greatness, yet God has chosen to be intimately involved in the affairs of man.

[23 : 06] God desires relationship. He is aware of the needs of the righteous. He's responsive to them. Now, one thing I want to say here, and it's just a good reminder whenever we look at scripture, is we don't paint typically, there are some things we don't paint with a broad brush.

Some things we do, right? There are things that we can say, if I tell you today that God is immutable, he doesn't change, I can paint that with a broad brush, and I can be confident that in everything we see in scripture, God does not change.

When I can tell you that God is perfect, that's something that I can paint with a broad brush, and in every instance, God is perfect. There are things that are said in Proverbs, though, where we would say, this is painted in a general brush.

So for example, train up a child in the way he will go and he won't depart from it. Can I tell you every single child that grew up in a godly home who had godly instruction has not departed from that?

No. That's a general term, right? And so it says here, the Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger, but he will thrust aside the craving of the wicked. So the Lord is looking out for the righteous.

[24 : 09] It doesn't mean there's not going to be suffering. It doesn't mean there are missionaries who are martyrs, right? Does that mean it's wrong? No. But the Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger. He is delighted in righteousness.

You know, Proverbs, I think, presents God as a seeker of men and while sinners will ultimately stand before God as their judge, it's his desire to have an intimate relationship with those that he loves.

Chapter 3, verse 32, for the crooked man is an abomination to the Lord, but he is intimate with the upright. I mean, that's a relationship with this God that we have this blueprint of. That is shown here in Proverbs.

You know, God has made it possible for men to know him because he has revealed himself to them. It says in Scripture, his handiwork can be seen in creation.

He can be known through the teaching of those who are wise, but most of all, he has revealed himself through his word. Verse 5 and 6 chapter 30 says this, every word of God is tested and he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

[25 : 22] Do not add to his words lest he reprove you and you be proved a liar. You know, isn't that comforting to know? Every word of God is tested.

As a child, well, let's flip it around. As a father, I am certainly glad that KJ does not test every word that I say. Right?

Because I can guarantee you, he's in the room, so I better be careful, but there are things that I say that aren't accurate. You know? There is advice that I give that probably isn't wise.

I make mistakes, believe it or not, as a parent. I know you guys don't, but I do. You know? Doesn't that give us comfort to know that every word of God is tested?

He is a shield to those who take refuge in him. And here's what it comes down to, is that God has provided for us. You know, Proverbs not only shows us what the problem was, it reveals God's provision for it.

[26 : 27] I think we see in this godly blueprint what is necessary for prosperity, not for financial prosperity. You know, I'm not telling you, in fact, I will tell you likely, if you follow what Proverbs says, there's a very good chance financially, you will not be prosperous.

Right? Doesn't mean you won't all the time, but if you are looking out for the, if you're being generous, if you're being righteous, if you're being a good steward of your money, it's not a guarantee that you're going to be prosperous financially, but spiritually, and having intimacy with God, I can tell you, that's what's there, and that's what's important.

What are a couple things we see? Well, number one, man must humble himself and confess sin. Chapter 15, it says, the fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.

Isn't that interesting? Before honor comes humility. He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Interestingly enough, what I take comfort in with Proverbs is this is the way that God has set it up, and that's what I want to be, what I want us to take from this is that this is not the way that I have set it up.

[27 : 51] This is not the way that Bethel has set it up. This is not the way that world has set it up. This is the way that God sets it up, and these are truths that before honor comes humility.

If it was the world's way, if it was man's way, it might be the opposite, right? Before humility comes honor. You know, he who conceals his transgressions will prosper.

The opposite of God. But this is what God says, and these are the truths that we live in in this universe, regardless of what the world would say. So, number one, man must humble himself and confess his sins.

Secondly, I think we see that man must, we must believe God's word. Do we believe what he says? Look at verse, don't look at, but turn to verse 5 of chapter 30. Every word, again, of God is tested.

Chapter 13, the one who despises the word will be in debt to it, but the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded. So we need to believe what he says.

[28 : 54] You know, we need to cease trusting in ourselves and trusting God. That verse, again, from Proverbs chapter 3, it's the, I love that verse, it was the key verse for storybook.

Many of you guys have been up there, but it's trusting the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. When I lean on my own understanding, I can tell you, my understanding is pretty finite, and I'm a pretty big guy.

It's not going to hold me up. In all my ways, acknowledge him, and he will make my plans or my paths straight. And then verse 7 is a great add-on.

It's not one that we would typically, we would stop at 6 a lot of times, but I love verse 7. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn from evil. The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

The righteous runs into it and is safe. Chapter 29, the fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts the Lord will be exalted.

[29 : 54] And then finally, man must forsake his folly and turn to the way of wisdom. Chapter 2 says, if you seek her, meaning wisdom, as silver, and search for her as hidden treasures, then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God, for the Lord gives wisdom.

From his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He's a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice, and he preserves the way of his godly ones.

It says in chapter 9, forsake your folly and live and proceed in the way of understanding. Who wouldn't want those things? Who doesn't want wisdom? Who doesn't want knowledge?

Who doesn't want understanding that comes from God? And he wants to give it to us. He offers it and he offers it generously.

If the musicians want to come back up, we'll wrap up here. Proverbs 21, the verse we looked at earlier, it says, the king's heart is like channels of water in the hands of the Lord. He turns it wherever he wishes.

[30 : 58] Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts to do righteousness and justice. It's desired by the Lord more than sacrifice.

You know, as we read the book of Proverbs, I think what we're going to find is that we can't live or we can't live up to the standard which is set for us, that being Jesus Christ.

In the context of Proverbs, as I read this, I find myself falling more into the category of the fool more so than the wise man. And in this respect, it's a bit like the Sermon on the Mount. You may remember the charge that Jesus gave where he sets this astonishingly difficult goal or this statement where he says, be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

That's a tough thing to, that's a tough standard, right? I imagine that as if the ceiling were eight feet tall, the bar is eight feet one. It's impossible to get there, practically speaking, right?

I'm never going to be perfect this side of heaven. And the book of Proverbs holds up a portrait of a godly character and the question is this, how do we make our lives match that portrait?

[32 : 14] How do we take a sinful man who is here and how do we appropriate or how do we present ourselves or how do we become what God is over here? How do we reach that goal which is set before us?

How do we progress toward that godly character that we should each desire to be displayed in our lives and that we see displayed in Proverbs? I think there's a few responses.

I think if you read this and you think to yourself, you know what? I can do that. I just need to try a little harder every day. I think you're going to leave here disappointed.

Conversely, if you read that and you throw your hands in the air and you become discouraged and disillusioned with the demands of a godly life and you say, I can't do it, then you're going to leave here disappointed and discouraged.

So how do we do it? In Galatians 5, 16, Paul says, I say this, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

[33 : 11] Walk in the spirit. I can't do it on my own. The Lord has saved me. When he looks at me, he sees Christ, positionally speaking.

When he sees me as I walk on this earth, when you see me as I walk on this earth, I can tell you, you don't see Christ, so how do I get there? Walk in the spirit. I think, if you read the book of Proverbs and you come to God saying, Lord, you're the perfect example.

My ways are not right and I have no sacrifice to make. But Lord, please, my desire is that you would work in me by your spirit to make me more like your son.

I think it's only at that point and by that strength and by that supernatural power that we're going to see our lives more approximate his. My prayer is that this would be our desire this morning as we leave here and as we go out this week.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to look at your word. Lord, oftentimes we look at the book of Proverbs and it's got some great stuff in there. It's got some great teachings. Lord, but I will tell you as a child of yours, it's also got some real difficulties.

[34 : 28] Lord, you delight in the righteous. You delight in what is good. You delight in those that are upright. You delight in honesty. And Lord, oftentimes I fall short and Lord, what I'm thankful for this morning is I'm not reliant upon what I've done to find favor with you because if that was the case, then it would be a lost cause.

But Lord, I pray that as I would walk daily, I pray that as each one of us would walk in this work that we would aspire to be more like the perfect example. Lord, that blueprint.

Lord, that we would say of ourselves that we delight in those things that you delight in. Lord, that we despise those things that you despise, Lord, that we would take it, Lord, every day that we would see your word, your word which is perfect, your word which has nothing left to be added, that we would look at that, Lord, we would look at that picture and we'd say, that's what I want to be.

Lord, that we would walk in the spirit as we do so. Lord, we thank you for our time this morning. We ask all these things in your name. Hear, take his help.