

## I. Review

Last week in Psalms 16 we talked about seven key areas of breaking any stronghold in our lives. We looked at seven very important areas all based on David's life. I showed you that Psalms has a doctrinal application as you read it which deals with Israel. It has a historical application which deals with David and what he is going through. Inspirationally it deals with you and me and what we go through. This is why so many people are drawn to the book of Psalms when they go through tough times. David is going through his tough times, and I showed you how the book of Psalms breaks down in three ways.

1. David when he goes through his trials and tribulations
2. David when God delivers him from his trials and tribulations
3. David now has got the victory, and he is praising the Lord for the victory

It is the same way all through for Israel and you and me. I showed you like David and the nation of Israel we are going to go through our own tough times. John Wayne said it best of all in the movie "*Sands of Iwo Jima*" when he was talking to that lady, and she was telling him all her problems. He said, "*well I guess, in each life a little rain must fall.*" That is so true! In everybody's life a little rain must fall. There are going to be times that we get a little rain and at times you are going to get a tsunami, a thunderstorm, or a hurricane. I showed you how, like David, **we are going to go through our own tough times.** When I got to the end of last week's message on Psalms 16, hopefully you saw the victory can and should be ours when we do what David did. He took ownership of everything that God had given him. This is what it is going to take in our lives. Understanding that we must take ownership of everything that we have.

We talked about our inheritance, our cup, the full cup. We talked about our lot. I've talked about this over the years about the wall of Biblical principles that you build around your life. One principle at a time and how they will keep things out that are going to be detrimental to your Christian life. We talked about keeping your emotions in check and how you don't run through life making emotional decisions based on the feelings that you have. You have got to keep those in check. We talked about setting the Lord always before us. Then we talked about the rest of the believer. The rest that we have through the trials of life. **Understanding that we can rest in the promises of God and the principles of God all by taking the right path through life.** Getting on the right path. When you understand your inheritance, it leads to understanding your heritage and it leads to what David did in Psalms 16, he took ownership of that city. The official name of that city was Jerusalem, but David took ownership of it, and he made it his own personal city. From that point on we know it as the City of David. That is what we need to do. We need to take the things of God and personalize them. Not keep them in some abstract concept but bring them in and personalize it in our own lives.

In verse 8 of Psalms 16 the great principle, “**I shall not be moved**”. I showed you how our victory will be nothing more than our steadfastness in what we have with Christ. Understanding who you are in the Lord Jesus Christ. I also told you that the real key to our victory will be three simple things.

- 1.) Understanding who we are in Christ
- 2.) Our confidence that we have in Christ
- 3.) Our self-confidence that determines how far we go

I teach you the Bible and I try to build Biblical principles into your life. I try to give you everything that I can and as much Bible as I can in the time we have. There are many reasons why I do that. **But the number one reason is getting the Bible into your life will build self-confidence in your life.** Self-confidence is the key. We have young men and ladies here that have self-confidence. That is what a pastor looks for and what a pastor builds when he is building the word of God into people. Because self-confidence will determine how far you will go with the Lord. Yet, what sets an athlete apart from one athlete? It will be his self-confidence. He knows what he is doing, and he is confident that he can play the game whatever it may be. It is true of being a musician. You will find when somebody gets up to play and they are already nervous, that breeds mistakes because you are nervous in front of people. A good musician is as comfortable as he can be playing before 10,000 people. Why? Because he is self-confident. Certainly, you must have a self-confidence when you are preaching the word of God.

The key to preaching is not how much you know about the Bible. It is not that you have some great passage that nobody’s ever seen. **The key to good preaching is you being comfortable in what you are doing and what you want to accomplish. But most importantly, you know how you are going to get it done.** It is the difference between good and greatness. Self confidence will be your ability to deal with any issue. When you start to work in ministry and dealing with people you must have self-confidence. You must be confident in what you are doing and how to do it. That is what I try to teach you here. Because your reins, your emotions are key and must be kept in check and you do that by the principles of the word of God.

It is like football, and you are the quarterback. You got the ball with two 500–600-pound linebackers coming after you. If you really have confidence, you are not worried about those guys because you are going to scramble and stay out of their grasp. You can make the contact downfield and get the ball to somebody. That is the ministry. Four-hundred-pound linebackers are going to come after you every time you try to do something for God. You got to be able to scramble and use your abilities to score a touchdown. In Christianity, that is real leadership. Its role is that the fundamental principles of the word of God are in your life to the degree that you have laid precept upon precept, line upon line, and now you have the self-confidence to be able to do whatever God wants you to do.

Having said that, I don’t want to make anybody feel bad. You may not be there yet, but you can be there. There is nobody in this room that can’t be everything that God wants you to be. But you have got to take time to get there.

We talk a lot about Proverbs 3:5-6 trusting in the Lord. *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”* You hear it all the time. But trust will only come in your relationship with Christ by you proving out each other. God proving Himself to you and you proving yourself to the Lord. That takes time. I am going to show you today how you can do that. **I believe in this church that God has something for everyone of you.** I don’t care what your education level is, or what your abilities are or your IQ. I don’t care. God will meet you where you are at and help you to be everything, He wants you to be. But it takes time. That trust in the Lord will be a vital part of your Christian life that you must begin to build. I am going to show you how to do that today.

## II. David – An Example of How We Should Conduct Our Lives Through a Relationship with Christ

Psalms 17 will be a perfect example of what our trust, our self-confidence, and our emotional state should be in our relationship with Christ. David will be our greatest example of this in the Bible and how we should conduct our lives through a relationship with Christ. When you look at David there are many aspects to his life. There are so many things you can learn about him. But I think the greatest book outside the Bible on David is a book that Arthur Pink wrote at the turn of the century called, “The Life of David”. It is one of the best devotional books that will show you David at his best and his worst and somewhere in between. David will be a great picture of us all. That is why it is so important. Because we all have our worst, our best and our somewhere in between. We see in David’s life like we see in our own lives his struggles and his failures. We see his own family with his struggles. We see his personal issues and yet we see ultimately the victory that he has through his relationship with God. It is an incredible study and yet with all of his problems, God saw something in David. In spite of his human failures, God was willing to hang with him because he knew that in the end it was going to be worth it. With all his issues God saw something that David probably didn’t see.

That is the mark of a good pastor in my estimation. The Bible says that a pastor should know the state of his flocks and look well to his herds (Proverbs 27:23). Part of the job of a pastor is to see things in his people that maybe they don’t see themselves. There are things that you look for in people. I can meet somebody and talk with them. Now, I’m not batting a thousand, but I bet you 999 out of a thousand. I can meet somebody, and I can ask them a few questions and I pretty much walk away and know where they are at with the Lord. I can know whether they are going to make it or not. That doesn’t mean that they can’t change it around and prove me wrong. I love being proved wrong in things like that. But the law of averages is not on their side. At the same time, I can see somebody and like I see in many of you, that God has something for you. You may not see it yourself yet. You are excited about the word of God. You are doing things; you are getting involved and doing all this stuff. But you don’t really see it yet in your own life what I may see as far as to where you are going with God. I am not saying I know that God is going to have you be a missionary or this or that. I am saying that God has greatness for all of you, but not everybody realizes that greatness. My job is to see that greatness in you and help

develop it. My job is to see the people that don't want that greatness and still give them the best chance I can. Because that is the ministry!

➤ The Christian Life is not How You Start, but How You End

God made two of the greatest statements anywhere in the history of the world and certainly in the Bible about David. He said in 1 Kings 15:5 that David did that which was right all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

*Because David did [that which was] right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any [thing] that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. 1 Kings 15:5*

But that wasn't true! There were many other things that David did that wasn't on the up and up. You say well what does that mean? It means that God sometimes will look past our deficiency. He will look past the other failures in our life, when God sees the end result like he did in David's life, when David was going to get the victory. We are all going to struggle and make mistakes. We are all going to fall and fail. That isn't what the Christian life is about. That is part of it, but **the Christian life is not how you start, the Christian life is how you end.** That is David! Then he said in Acts 13:22 that David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart which shall fulfil all my will. You see God looked at David like he looks at you and me. He saw his frailties and his failures, but he also saw within him something that David probably never saw himself till later on in life.

*And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the [son] of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Acts 13:22*

I told you Thursday night when I laid out the Millennium for you. That in the Millennial reign of Christ, David sits alongside the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the prince of Israel. When you search the scriptures, you will find that David's heart aligning itself with God's heart will simply be based on his love for the word of God. You will find this clearly laid out in the greatest chapter in the Bible in my mind on loving God's word, Psalms 119. All written by David. Further study in the Bible as you get into the Kings of Israel and Judah, that every king was compared to David.

Here is my own take on this. I started a study on this and I will probably never get it done. You got 33 kings of Israel and 33 kings of Judah. When you begin to lay them out you start to see some interesting things about them. Personally, I think you find within those kings every type of Christian that you are going to find in Christianity. That is why you find places where it will say that the guy had a heart, but his heart wasn't perfect before God. How did he do that? Well, when you put that into God's people that you work with all the time you see that. All the kings of Israel and Judah, David was the standard by which God judges all of them. My point is that

they may well be and probably are a picture of all kinds of Christians. **But the gold standard in our relationship with Christ is going to be David.** David is the greatest king that Israel ever had. You ask yourself why is that? It comes down to his love affair with the word of God. That is what made David the greatest king Israel ever had and made him a man after God's own heart.

I always thought about this being a really great study. David started out as a shepherd, taking care of the sheep. But he wound up being a king. Now I can't pass on that. I mean you know what a picture that is for you and me. Right now, you and I ought to be a shepherd boy that is tending the flock. But through the process of time as a Christian and the millennial reign of Christ you ought to wind up being a king. See how it works? That is a great sermon in itself. That is what God wants for all of us. Sheep now tending the flock, feeding them being a shepherd to them. But someday reigning with Him as king. You will see in David a self-confidence, and this is what I want to focus on today. Not only self-confidence, but a steadfastness.

You will see in David what each of us should have, a relationship of building trust that leads to understanding who we are, that leads to steadfastness, that leads to our self-confidence. So that like David in Acts 13:22, we shall fulfill all of God's will. That is everything that God saved you for. That is what God saw in David and developed and brought him through so David could fulfill all of His will. It is the exact same thing God will do with you because He wants and expects you and I to fulfill all His will.

Last week I gave you the two securities in a believer's life. The first one is eternal security. That is our salvation. Who you are going to be in eternity, you can never lose that. The second one was the everyday rest of the believer security. Who you are in this life. How people, Christians sometimes, can pull you off track because you are not secure in who you are. You are not focused on what God wants you to do, so somebody else can easily pull you off track. They can say something, ruin your day and suddenly you start second guessing yourself. The reins of our lives, our emotions, should always run through the principles of the word of God. This will be the mark of a true leader.

### ➤ Leadership – What God Wants to Build in Us

I like to read books on great leaders down through history. Many of them are not saved but that doesn't mean that they weren't great leaders. I can take the lessons of their leadership and put it into a Christian format. But there are some men down through history that were great leaders. I think probably in my generation one of the greatest leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was during the Vietnam War. His name was Hal Moore (Lt. General Harold G Moore Ret). He wrote a book called "We Were Soldiers Once...and Young". It was about a battle that changed the war in Vietnam. They made a movie about it and Mel Gibson played him. The name of the movie was "We Were Soldiers". I don't know of another example of the world in a military scenario where you can see what leadership really is in action. We are talking about a group of men around 200-300 men who were deployed and found out later that they were up against 10,000 NVA (North Vietnamese Army). They landed them right in the hot bed of an NVA stronghold and yet these 200-300 men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, held the line and did everything they

could do. They lost a lot of guys in the battle, but they came out victorious. There is only one reason for it and that was the leadership that they had. His leadership in the face of adversity. The NVA tried to outflank them, they tried to come on frontal assault, they tried everything in the world, and they could not do it. You know why? Simply because of the leadership. That is what God wants to build in each one of you. He wants you to put you in the middle of 10,000 of them coming over the wire that want to eat your lunch and destroy you. But give you the wherewithal because of your steadfastness and your self-confidence that you can have the victory. That's true leadership. You are not a leader because everything is fine in your life. What makes a good leader is when everything is not fine in your life.

### III. Psalms 17:1-5

Let's look at Psalms 17 and yes, Psalms 17 is a Psalm of David.

1. *Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, [that goeth] not out of feigned lips.*
2. *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*
3. *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited [me] in the night; thou hast tried me, [and] shalt find nothing; I am purposed [that] my mouth shall not transgress.*
4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept [me from] the paths of the destroyer.*
5. *Hold up my goings in thy paths, [that] my footsteps slip not.*

Over the next couple of weeks, I want to break down this passage, so we don't miss anything out of it. I want you to see each part that will show you the self-confidence that David has with God. That is where it starts. Our trusting in God and Him trusting in us to do all His will. As I came down through here, I just quickly marked five things that I want to look at today that gave David his self-worth. That gave him his heritage and his self-confidence. I said this earlier; **God has something special for each one of you.** I can see already how the church has grown and how the leadership has grown. God has brought this church to where we are at right now with what is coming in our mission's conference. This is why I am asking everybody to just blow everything off for those five days, especially during the preaching services at night and be here to hear what God has to say. Because right now this is a turning point in our church. I have brought this church up to the best of my abilities through God showing me how to do it. I have tried to bring it up to different levels as we grow spiritually. You have all responded well and we are now at a place where we are ready for the next level. We have got everything going for us. We got the key people in place. What I am saying, I guess, is this next year is going to be a call for all the leadership to really rise up. You are going to have to do what you have got to do if we are going to take this to the next level. You have all done well where we are at, but God is never satisfied with us doing well where we are at. God wants us to do well where we are going. He wants to

have with us what He had with David, that we too fulfill all His will. You know not only around the world but as I showed you the opportunities right here to work with Steve and Justin and all the things that God is doing. Many of you right now have been building that same relationship that David had. You may not be where he was at, but you are headed that way. The confidence that David had and his boldness with God is what needs to happen.

## IV. Five Things that Gave David His Self-Worth

- 1.) Verse 1 *Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, [that goeth] not out of feigned lips.*

This first thing I want you to see is the relationship that David has with God is found in Hebrews 4:16. In this verse we are told to come with a boldness before the throne of grace. But we are to come with a boldness.

*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

Right here you begin to start out with “*Hear the right O Lord*”. I want you to notice he is not asking God for anything here. This is not a petition; oh God give me this or do this or that. He is speaking to the Lord directly with the boldness and the self-confidence that we should all have when it comes to our relationship with the Lord. By David saying this the way that he says it, he is telling us that there are absolutes in life of what is right and of what is not right. You need to understand that. There are no gray areas in life of right and wrong. Right is right and wrong is wrong. This is the first step in a relationship with God. Recognizing, “*Hear the right O Lord*”. Recognizing that it is light versus darkness. It is the world’s council versus God’s council. It is truth versus lies. He tells God “*my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips*”.

The second part of this verse that you need to see is that David has such a confidence in himself that he knows what he is saying to the Lord is true. There is no self-doubting himself. There is no saying well Lord I hope that what I am saying... no, no, he knows it is. He tells God “*my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips*”. He is saying God I’m on the side of right and you know I am on the side of right. Hear my prayer. He is not asking him for anything. He has the self-confidence of God to know that because he is on the right and he is doing right, God has to answer him. This comes down in a simple format, that I try to tell you all the time, having a Biblical principle behind everything you do. Having a principle for every major decision of life. I told you last week that whatever decision you are going to make in life, somebody is going to criticize you for it. Whatever decision you make, somebody is not going to agree with it. Here is the rule that I told you last week. You want to make sure that the decision you make is on the side of right and it is based on Biblical principles. David speaks this way because of the steadfastness in God’s truth which has produced his self-confidence.

- 2.) Look at verse 2. *“Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.”*

Note the word “presence” from last week in Psalms 16:11. We talked about somebody being in the presence of the Lord and somebody leaving the presence of the Lord. *“Thou wilt show me the path of life in thy presence is fulness of joy.”* This is Psalms 16:11 from last week. What he is praying, or what he is saying is coming forth from him by him being in God’s presence. There is nothing that will give you the confidence that you need to do what is right than when you understand that you are in God’s presence.

Then he says, *“let thine eyes behold the things that are equal”*. That is another thing that comes down to the balance in our lives. Seeing that in God’s sight the way we look at life and there is bad things and good things. We all go through our Christian life hoping that the good things outweigh the bad things. I told you this in the beginning, you are going to have some dark times in your life. John Wayne said it best “well I guess, in each life a little rain must fall”. But most people don’t see how God balances that out. Because all you do is look at it from a human standpoint. You don’t look at it from God’s standpoint. You are going to have some tough times in life. You are going to have some people betray you and forsake you. You are going to have circumstances that are not very good in life. But here is the thing, it equals out with God when God blesses you and the blessings of God equal out the tough times you go through. I tell people all the time and very few people either don’t understand or just don’t want to. But I tell people all the time you never focus on what you don’t have. You never focus on the wrong in life. There is plenty of wrong in life. You always have to focus on what you do have. There God makes everything equal. Everything balances out. Tough times are made equal by God’s balance of the full cup and His blessings. But most people never see that, and this is what leads to you second guessing yourself. This is what leads to the problems that we all get into.

Doing right with unfeigned lips. Loving God equals the blessings of God equals a full cup of God, equals the self-confidence of God. It is just that simple. The unfeigned lips and the blessings of God equal the balance of life. Even though there are some bad things that may come down in your life, you have the blessings of God. Unfortunately, most of God’s people never experience the full cup. They never experience the blessings of God. So, all they do is struggle through the trials of life. That is why they come to the place where they walk around saying, how much more can I take, God. Well God says you could take a lot if you just got your cup filled up. You are saying I can’t do this anymore. No you can’t because you are only looking at what is happening to you. You are not seeing everything that God has for you that you simply don’t want. This is what leads to the downfall and the destruction of many of God’s people.



- 3.) Verse 3 *“Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited [me] in the night; thou hast tried me, [and] shalt find nothing; I am purposed [that] my mouth shall not transgress.”*

This verse is loaded. The first thing I must ask all of us is, how does God prove us? I mean we as Christians, we are told to prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and hold fast that which is good. I found that most of us, most of God’s people, spend their whole lives insecure and trying to prove that God is really who He says He is. How typical that is. I am not worried about God proving Himself to me. What bothers me is do I prove myself to Him? So how do we prove ourselves to God? He answers this in the next two parts of this verse. I want you to notice that he doesn’t prove you by what you do. He proves you by your heart in what you do. **God is always looking at the motivation factor behind anything that we do.** Okay here it comes! God proving our hearts. *“Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night.”* Let’s look at the night. This will be the time of darkness in our lives and for Israel it is the tribulation period. For you and me it is the dark time when the sun doesn’t shine. Then he says he visited me in the night. Why? It doesn’t say that he came down to solve my problems or to fix my problem. It says he comes to visit me in the night to prove me.

Then he says. *“thou hast tried me”*. Then we prove ourselves to God by how we respond with the principles of the word of God, when we are tried in the fires of life, the nighttime. We all have to answer the same question in our lives. **Do the principles of the word of God really work in our life? Either they do or they don’t.** This is the difference between greatness and just an average Christian. Do the principles of the word of God really work in your life when your nighttime comes? Because He is going to visit you in the nighttime, and He is going to visit you to prove your heart. He is going to watch how you and I respond in the nighttime with the Biblical principles. Or do we react to it when we get tried in the fires of life. Do we run to God, or do we run from God? Living for God when all is good proves nothing.

### ❖ Job – In His Defining Moment He Stayed True to God

I have said this many times that in each of our lives there will come a defining moment. But the defining moment will be what Job went through. In Job 1:6-11 God says, have you considered my servant Job? He is a good man, and he loves me. You know what the devil said? He said the same thing he will say to you. Well, why wouldn’t he love you. Look at all the stuff you have given him. Why you have blessed him and given him this and that. I guarantee you God, that if you take all away that he has; he will curse you to your face. You see what Job’s defining moment was? Right there! But God said alright take all that he has, and Job stayed true to God. It was Job’s defining moment! There will be a time in your life and my life where God will allow the devil to take everything or put you in circumstances that seem like it is hopeless. That will be your defining moment where God will visit you in the night to prove your heart.

James 1:3-4 tells us that the trying of our faith worketh patience and through that trial, that faith and patience has a perfect work for us. There is something that God does for us

when we go through the night, and he visits us, and you apply the principles. And you know the word of God is going to get you through whatever you got to go through.

I was told this years ago and I believe this is true. When you make a real diamond, it starts out as a lump of coal. Through the hundreds of years being buried in the ground, that lump of coal through the pressure it goes through becomes a diamond. I have thought about that many times. I never forgot it but I understand the significance of that because we are just an old lump of coal. When we go through the pressure that the world puts on us and we respond, and God visits us in the night. The devil comes after you like he did Job, but you stick with the Book and the principles. This old lump of coal through the pressure of this world will be turned into a diamond fit for the Master's hand.

#### ❖ Abraham – In His Defining Moment He Had Confidence in God

Yet again we not only see Job being tested and tried in his night, but we also see another example in the Bible is Abraham in Genesis 22. Abraham's faith is tried and tested when he is told to sacrifice his only son Isaac. If you just read that story, it is no wonder that God says that Abraham was the friend of God in the Bible. Because when God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, Abraham never questioned God. Do you know why? Because he had confidence in God. He didn't know what the end result was going to be. But Abraham had enough of a relationship with God and enough self-confidence and trust in God. That however it came out was the way that God wanted it, and he was okay with that. Wow! How many of us can put ourselves in that scenario. Abraham's faith is tried, and we see another great truth. **You better learn this one. When our testing and trials come. When our nighttime comes with all that we are going to have to face, it will always be that we are tried with the things that we love the most.** What is the point in God trying us with something we don't care about? When Abraham stood there and God told him that and it took three days journey to the land of Moriah (By the way, Moriah is where Christ was crucified.) Just imagine as they sat there those three nights at the campfire. Abraham is sitting there, and Isaac is snuggling up next to him to stay warm. Abraham is looking into that fire, and he knows he is going to have to kill that boy. About that time Isaac looks up and says, dad I sure do love you. Abraham looks away with the tears running down his face. That was his defining moment!

#### ❖ What Will Your Defining Moment Be?

There will come a time in your life that will become your defining moment. Sometimes with your own children. What are you going to do? What are you going to do when they get to the place that they start getting out of control and start running with the world? Maybe it will be with your job or with your relationships. Maybe it will be in your own family or with your possessions like Job. I don't know what it will be for you, I can only speak to what it has been for me in my life. But I want to tell you right now, that there will be a defining moment in each of your lives and God will visit you in the night season. God will try you through your trials and prove your heart. Our proving ourselves to God will be based on loving the word of God, its principles, precepts, and its doctrines.

Loving them more than anything in life. As the Bible says in Colossians 3:2 setting your affections on things above.

*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:2*

Then the last part of verse 3. Here is self-confidence! Verse 3, “*thou hast tried me, [and] shalt find nothing; I am purposed [that] my mouth shall not transgress.*” This is a lot like Daniel in Daniel 1:8 where Daniel was faced with his defining moment. The Bible says, “*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat...*”, picture of the world system. When our nighttime comes, and it will surely come. It will be up against the wall that we have built in our lives of Biblical principles that will prove you out to God. Again, I ask the question that I asked last week. How high is your wall and how thick it is?

What makes the mark of a strong Christian will be self-confidence and steadfastness. It is not when all goes well, but when we go through the great nighttime’s of life and God visits us to see how we react or respond. Romans 12:1-2 are two great familiar verses for all of you. It says,

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that ye may prove (there it is!)** what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

It is not about when it all goes well, but it is about when it all doesn’t go well. What do you prove? Romans 14 tells us that no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. There is always somebody watching our lives.

*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Romans 14:7*

What do they see when we go through what we go through? Do they see that we are a Christian that really believes what we say? Or do we fold up like a broken accordion just like everybody else in the world? Proving yourself to God in any issue in life. Knowing that as it says here in verse 4, “*by the words of thy lips*”, is all that you need. Like David in Psalms 119:127, “*Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.*” Like David on the downside in Psalms 119:136, “*Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*”

- 4.) Verse 4, “*Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept [me from] the paths of the destroyer.*”

I told you last week out of Psalms 16 there are two paths in life. The path of life that is filled with joy and pleasure forever more, or here in verse 4, the path of the destroyer.

One of the downsides of my 50 plus years in ministry is that I have seen so many good people who once were on the old paths, leave it for the path of the works of men. The left the word of His lips, left the presence of the Lord and today they are clearly in the

presence of the world. They have entered into the path of the destroyer and have lost everything that God has for them. Most of them have lost their kids. They have lost all their joy, their ministry, and have certainly lost their inheritance. They have left the presence of the Lord and are walking with the ungodly and sitting in the seat of the scornful as it tells us in Psalms 1.

Listen! You are in bad shape when your beer is now more important than your Bible. You are in bad shape when the things of this world are more important than the things of God. You are in bad shape when once you loved the Bible, loved church and were involved in ministry. Now you are sitting in the seat of the scornful and all you do is criticize and castigate against the very thing that at one time gave you your salvation and your joy. How did that happen? You just changed paths. You got off the path of life and now you are on the path of the works of men.

5.) Verse 5 *Hold up my goings in thy paths, [that] my footsteps slip not.*”

The context here is footsteps that slip not. That will be what we find with Israel and our use of the term today called backsliding. Backsliding is always a term that is used with the Nation of Israel in the Old Testament. A backsliding Christian (even though you never find the word backsliding as pertaining to a Christian in the New Testament) is a term that is used when we lose our footing going forward for God. Staying on the old path, staying off the path of the works of men.

When you look at these verses that I gave you today, the principles will be for the victory for each one of us as a child of God.

## V. Six Areas of Steadfastness, Self-Confidence & Stability of the Christian Life

There six areas and I am going to leave you with today. Six areas of steadfastness, self-confidence and stability of the Christian life based on the word of His lips.

1.) *Understanding What is Right and What is Wrong.*

Get a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. What is real and what isn't. In Hebrews 5:14 talks about when you start to do the word of God that you exercise your senses. You have the ability then to discern between good and evil. God has some place that He wants you to go, and it is going to take boldness.

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:14*

I was watching the old Star Trek TV series last night and William Shatner always starts its opening words. I thought to myself, I am going to use that tomorrow because here in a fantasy role is a bunch of people going out into outer space to explore new worlds and

then he says this, “**to boldly go where no man has gone before**”. That is what God wants for you. He wants you to boldly go where no man has ever been before. He wants you to boldly go, to explore new worlds, to explore new cultures. He wants you to broaden who you are and your understanding of what the world’s all about. He wants you to have a better understanding of right and wrong.

2.) *Having Confidence in God*

He wants you to have the confidence in God and your relationship to boldly come to the throne of God, like David and lay it on the line with God.

3.) *Having the Presence of God in our Lives*

Let what we say and do come from the presence of God in our lives. Your relationship with God.

4.) *Allowing God to Prove Us Through the Fiery Trials of Life*

Allowing God to put us through the fiery trials of life that through the pressure, the darkness, when God visits us to prove us on the other side we come out as a diamond fit for the Master’s use. Job went through a tough time, but he was better off when he came out of it than he was when he went in. But sometimes you don’t see that when you are going through it.

5.) *Staying away from the works of man that lead to a path of destruction*

Keeping away from the works of man (verse 4) that lead to a path of destruction, in the world and also in Christianity.

6.) *Always moving forward and never moving backwards* (verse 5).

There will be times in life when something hits you that stops you in your tracks. I get that. But don’t let it move you backwards. Use it to move you forward. It is all based on our wall of Bible doctrine that protects us from the world. But even more important it protects us from ourselves that we may prove that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Like David, be found in God’s confidence to be proven that we too will fulfill all His will.

This is where many of you are right now. You may never reach your potential, but it is not because you are brain dead and can’t. It is simply because you don’t want to. There isn’t a man or woman in this church that doesn’t have the ability to be everything God wants them to be. God has fixed this church that way and now it comes down to you deciding. You are not proving anything when everything in your life is just wonderful. No, it is when it all hits the fan, and the darkness comes and the Lord visits you. He is just going to want to see what you are going to do with what Old Paths Baptist Church has given you. That is the key!