

## I. Review

Last week we finished up Psalms 17, and as we went through that Psalm, we looked at a number of things that I think will really be a good help to any of us in trying to have the right relationship with God. I know for me, as I went through it, laid it out, and put it together, the main concept that I took away from it would be the confidence that I need to have in Him.

### ➤ Confidence, Trust, and Patience

The confidence of any child of God's relationship will simply be based on our trust in what we do with the word of God and seeing the promises and the principles coming to pass in our lives year after year. It's God proving Himself to us, and the confidence that comes from that. I wouldn't presume to speak for any of you here, but I know in my own life for over 50+ years, half a century, it's seeing God never fail me and always come through in anything that I've needed. In the times that we live in and the times that are coming, I fear that many of God's people will get swallowed up and fall through all the things that are going to befall Christianity simply because there is no real confidence in Him in His word.

I know we have people on different levels here spiritually. Some of you have just begun to be disciplined; some of you I just set up today to be disciplined, and I'm excited about that. **My advice to you is to learn everything you can as quickly as you can.** Stay close to the church, stay close to the word of God, and stay close to the people who are there for you that God has put into your life. You'll want to get that confidence level up as quickly as you can.

One of the things that will come out of our confidence and trust in God will be the word patience—our learning to wait on God because we see how He works over time. And He works in His own time frame. This is one of the big problems that we all have: we want it in our time frame, and it doesn't always happen that way. Confidence in Him will build trust, and that trust will build patience.

### ➤ The Contrast Between a Man of the World and a Man of God

Also out of Psalms 17, we saw that great contrast between a man of the world and a man of God. I think this was a great example for all of us. It's been said that you can tell what kind of a man or woman a person is by what they love. Nothing could be truer than that statement. It's a real key if you're working with people and trying to understand people. We saw that the worldly man will love all the things of the world—his worldly possessions, his worldly substance, likening it to the fatness of the things of this world.

Then the Godly man loves, longs, and works at just three simple things. These three areas will really define him just as the areas of a worldly man define him.

1. The Godly man seeks God's face, and we talked about that being the word of God. God's face revealed through the pages of the word of God.

2. The Godly man seeks God's righteousness. He has a desire to do what's right because he's now a new creature in Christ Jesus. He wants to please God, and he wants to do the things God wants him to do.
3. The Godly man seeks God's likeness. He's looking for the day of days in his life: the day that he gets his glorified body, and the wedding day for him and his bridegroom—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week, as we closed out Chapter 17, it was simple to grasp, yet I know so many of God's people will never give up the love for the things of this world. In this life and in this world, there will never be anything that really satisfies you. Instead, it will be a life of heartache, tremendous strife and trouble; never the peace that passes all understanding, but rather no peace because there is no understanding. This is where many of God's people find themselves today.

### ➤ A Spiritual Colonoscopy

Today we're going to move into Psalms 18. We will find here another incredible Psalm for our lives. In the Patterns class yesterday, I gave them a fair warning that this would be a good Sunday to miss if you had something else to do or really were looking to miss one. I was joking with them yesterday that I don't normally put names to my sermons, but if I was going to put a title to this, it would be that this is *A Spiritual Colonoscopy!* Terry told me this morning that most of you young people don't even know what a colonoscopy is. Let me tell you, life has some surprises coming your way! You'll see what I mean when we get through this. I told them yesterday that **we're going to go some places where nobody ever sees and find out what's really going on.** Some people immediately, and I appreciate this, thought there was something wrong, but there isn't a problem. There really isn't.

When I was a little kid, maybe nine- or ten-years-old, we were going on a trip. We stopped at a truck stop to get something to eat and go to the bathroom. My dad was gassing up the car, and I was watching a truck driver with a great big 18-wheeler. I've always been thrilled with big trucks. I saw the truck driver get out of the cab, and he got a big steel rod out of the back. As he walked, he started banging on the tires. I'm just a little guy, but I'm thinking that is one way to deal with your anger. When he walked over near me, I asked him what was wrong with his truck so that he was banging on his tires. He smiled and said, "Son, there isn't anything wrong with the truck. You just beat the tires to make sure that there is nothing wrong with your truck." So...there isn't anything wrong today, I'm just going to *beat the tires* today a little bit.

## II. Psalms 18:1

This is another incredible Psalm for our lives. Now interestingly enough, when you read Psalms 18 here in the first couple of verses, you'll find in 2 Samuel Chapter 22, almost word for word, what you find in Psalms 18. When you investigate it a little farther, you'll find that in Psalms 18 you're told that it's a Psalm, but in 2 Samuel 22, you're told it's a song. This will be David's Psalm of victory over his enemy, and yet it's his song of victory in 2 Samuel 22 of God delivering him. I think that's very important.

Doctrinally, this will be Israel's final victory over, as we saw last week, the lion and the young lions, and God coming through for him in Psalms 17:13 where he cries out, *Arise, O Lord!* Inspirationally, this is an incredible picture in the first couple of verses of the seven things from God that we need to put in our lives to have the victory.

### ➤ Building Block Passages

Now I call places like this in my Bible "Building Block Passages." There are a bunch of them in the Bible like this. It's where you get into a passage in the word of God, and there will be a sequence of things given in the right order that you're supposed to put and build in your life in order to build your relationship with Him. For me, this is one of my favorite passages in the Bible that goes along with 2 Samuel Chapter 22, and it's places like these that you can read and get a sequence for building the things in your life that build upon the next things. It shows me personally, and I can't speak for you, what and how to build in my life and in the order of their importance. It shows me God's proper order of His principles and promises through the word of God for me to build in my life.

### ➤ Psalms 18 Introduction

In your Bible, for some of the Psalms, there will be a little excerpt before the Psalms that tells you what the Psalm is about. I'm going to read that, too.

*To the chief Musician, [A Psalm] of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day [that] the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said*

Now we have a context for this, so those things are important.

### ➤ Psalms 18:1-2

*Psalms 18:1-2. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*

*2. The Lord [is] my **rock**, and my **fortress**, and my **deliverer**; my God, my **strength**, in whom I will trust; my **buckler**, and the **horn of my salvation**, [and] my **high tower**.*

Over the next couple of weeks, I want to show you these seven key areas. I want to go through them in a way where you can understand what they are and see the spiritual impact they will have in your life. **This Psalm will be exactly what every child of God needs to have a working relationship with God.** Notice I said a "working relationship with God." Most of God's people who are saved have a relationship with God. The question you have to ask yourself today is, "Do you have a **working** relationship?" It's us working in the Bible, then the Bible working in us, and then us working with others. That is the "working relationship" that the Bible talks about when I say having a working relationship with God.

Do you want a relationship with God? Do you think you have one with God? Well, here is where it all starts. This is vitally key and vitally important. Before I get into this, let me just say this. I must preface this from time to time because I'm not into making some young Christian

who has just gotten saved feel bad or feel like I'm coming down on them. So I'm going to tell you this: if you've been saved five years or less, I'm not telling you not to listen to the message, but I want you to know that I'm not talking to you. In four or five years, I'll be talking to you, but right now you're getting this together. I'm targeting those who have been saved 10, 15, 20, 25 years. Those are the ones that I want to talk to today. We won't get past verse one today because this is where it all starts.

### ➤ Do You Really Love Him?

*Psalms 18:1. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*

Now first off, right out of the chute, He shows us what the root problem is in Christianity today. I'm going to ask you a particular question throughout this, and I'm just "beating the tires" today. I don't have anybody in mind other than myself. This isn't a case where somebody called me up and said, "so and so needed this message". If anybody needs this message, it's me. You have to do with it what you have to do with it. I'm not responsible for that.

The question that I'm going to ask throughout this whole message, and as we look at verse one, is the question that you're going to have to answer for yourself. "Do you really love Him?" And I hope in most cases this will be your reality check.

I asked Danny to leave this up here. He was leading the song service and page 332 was the page you sang. *My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine.* And I watched you all sing that. You sang it great, and you sang it loud. **But the question that you have to answer today, before you try to build any of these things in your life, the foundation has to be built on, "Do you really love Him?"** I know that in the world we live in, in America, I know of no other word in the English language that is more butchered, more misunderstood, and more misapplied than the word love.

In this life there will be many things that we say we love. To most people, love is an emotional word we use to express how we feel about something or somebody. But real love, based on the Bible, is not about a word. **Real love is based on an attitude of our hearts about something. Love, based on the Bible, is about not only the right attitude but the right action based on that attitude.**

I've told you many times that in America we tend to use the word love completely wrong. We use the word love based on our mindset about things we love that cannot love us back. "I love this house!" "I love my car!" "I love this city!" "I love that restaurant!" "I love this dress!" Now I get it. **We are in a culture and in a society that has so butchered the context and the definition of what the Bible says love is that we spend our time loving inanimate objects. And yet we have the One in our life who died for us on the cross, did everything for us, and only wants the best for us.** And the question today that you have to answer is, "Do you really love Him?" Now before you say yes, hang on! I can't guarantee a lot of things in your life; I wish I could. I wish I could guarantee you'd have a good day, a good week, or a long healthy life. If you're saved, I can guarantee you're going to heaven. If you get into the Bible, I can guarantee that's going to take care of you, but there's not much in your life I can guarantee;

however, **I will guarantee you this: when you leave today, you'll know whether you love Him, or you don't.**

➤ The Theme of I John is Knowing Him

Now in your Bible, you'll have two key books that I told you about when we came through the book of John. You have the Gospel of John, and you have the Epistle of I John. I remember clearly laying out for you that the gospel of John is the book that shows you how to be saved which is the reason why that book was written. After you get salvation down, then you get over to I John which is the Biblical basis of you building your relationship with God. You've got to have both books together. The Epistle of I John is a very unique book. You'll want to remember that it's written by one of the greatest types of Christians found anywhere in the word of God: The Apostle John, and we've been through that many times.

Every commentary you will pick up on I John, save maybe one or two, will tell you that the theme of I John is love; and yet, when you break the book down Biblically and look at it from a Biblical standpoint, you'll find that the book is not about love. The book is about knowing Him. In five little chapters, 26 times you will find the reference to us knowing Him or to know Him, and from that we come away with the understanding that the theme of I John is not love. The theme of I John is knowing Him. I'm not speaking for you, but this is where God's people today get the false idea that you can actually love Christ without knowing anything about Him.

Christianity is so shallow today. Pastors and churches are so out of touch with the Bible. God's people go to church, hear a message, and they make some kind of emotional decision. They walk out and say, "Oh, I love you Jesus." On February 1, they'll go forward in a service and make some profession for Christ, and then eight months later they fall out of love, and you never see them in church again. This is common in every aspect of Christianity today. God's people fall in love with things, and they fall out of love with things. They fall in love with Christ, and then when a better deal comes along, they fall out of love with Christ. Do you know why? It's because to know Him is to love Him. People are not going to like messages like this. I mean at least with a colonoscopy they put you out! You may be out there saying, "I don't like this!" Hey! You only have to hear this once. I had to go through it every day as I was putting this together. I don't like it either, but we all need a reality check. We all need to stop and really evaluate what's going on in our lives especially in this messed up world of Christianity that we live in.

➤ To Know Him is to Love Him

And the question is, "Do we really love Him?" Well, you can't love Him without knowing Him. Look at Philippians 3:10.

*Philippians 3:10. That I may **know him**, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

Now why get mad at me? He just told you that if you don't have those three things in your life, you don't know Him. Yet we, as God's people, think we love Him. We're caught up in the American travesty of the word love.

### ➤ The Main Issue in Relationships

Now I'll just divert here for a moment. This is the main issue in relationships. This is the reason why so many people get married, and then in a short time, they get divorced. They have terrible issues in their marriage, and I'm talking about God's people. I've told you before, there are two fundamental problems with people getting married today who are saved. First, they don't understand that God designed marriage, why He designed it, and how it fits into their lives together. They get into something without ever understanding it. Second, they don't know who they're marrying. They don't take the time to find out who that person really is.

In America today, with God's people, it's not about love, it's about sex. You don't love that person; you lust after that person. You get into a relationship with somebody, get emotionally entangled, and throw the Bible completely out not caring that in Genesis 24 there are 19 principles that you ought to put into play before you even start to consider that aspect. Through the process of emotional entanglement, you get into a sexual relationship, and you're now in "love." I've watched this for many years. God's people find a spouse like they buy a car. You see a sleek fast car zip past you, and you say you want to get one. You go to the dealership, and there she is. You say that it is just what you wanted, so you test-drive it. You say you love the car. In both cases, five or six years later you trade it in for a new one. *Prove all things*. It's all in the flesh today.

*Romans 8:8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

And with that, in Ephesians chapter five, our relationship with Christ is likened unto a marriage. We're the bride, and He's the bridegroom. Here too, we get an emotional relationship going, get entangled in the emotion, but we never really know anything about Him. So you fall in love with Jesus today, and two months from now you fall out. **You have to learn to love God. His ways aren't our ways. His thoughts aren't our thoughts. He doesn't look at things the same way we do. He doesn't deal with things the same way we're used to dealing with them.** If you want to have a working relationship with Christ, and you want to love Him the Biblical way that you're supposed to love Him, you need to learn to love Him. You can't just make an emotional attachment to Him like you do other people and things.

### ➤ The Nation of Israel had the Same Problem

To make my point, you see this same thing with Israel. Now we are Christ's bride, but Israel is God's wife. Israel, as God's wife, has the same problem that you and I have as Christ's bride.

*Isaiah 29:13. Wherefore the Lord said, **Forasmuch as this people draw near [me]** (Oooh!) **with their mouth** (I love Jesus!), **and with their lips do honour me** (Oh! How I love Jesus!), **but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:***

*Matthew 15:8-9. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. 9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.*

**They've supplanted the word of God that God has given you for the precepts and doctrines of men.** They will teach you in I John that you can love Him without knowing Him. That's what God's people do today. The real question for all of us today is do we really love Him based on knowing Him? To know Him is to love Him. As I said before, if you've been saved five years or less, don't worry about it. You don't need a colonoscopy yet, but how about the rest of us? **What do you know about the One that you have been espoused to?** The One that someday you're going to marry.

Somebody asked a question last Thursday out of Song of Solomon, and I showed you how crucial that book is. It shows you how He loves you, how you should love Him, and it breaks down every aspect for you and me to know Him.

### ➤ People Don't Like It When You Question their Love for God

When you start preaching like this, somebody out there says, "How dare you question my love for God!" Are you kidding me? Okay, here we go—get out your scorecard. Reality check is coming through the door. As I said, I can't guarantee a lot of things in your life, but I will guarantee you that when you walk out that door today, you'll know if you love Him or not.

In your Bible there are seven things that God loves. What are they? Do you actually know what He loves? Are they in your Bible? Are they in your mind? Are they in your heart? You would fight and say you love Him, but what are the seven things He loves? And yet we have no idea what He loves. What kind of relationship is that? Right here are my wife, my kids, my grandkids, and my sons-in-law. I know what they love because of my relationship with them. I love them based on knowing them.

Now I'm a dog person, and I know many of you are. I grew up with dogs—Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, and Bullet. If you're a dog lover (and some of you love horses, cats, or whatever), we know our dogs. My dogs both sleep with us in bed. In the middle of the night, if Izzy jumps down off the bed, I know where she's going. If I didn't close the toilet seat, she's getting a drink! At night, your dogs will have dreams. I'll get up at night and hear some noise then I see Izzy down on the floor kicking, squirming, and barking like she's chasing something. She's dead asleep, but she's dreaming. I don't panic and think she's having a seizure. I don't want to wake her up because she may be enjoying her dream.

The point is that I know my dogs and you know yours. I can be downstairs working on something and hear my dogs bark, and I can tell what is going on by how they bark. If there's another dog they're seeing walking down the street, that's one bark. I just blow that one off. If they've got to go out, that's another bark. If somebody comes to the door, it's another bark and I get up because somebody is there. If you've had your dogs for a long time, they become like part of the family, and you just know your dogs. Do you know what the tragedy is? Some of God's people know more about their dogs than they do God. You can discern what they're

saying, but you cannot understand when God speaks to you. You see the question today is, “Do we really love Him?”

I’ll tell you something else. Not only are there seven things that God loves, but there are seven things in the Bible that God hates. Do you know what they are? Come on, do you? How do you know if the things you’re involved in aren’t the very things that He hates if you don’t know what He loves and what He hates. I’m telling you right now that in many cases in America, with the shallow Christianity here, God’s people think that they can love God without knowing Him. Sadly, many of God’s people just think they love Him.

### III. Real True Love Will Always go back and Identify Itself with the Object in Question

*I Corinthians 8:3. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

You see, the reason for that verse and the power of that verse is because real true love will always go back and identify itself with the object in question. When a man loves God, it shows. It’s manifested. Everybody sees it! You don’t need to rent a billboard, you don’t need to wear a 20-pound crucifix around your neck, you don’t need to put a fish emblem on your car, or a bumper stick that says, “Honk if you love Jesus!” It’s known. And if you don’t love Him, it’s known.

**You want a good reality check on if you love Him based on I Corinthians 8:3? I’ll show you three ways, if you really love Him, that it will show through.**

1. If you really love somebody, you’re going to tell them all the time how much you love them.

Probably across Kansas City this morning there were about 300,000-400,000 men and women who got up to go to church. They got up in the morning, crawled out of bed, looked at their scraggly face in the mirror, brushed their teeth, got a shower, got ready to go, picked up their Bible, got into the car, went to church, and **never one time this morning told Him that they loved Him.** *Yeah, you love him all right. Lip service.* There are some of God’s people who go all week long and never tell Him they love Him. How many times do we just stop during the day and tell Him we love Him? It ought to be a thousand times that we just stop in our thoughts, or at the stoplight, when we’re at work or on break...whatever the case may be and just tell Him we love Him. God’s people can go their whole day long. They’ll tell their boyfriend or girlfriend that they love them or their wife or husband or their dogs that they love them. **But you never tell Him, and you want me to believe that you love Him!**

**Do you know what the Bible is fundamentally? First and foremost, it’s God’s love letter to you and me.** It just blows my mind that God wrote you and me 66 love letters: 1,189 love chapters. God broke it down and gave it to you as His love letter to YOU. Forget the person sitting next to you. He gave it to you. He loved you enough that He gave you a love letter that would cover every aspect of your life, every aspect of your heartaches, every aspect of your



relationship with Him, and we've got to have a guy like Joe Silvestri come to our conference, who preached one of the best messages I ever heard him preach, and challenge God's people to read God's love letter—just 10 chapters a day. Are you kidding me? God gave you His love letter, He wrote it to you, and we've got to have a guy come in and challenge you to read God's love letter! Some of you started it and quit. Some of you still haven't done it, *but you love Him*.

This is between you and Him, but most of God's people today simply live a life of complete denial when it comes to God and the Bible with really knowing Him and loving Him. We're filled, like the nation of Israel, with lip service Christianity, yet my Bible says, *but if any man love God, the same is known of him*.

2. If you really love somebody, you're going to want to give them things.

We all give things to the people we love. You kidding me? Christmas time, birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine's Day, or just because you love that person, and they are special. I know for most of you, especially you ladies, a lot of thought goes into what you give somebody. Some of you take 2-3 hours just to pick out a card because you want it to say the right thing. Us guys don't have that problem. I love how the cards are categorized by his/her birthday, anniversary, funeral, etc. *I walk down the aisle and just pick one out of there. They're all good!* You see that's why you're laughing. You know how stupid that is, but that's what we do with God.

For me, when I get something for somebody, I get something I know that they want. They may not need it; that's immaterial. And if you love somebody, you'll give them things and the reason you will is because **true love will always identify itself back to the object**.

Hey guys, let me ask you a question. Did you ever forget your wife's birthday, anniversary, or Valentine's Day? Let's just stick with her birthday. She's looking for flowers in the morning or perhaps a present on the couch. Nothing is there. She thinks you're going to do it later in the day. When you come home for lunch, she's looking for a box of candy or flowers. Nothing. She thinks that you'll do something when you get home from work. In the afternoon she's looking for a nice card or a package delivery. Still nothing! When you come home from work, she thinks, "This is it!" You give her a little peck on the cheek and go watch television while asking her when supper is going to be ready. She thinks this must be a really big surprise and that you're waiting until later in the evening to give it to her. Finally, it's time to go to bed. You reach over and turn out the light. Then suddenly you hear this terrible bemoaning. She breaks down emotionally, and you bolt up in bed, turn on the light, and ask what's wrong. She reveals that you forgot her birthday. Now you're caught and you feel ashamed and stupid. Then you say those fatal words, "Oh, come on, honey, but you know I love you!" **Is she going to buy that? Well God doesn't buy it either.**

When it comes to God, do you even know what He wants? I've seen God's people, good people, and this is not a criticism but an observation, go through their whole Christian life and never one time give God what He wants from them. We sing *My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine*, but boy do we have a laundry list of things that we want from Him!

2 Corinthians Chapter 8 is the great chapter on giving, and everybody thinks that it's the chapter on giving of money. Which it talks about that, but in 2 Corinthians 8:8 he says that we prove the sincerity of our love to God by what we give Him.

*2 Corinthians 8:8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to **prove the sincerity of your love.***

Now in a New Testament church, that breaks down into tithes, offerings, and sacrificial giving. You know in 20 plus years of ministry in this church, I have never preached a message on giving. Personally, from my standpoint, I think that would be an absolute insult to God. I shouldn't have to tell the people of God, that God has given so much to, that they should give something back to Him. I assume that if you can't pay the bills, close the door and go someplace else.

In most churches today, the preacher will give you a 20-minute sermon and 40 minutes of saying they need more money. Instead of all that, **I just work to try to get you to love Him because if I can build you to really love God the way you should, the giving of your money and finances to God will never be a problem.** You'll want to give back to Him. You'll start out in discipleship, and realize as we teach a lesson on it, about the tithe—10% is where you start. As you grow and know Him to love Him and see what He's done for you, you'll give an offering. Then when you get to the point that you see and understand the sacrifice that He made for you, that's where your sacrificial giving comes in. And if you don't give because of those three reasons, keep it!

I had a friend, who is gone now, who was a great preacher. I preached with him at many conferences. He would put it right to you, man. He was preaching one time at a missions conference, and he was preaching on giving to missions. He always had great illustrations that really nailed you. He said he had an idea. How about next week if he and his wife invite you and your spouse out to dinner. They'd pick you up and drive you to the nicest restaurant in town. It's beautiful, and he tells you to order whatever you want. Everybody does, and it's a wonderful time. When it comes down to the end of the meal, he tells you to pretend like you're going to the restroom and to wait outside the door. He tells your wife the same thing. He tells you that he and his wife have done this before. Everyone will go to separate places, and by the time the waiter gets back, everyone will be out the door. You'll all enjoy this fabulous meal and won't have to pay a dime! Then he asked the congregation what they would think of him as a preacher? He said they would probably want nothing to do with him, but boy, then he hit them. **He said you folks come here week after week, month after month, year after year, and get everything the church has for you then walk out the door and never pick up the tab!** The church there got as quiet as you did right now! Hey! That's the last kind of Christian I want in my world and in my life. The kind that takes everything from God, but in their personal life doesn't want to give anything back to God.

3. God wants us to be a living sacrifice for Him.

I'll tell you something else He wants. He wants you and me to be a living sacrifice for Him. You see He died on the cross as my sacrifice so I could live, after He went back to heaven, as His living sacrifice; however, God's people just won't give that to Him. You've got your own

agenda, you've got your own lifestyle, you've got your own relationships...you've got everything in your world the way you want it, and you're not going to jeopardize that by laying it on the altar.

I was at another missions conference years ago where I heard a missionary from Africa. He was a national missionary supported by many churches. He was preaching about his church in Africa which was very poor. They needed a new church building, but nobody had any money; however, they put the cry out. Everybody in the church knew what they needed. When they passed the offering, there were women and men who were putting in their wedding rings to be sold to pay for the new church building. There was one little gal who had nothing. She was an orphan and had no money or family, but she came to the church and got saved. She was faithful in the church. When they were taking up the offering, she walked up front. She took one of the offering baskets, put it on the ground, and stepped into the basket. That's what God wants. He wants US!

I mean can you honestly look and see the sacrifice on the cross and all that He went through and then live our lives the way we do thumbing our nose at God because we've got something in our lives that is more important than the price that He paid. And we've got the guts to sing *My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine*.

*2 Corinthians 8:5. And [this they did], not as we hoped, but **first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.***

In the great chapter on giving, it says that they gave of their own selves first, and that's what it takes. Knowing Him. Some of God's people go their whole Christian life and never give God a thing. They sing with a straight face every Sunday *My Jesus I love thee*. Yet Malachi 3:8 says that you rob Him.

Malachi 3:8. Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

I'll tell you something else. If you really love Him, then you're going to want to be more like Him because true love identifies itself with the object. Last week we saw the Godly man looked for three things in his life: God's face, God's righteousness, and God's likeness. And I can say with 100% certainty if as a child of God, you don't know the seven things He loves and build those into your life, you're probably involved in the seven things that He hates.

## IV. Summary: A Reality Check

**In pastoring or preaching the Bible, the key is having a balance.** You can't do the same thing all the time. Most pastors only know one dimension: boredom. You go along, get into a book of the Bible, you teach, you preach, you blend it together. You lay out the Bible on Thursday nights, Patterns class laying out the patterns of leadership, discipleship I, II, and III. I teach the Bible, preach to you, and try to give you everything I can; however, **the balance must require a day like today: a reality check.** In the day and age of Christianity that we live in, it is so easy

to get your mind on the wrong things and get it into the place where you lose sight of the real value system that God has for us. We all need a reality check.

You need to pull your car into the garage here. I'm going to raise the hood, pull your dipstick out, and see how low your oil level is—oil being the Holy Spirit of God. There have been many a person who in their life didn't understand what it meant when that little red oil light came on. They just kept on driving and burned up their engine. **God's people ignore the warning light and keep on driving it until they burn themselves out and then wonder what happened.**

**We all need from time to time, as a church body, an honest look at ourselves. You ought to do this every day in your own personal lives.** With all that we get here, it means absolutely nothing if you don't love Him. After this morning, when you walk out that door here in just a little bit, you'll now know the answer to that question. Do you really love Him? *Psalms 18:1. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*

You know what Psalms 119 is with 176 verses? It's 176 verses of David expressing how he loves God. Previously, I went through the whole thing showing you my prayer. That is a prayer that every child of God ought to have out of Psalms 119 to tell God you love Him and to give you His word. I don't even want to know how many of you did that today, but in any relationship, this is where it starts. **It starts with knowing Him before you can ever really love Him.**

Over the next couple of weeks, we will build on today's message. We will build on the idea that what is coming in this chapter, that is key in our lives, will be of no value if we don't understand the Biblical aspect of love. In this world, there is no reality. **Where there is no Bible or knowledge of God, you lose touch with the real issues of life.** Life on planet earth today is a deception of words that are misinformed, lies, and smoke & mirrors. People are deceived that we are headed for some Golden Age, yet Haggai 1:6 says that really life is a *bag with holes*. You go all through your life with your bag. "Oh! I want this! Oh! I want that! I've got to have a couple of these!" All your life you keep putting things in your bag, and when you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ and hold the bag up, everything fell out because it's a bag with holes. That's life on planet Earth. That's the life that so many of God's people put over the life that God has for them, and unfortunately, Christianity is the same way. Hosea 4:1-6 says, *there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land, yet we still love Him. Right!*

Jeremiah hit it right on the head in Jeremiah 23:25-26 where he says, *I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.* **And for most people, Christianity is a dream world that is not reality—to the point where God's people think they can actually love Him without knowing Him.**

I will tell you in closing: to know Him is to love Him. If any man love God, the same is known of Him because you cannot divorce yourself with true love from the object in question and you can never love God without knowing who He is.