

Proverbs 24-01-10b

Let's pick up here in Revelation chapter 13 at verse 12. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life. It's helpful to get a little bit of clarification on what these words mean.

The word that is translated hope is used six times in the Old Testament. It's always translated hope when it's, uh, if, if you remember your Greek Elpizo is the Greek word for hope. Elpis is the Elpizo is the verb.

Elpis is the, is the noun, faith, hope, and love. You, you have a pistis, uh, Elpis and agape as those three. Um, and so this is different than the word that is going to come up in the second line, hope deferred.

And you think, wow, did they really have a word for deferred in Hebrew? It seems like such a complicated, advanced concept in English. Uh, I have a deferral. I have a thing that could be done now, but I'm going to wait and do it later.

Uh, hope deferred. And this is a word that actually literally comes from to draw and lift out. This is like finding a net, finding a fish or getting a net of fish and lifting it up and drawing it out of the water, uh, literally to drag along to to use work, to physically move something heavy.

That's what this word literally means. And so it isn't just, well, I was hoping, but it hasn't happened. I hoped the package would come this week so I could give it to somebody for Christmas, but it was delayed.

So I'm hoping it will come next. Well, it's deferred. It's I'm just waiting.

I'm waiting. And if I have to wait too long, well, now I'm just heart sick. It doesn't really catch the drift here.

Hope, which is the expectation you are waiting for something. Um, the long awaited opportunity, the long awaited condition, a long awaited fulfillment, uh, is being dragged along. It takes work to maintain it.

I am efforting. I am laboring. We just saw labor in the previous verse, right? What is it that we work at? What should we be working to accomplish? This is gathering wisdom, gathering the truth of God, assembling it, building it into our souls, comparing scripture with scripture, uniting concepts and doctrines and principles and promises that we see in God's word, laying a straight course of bricks.

Remember rightly dividing the word of truth means line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept. Even quoting that verse is kind of laborious. Why do I have to repeat line upon line? Why do I have to repeat precept upon precept? The

very verse tells you, you've got to get past what might initially look like tedium.

It takes work just to get through that verse here a little there a little. I didn't get it all here. I got some of it here, but I had to go there to get the rest of it here a little there a little.

It's not all here and it's not all there. Sometimes I'm not all there, but this requires searching Proverbs chapter two, lifting up your voice, seeking, applying your heart, inclining your ear, all of these different increasing levels of work, of effort, of dedication, of commitment, of interest, of expression that I consider this valuable. If I value something, you think about people that so admire people that put in a garden out here in the country because it's work.

You've got to lay plastic down to kill the existing grass and weeds. You've got to turn that soil. You've got to put a lot of labor in to have a garden and you can't just wake up one day and say, you know, I'd really like to have a garden.

I think I'll go out there and just put in a garden. You have to be consistent over time. You've got to know the steps.

You've got to know when to do them. You've got to know how to do them. You've got to, it's helpful to take your dirt sample down to the county extension office, have them analyze it and tell you, is it acidic? Is it what kind of fertilizer will work best? What are you planning to grow in here? And the people at the college or at the extension office, they will tell you, they will help you.

They love to give you the wisdom and the knowledge to have a successful garden or a successful pasture. If you're wanting to run cattle, what should you plant? Lespedeza, bluestem, alfalfa? Do you want to just grow hay? Do you want to, you know, you want alfalfa or bluestem or what kind of hay do you want? What kind of soil do you have? What hay will do best? How can you minimize the weeds and maximize the edible stuff and so on? And so it takes knowledge, but it also takes an investment over time. You have to know when to do what, how to do what.

I'll never forget my dad seeding the pasture that's here in front of our home. There is still a box spring in the corner of that field that 40 something years ago, he dragged across this field to break up the clods after having plowed it, break up the clods with that box spring so that when he seeded it and eventually had a guy come and sprig it, he used both seed and sprigs. And there is still wonderful grass out here to this day.

We've had to spend some years mowing the weeds down so that the sun could get it and the grass could come back. It's a process. It takes time and it has to be a goal that is high enough on your priority list and reflecting a value that this is worth doing.

It is the right thing to do as a steward of this patch of ground. And it is going to confer

benefits down the road. I will have homegrown organic vegetables.

I know exactly if there was any insecticide applied. I know exactly whether or not they have had food coloring injected into them and red dye number seven and the rest of it. So this is a value.

Well, this hope in verse 12 that has to be dragged along. Where does our hope come from? And we're talking now in the spiritual realm. We know that all of this is language of accommodation using physical ideas and material conditions that people are familiar with in the ancient world.

The one who plants his seed plants it in hope. Remember Paul using this example? There's one who plants and one who waters and we plant in hope. We cultivate in hope.

We water in hope. We are expectant for a harvest. But the hope itself doesn't come about by work.

I'm going to work at being hopeful. No, I'm going to work at being good at agriculture. And my expectancy is in the quality of the seed and in the fact that that ground has been properly prepared.

And my hope comes from preparation. My hope comes from confidence and belief in the truth that God's word will give me spiritual power and will produce in me the fruit of the spirit in the hands of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit by himself is not going to give me that fruit.

It's the word and the spirit that provide love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and so on. But I don't have to work at hope. This is like working at loving someone or working at being mature.

You have to take a more knowing approach. This is like praying for joy or praying for spiritual strength. You don't get spiritual strength as an answer to prayer.

You don't get joy as an answer to prayer. Those things come by a known and revealed means in the word of God. So prayer is not the means.

And working is not the of having hope. And if you are dragging your hope, I will not let you go until you bless me, Jacob says to the man he wrestles with all night long. That's not the means of obtaining a blessing.

And he instead gets a new name. Jacob doesn't walk away from that wrestling match with more sheep and more oxen and more children and more land and more possession. What does he walk away with? A limp.

Jacob walks away from that encounter with a new name and a limp. He wrestled with God and men. And he is going to prevail, but not in the way that he thinks.

His prevailing is going to come by faith and patience. By faith and patience, what happens? Those are the conditions under which we inherit the promise, right? Those who by faith and patience inherit the promises. We do not gain hope by dragging it physically into presence.

And dragged around hope, drawn out and lifted by hand, all that's going to do is weaken your heart. Because the hope itself and the fulfillment of that hope do not come by effort. For by grace, are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God. I can't drag salvation out of the water and give it to myself. Our deliverance in time and in eternity depends entirely on the grace and the faithfulness and fulfillment of God's promises.

And my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and Jesus' righteousness. Words to the great hymn. I dare not trust the sweetest frame.

That's something I build out of scantlings and nails and so on. I dare not trust the sweetest frame. I wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand. I can't effort myself into hope. Hope that is a result of my work and effort is just going to weaken my heart.

This makes the heart sick. The word for sick means it draws it down. This word is translated a number of different ways.

It is used for pain and soreness. This is in the hyphial. It's a hyphial participle.

Hyphial is the causative and so this is something that is going to be caused in the heart. If I am working trying to create an expectation, if I work hard enough, good things are going to come. God will bless me if I work hard enough.

God will bless me if I travail hard enough. If I pull this thing out by my own efforts, it's going to result in blessing. This word chalah is translated grief, to grieve, to be sore, to be in pain.

You can see where it comes to mean infirmity or illness or sickness. Sorrow or being sorry, it's going to make the heart sorry. It will weaken the heart.

You have the word lev and trying to create hope by effort just will make your heart sick. It will weaken you. It doesn't strengthen you.

Paul McCartney wrote a song in the closing days of the Beatles. Boy, you got to carry that weight. Carry that weight a long time.

He couldn't finish the song so he made it a part of a medley along with the end and some other bits and pieces they just kind of mashed together to finish their album. But

carrying that weight, that doesn't strengthen the heart. You think, well, wouldn't it work? No.

Remember the triad of Christian virtues and Paul is writing about it and he says God is not unrighteous to forget these three virtues. Do you remember what part of the human component is associated with them? God is not unrighteous to forget what? Your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope. It doesn't say your work of hope or your labor of hope.

Hope doesn't come that way. We sometimes have to work at love. It is difficult to be sacrificial to self and beneficial to others.

It's hard. It goes against our grain. We're not instinctively programmed to be self-sacrificial.

We're programmed to survive, to look out for number one, to take care of ourselves. That's human programming. That's the energy of the flesh.

That's the carnal mind is, well, let me make sure I'm okay and then I'll look around for somebody else. Work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope. Work is not associated with hope.

And if you're working at hope, you're just going to weaken your heart. You're going to be heart sick. But when desire comes, and this is a different word from hope, the word for desire, this is actually translated lust.

Depending on the context, this can be in a bad sense. This is a craving. This is a very strong, compelling wish or desire.

You could legitimately translate this when that for which you really, really are desiring, you desire it like people desire physical intimacy. You desire it like a hungry man desires a meal. It's a craving.

It is used in coveting contexts. I must have that. You think about the sons of David and Tamar and her half-brother is sick because he can't have her.

And so he feigns to be sick and his, you know, the whole Absalom thing that results from that. This, I just can't function if I don't have this thing. It's debilitating me.

I'm dysfunctional. I'm unfunctional if I don't have this. Well, when that desire comes, it is a tree of life.

What does this possibly mean? Just a wish fulfilled. I really, really want a boat. And when it comes now, it's a tree of life.

What can this possibly mean? What are our three rules of Bible interpretation? They all

start with C. It was, what were we talking about, Elizabeth, where a guy had three principles and they all started with W and we didn't agree with his premise. And I thought, you know, he doesn't know that WWW is 666 in Hebrew. He was talking about revelation.

And he said that revelation was written so that people would work and witness and something else. But he used three W's. Yeah, work, worship and witness, I think.

And he said, it's the three W's of revelation. And Elizabeth and I looked at each other and thought, do you know the Hebrew alphabet at all? Anyway. So what does this mean? Well, it is a tree of life.

What is the tree of life in scripture in general and this book in particular? Well, we have tree of life as a phrase in the Bible about 10 times, one for each of your digits on your hands begins, of course, in Genesis chapter two out of the ground, the Lord made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. God made it grow. This is before the fall.

God did not give Adam and Eve a cruise of oil and a barrel of flour. Did he? God made the tree grow and from the tree without work, without preparation, without grinding, without threshing, without harvesting, without planting, without any of the work involved in later human life, you walk up to the tree and it's as easy as picking it and taking a bite. It doesn't get any easier unless God arranged for there to be intravenous feed in Eden.

God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And this is an either or choice.

So long as you partake of the tree of life and avoid the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are in the Edenic paradise. Once you choose to disobey and eat of the tree, whereof I told you, God says, do not eat of it. They are expelled from the garden.

Why? Genesis three 24, God drove out the man and placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden and a flaming sword, which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life, not to guard the way back into the garden, not all of the other trees that are good for food. The reason Adam and Eve are expelled and forbidden to return is because of one fact. That is the location of the tree of life.

That's why they can't stay in Eden. If God, why didn't God just uproot that tree and say, OK, stay here, but you don't get the tree of life anymore. And the day you eat thereof, you will surely die without access to the tree of life.

This results 900 odd years later in death for Adam and Eve. Death results from no more access to the tree of life. It is life and death, life and death.

Keep that in your mind because this is coming up in our context. Take a look at verse 14. The law of the wise is a fountain of life.

To turn one away from the snares of death, we are moving into the realm of spiritual truth, life and death, not just physical life and death, relational life and death, functional life and death, spiritual life and death. So hope that you're dragging by your own efforts will make your heart sick because you can never accomplish the fulfillment of that hope. Hope is something that God does.

If we are patient by faith and patience, we inherit the promises. The promises fulfill our hope, hope of the resurrection, hope of eternal life, hope of unity with the Lord Jesus, hope of dwelling in the place that he has gone to prepare, hope of reuniting with our loved ones, hope of work and service in the future, hope of being qualified to be given the overcomer blessings, the white stone, the new name, the morning star, walking with the Lord in white, sitting with him on his throne, being in the temple with a name written, the name of God and the name of the new Jerusalem. All of these wonderful blessings, that's our hope.

We can't fulfill a single one of those and no amount of work can obtain them. We work at faith. We work at love and the fulfillment of our hope comes from God.

That's God's part is to fulfill hope. And we place our faith in him, our confidence. We are obedient.

You can think of the work of faith. We labor under the sun by faith, believing that God will vindicate our choices and our priorities. We love sacrificially, knowing that God is not unrighteous to forget that that's what we're doing.

And we are patient and that hope will be fulfilled by God. Hope dragged along, hope by means of labor, makes the heart weak, sick. But when the fervent desire comes, it is a life.

The first mention of the tree of life, as I said, is Genesis chapter two. And the cutting off of access to that tree is in Genesis chapter three. And God emphasizes this by recording his words and then recording his actions.

So in Genesis 322, the Lord God said, the sun has become like one out from us. And in my view, this is a reference to Satan, to the former Lucifer, son of darkness, shining one son of darkness. He used to shine, reflecting God's glory.

He became lifted up in his heart. And by the content that we've seen in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, he corrupted his wisdom. He corrupted it.

He tarnished it. He started trying to use it for his own gain and his own purpose. He tried to drag the fulfillment of his hopes out by his own efforts.

I will, I will, I will five times. That's, that's, we wouldn't say human effort, that's angelic effort. But by his own effort, he wants to fulfill his own hopes.

I will be like God. I will raise my throne above the stars of God or my fellow angels. So he has become like one out from us to no good and evil.

Satan made that choice. He is now knowledgeable in ways that he should not be. There are things that we do not need to know and don't want to know and should not know.

And God hides information from us for our own benefit. We were talking about this Patty and I earlier today. There are things we don't need to know.

The Lord Jesus doesn't even need to know the day and hour of his own return. And God does not reveal it to the Lord Jesus. Only the Father knows.

If Jesus needed to know, if it was beneficial and important for him to know, God would tell him. But it is important that he not know. It was important to undiminished fellowship with God to not know sin and evil and the depths of depravity to which free will creatures can sink.

And God did not create the unfallen angels, all of the angels prior to the fall of Lucifer. God did not give them intrinsic knowledge of evil. That is a realm of which they were entirely and completely ignorant, as were Adam and Eve, until they disobeyed.

Now we have this awful knowledge. It is not God's will that we ever have to know that. As a very crude analogy, if you have children and you know someone, as many of us do, that has lost a child, you know, one of the worst griefs in life is to outlive your child.

Those of us who are happily married and have not lost our spouse, I hope to never know what that grief is like. It would be wonderful if no one knew that grief. If children were not tragically lost, if spouses did not tragically pre-decease one another.

If there were not the ugliness and the harshness that comes through war and greed and self-interest in the world. Starving children. Wouldn't it be great if that was an unknown concept? Nobody had ever heard of it, thought of it, couldn't imagine how it would ever come about.

And we could focus on positive things and not begin to develop a fear or an obsession or a debility that comes from this knowledge. That God never really designed us to have and forbade us from acquiring. But in some cases, people push and push because I want to know.

I want to know. Tell me. Tell me.

You know, you get a story from the military. Well, your husband, your father, your brother, your son died heroically in combat. Let that be sufficient for you.

And there are people who press and want to know the details. And well, did he suffer? And if you knew the true circumstances of somebody being blown in half and lingering for hours with no hope of recovery and bleeding slowly to death and in screaming agony, is this really a knowledge that your loved ones need? It's true. Is it helpful? Is it beneficial? Does it in any way provide closure, relief, comfort? No, it does not.

And there are people who will lie through their teeth to prevent you from having knowledge that you should not have and don't need. Those who are aware and know are sure you don't need to know this. And I am not going to tell you.

There are good, compelling reasons for us not to know. The moment of our death, the manner of our death, and many other things. The time of the return of the Lord Jesus.

We're not supposed to know. And that's a good thing. God in heaven is much wiser than me.

And there's all kinds of information that he withholds. And I thank him for that. I thank God for things that I am ignorant of.

I don't want to know what those things are like. I don't want to have to go through that particular shadowy valley. Satan made a decision.

Eve and then Adam made a conscious decision and entered into a kind of knowledge. And what did that do? It cut off the tree of life. There was a desire.

Remember what it says about Eve? She looked upon the fruit and it was desirable to make one wise. That's a bad kind of wisdom. She doesn't factor in God's wisdom.

And so, when that desire was fulfilled, it had the exact opposite effect, didn't it? It's desirable to make me wise. I eat it. Instead of being a tree of life, it expels me and cuts me off from the tree of life.

Because it is not a proper desire. Why did we start the evening talking about goals and values and priorities? We have to analyze our desires in that light. Do I have godly, biblical, Holy Spirit-enabled and empowered values and goals and priorities? Is this thing that I crave and that I want a good thing or not? Is it good according to God's measure? If Eve had asked herself that question, well, I hear this snake talking and it's sure impressive and it's a great sales job.

But what would God have me do? Maybe I ought to ask Adam what should we do instead of partaking and then presenting him with a fait accompli and he's going to go along to get along. We need to ask ourselves that tree of life question. And this sentence doesn't have a verb.

Do you notice the italics in the second line of verse 12? The word when is not there.

Scratch it out. The word it is, those words, not there.

Leave them out and what do you get? You're dragging along a hope and it's weakening your heart. But the desire comes. Tree of life.

What is this saying in reality? You can simplify it like they've done in this translation. Be careful what you wish for. Measure and filter and have some discipline about desires because what's on the line? The tree of life.

Some desires when they are fulfilled, I desire to be pleasing in God's sight. I desire to be an overcomer and I'm going to follow rigorously what I know from the word of God on how to overcome. This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.

I'm going to work at being faithful. I'm not going to work at fulfilling a desire. I'm not going to work at dragging a hope along.

Because what's on line? What's on the line? And this is no accident. This word for desire is often translated lust or covet. Be careful that if that desire is fulfilled, think about the tree of life.

Is this going to open access to the tree of life like an overcomer? Remember one of the overcomer promises, I will give to him to eat. This is a revelation chapter two, verse seven. He who has an ear, let him hear.

Pay attention to what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Full reversal of the effects of the fall to him who overcomes.

So what's your desire? You're going to drag it along in a way that makes your heart weak. Remember, when a desire comes, ultimately, it's the tree of life that's on the line. Are you going to lose it or are you going to gain it? This doesn't say either way.

It says, coveting lustful desire fulfilled. Tree of life. What are you thinking? Is this the path to the tree of life? Is indulging this desire, satisfying this urge, fulfilling this desire? Pushing this, whatever it is, out of my soul? Tree of life.

Am I getting closer or am I getting further? Am I gaining access or am I being cut off by the angel with the flaming sword? I need to think about my desires, goals, values, priorities. It takes time to sit and evaluate them, to take a hard, harsh look at how I'm living. Quickest way to tell what those three things are is, well, where's my time going? Is it entertainment? Is it stimulation? Is it self-gratification? Am I so earthly minded I'm no heavenly good? Am I so heavenly minded that I'm no earthly good? Do I have balance? Let your moderation be known to all.

The Lord is looking on. The Lord is at hand. We have to think our way through this life.

You are what you think. I've seen a great meme or trope or something, I don't know what it is, where they take that thinker statue, you know, I think therefore I am, and you've got the thinker sitting there with his chin on his knuckles and he's thinking, but they've modified it and now he's got a smartphone in his hand and he's staring at that phone. That is not thinking.

You can get grist to think about, but how do we spend our time? You can be distracted. You can be deflected. You know, the art of pickpocket is misdirection.

You bump someone, you distract someone, you call someone's attention to a thing, and in that moment when their attention is diverted, the wallet or the purse disappears. It is distraction, diversion. What do they always say when they're going to go do something important in a movie? Well, we need a distraction.

We need a diversion. We need to get their attention focused elsewhere. Let's blow something up.

Let's shoot a gun. Let's throw a trash can. Let's throw an empty shell casing across the room and get them to look over there so that we can do what we need to do.

This is the devil's ploy. And we've got to focus. We've got to concentrate.

We've got to have situational awareness that the devil is roaming the earth like a roaring lion seeking someone he can distract and devour. I don't want to be that person. I was talking to someone yesterday about situational awareness.

If you're going to keep a weapon for self-defense, you can't just say, well, I don't have to worry about burglars. I've got a gun in the drawer. I've got a I've got a snubby in my purse.

No worries. Are you kidding me? What is your line of fire? When you miss, which you will, where does that bullet go? You're going to shatter windows and potentially endanger your neighbors. You're going to put holes in your car trying to frighten off a prowler.

Are you going to shoot your own dog? Are you going to create some kind of damage? Where does that bullet go when it leaves the picture you saw of me shooting on New Year's Eve? If you look closely, I am very carefully aiming into a very thick tree trunk because every bullet that goes up comes down somewhere. I don't fire into the air like these dingbats over in the Middle East. All these guys, you know, happily firing off like it's a celebration.

Every single one of those bullets is coming down in civilization. Think, think, plan ahead. Where am I going to keep this gun? How am I going to get to it if I hear a prowler? Am I going to hide behind a doorframe and steady myself so I've got a better chance of missing with less distance? Or am I just going to walk out there and start popping off

rounds? You need training.

You need discipline. I told this lady, as much of an enthusiast as I am of firearms. I recommend non-lethal.

Get yourself a loud home alarm. Get yourself some pepper spray. Don't think having a gun somewhere in the house, you are more of a threat to yourself and others.

More people are wounded and killed cleaning their weapons than are killed thwarting a home invasion. If you're not trained and you're not ready, you've got no business messing with firearms. Get something non-lethal.

Get an air pistol. Get something that makes a racket. Get a siren.

Get some blue and red flashing lights that'll go off when your burglar alarm goes off and they'll think the cops are outside and they will flee. Get a big dog. Something non-lethal.

But these conclusions. This lady said, you know, I've never thought about that. And I said, not only that, you live in a brick home.

Do you know that if you shoot at your front door because somebody's coming in, you're going to hit that brick wall. Those bullets will ricochet. And do you see your neighbor's two houses right over here? There's tricycles and bicycles out here.

There are children in those homes. Do you realize that shooting one bullet, you're far more likely to terrify, if not wound or kill, one of your neighbors? Because you're just going to miss. If you don't train, if you don't go to the range, if you don't learn how to hold a sight picture, if you don't learn how to control your heartbeat, if you don't learn how to suppress your adrenaline, you are a massive danger with a lethal weapon.

You also have to think about PTSD. I killed somebody for breaking and entering. Turns out he was an unarmed teenager looking for a flat screen that he could go hawk to get some drug money or whatever.

So I have now inflicted capital punishment for a misdemeanor crime. This person has lost their life at my hand because they rattled by doorknob and started coming in with ill intent. Now you can rationalize and say, well, I didn't know what they believe me.

There are a lot of people with PTSD who were in uniform shooting people with every legal authority, right and purpose. And it messes up their mind because their head's not right. And you've got to get your mind right.

If you're going to use a weapon, it's not casual. We are trained from the outset. I was trained from the time I was old enough to understand that if you're shooting a bullet, you are shooting to kill.

If it's an animal, if it's a person, the intent is shoot to kill. You aim center of mass because that's where the vitals are. I'm not shooting to scare.

I'm shooting to kill. Well, that's a pretty big decision to end someone's life because you're afraid. Well, transfer that to the spiritual realm.

We need to think we need to plan ahead, have a plan, implement the plan. I'm going to practice at the range every few months. I'm going to go out in the backyard here and crank off some rounds every few months.

I'm going to look at my house. I'm going to look at lines of sight. I'm going to look at potential points of entry and figure out what is my line of fire that will only endanger the perpetrator.

And not my neighbors or my family. Sheetrock does not stop bullets. Flimsy sighting does not stop bullets.

You got to think you got to plan ahead and you've got to practice that plan so that you can do it instinctively, reliably and productively. Something you will look back on and say that was the plan. It worked beautifully.

Well, how much more so our spiritual life? If you aim at nothing, you're going to hit it every time. If you don't have a plan, there's going to be chaos. And if we don't, if we're not intentional, this is one of the new words be intentional.

Well, that is a true principle. And it's here in Proverbs be intentional about spiritual life. Schedule time for reflection and meditation and review.

Schedule time for prayer. Evening, morning and at noon is a great biblical example. Look at the Lord Jesus.

We don't know a whole lot about his time of reflection and meditation, but we do know that he is said to be out by himself, praying time and time and time again. On the eve of the greatest day of his service and function and fulfillment of God's will, Jesus was praying for hours. Do we pray for hours? If not, why not goals, values, priorities? Are we just dragging a hope around and hoping for a fulfillment and on the line is the tree of life and we're going to lose it.

If we're partial in our remembrance of the word of God. If we can be deceived and deflected and if an illicit desire can be. At the top of the list.

Well, much more to say about this and see about this in Proverbs. It is so valuable is so essential. Oddly enough, Old Testament scripture for New Testament believers.

These principles are timeless. Every believer from Adam to the end of the Millennial Kingdom needs to know these truths and put them into practice. And that's why they're

in the center of the word of God.

But for tonight, we'll close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for not leaving us orphans as the Lord Jesus said. But your guidance, your exemplary instruction comes to us as our father through these wonderful words of life.

We thank you for them. We pray that we can be the faithful child who listens to them and heeds them and puts them into practice with the power of your Holy Spirit to illuminate us to refresh our minds to Convey our prayers in one direction and convey your words and guidance to us in the other. We can be overcomers.

We pray that this will be the case for us individually and as a group and we will be ready when the Lord Jesus comes for further service and function in the kingdoms that are to come. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.