

Proverbs 24-01-24b

We're ready to resume our study here in Proverbs chapter 13 and my goal in observing these structures is to point out how they are helpful for personal reflection and cogitation. We have to do that. Those who go to a high school class or a college class and just kind of listen during class and don't go home and study and reread the material and do the questions and invest time and effort in mastering the material will only have a very superficial acquaintance that doesn't pan out when you need it.

And it's one thing for us to see what the Word of God has to say in Bible class, but as James says, you can't just look in the mirror and then walk away and straightaway forget what you saw. We've got to discipline ourselves to take time and it doesn't take much time. And this is the beauty.

I used to wonder if the goal is to be a healthy believer and we get that way from intake of the Word of God and in the hands of the Holy Spirit, then it seems like the more Bible class, the better. And I would spend whole weekends just chain smoking, so to speak, one tape after another, just finish one, start another, filling pages in my notebooks and just binge listen to Bible classes. And I thought, you know, this is the way to grow.

And if it takes quote unquote five years to reach super grace, well, I'm going to do it in three. And what I came to realize, and this is the great thing, if you do overdo in Bible study, it's a self-correcting, you're in the place where you're going to get corrected and rebuked and instructed in righteousness. If you're going to overdo anything, overdoing your attention to the Word of God will eventually lead all of us to a place of balance.

But there is a real need to realize that the Word of God is alive and powerful, and a little bit of it goes a long way. I didn't initially realize this. I thought, well, you know, I should have half of my time in Bible class and then half of my time living life, and that way I'll have all of the strength I need to, you know, six hours of Bible class and six hours of life, I'll be able to do the life thing exactly right.

This is like nuclear fission material. A little bit of the Word of God goes a long way. And the reason I am emphasizing this is we tend to think, well, you know, I've been working my schedule now for a while and trying to carve out, you know, 30 minutes in the morning for devotions or trying to, you know, have a 45-minute Bible class and squeeze that in before I start my day or try to stay awake at the end of my day and listen to, you know, a Bible class a day or whatever, and we think, we end up not doing anything because that's too big a chunk to bite off.

Here's the wonderful thing about God's Word. You can start the day with just a few minutes. Grab a Bible before you do your morning ablutions or grab your notes or whatever, and just load something into the hopper.

Just put a stick in the stove. You've got the coals there. You've got spiritual life.

You've got the Holy Spirit. Just put a log on that fire. Grab anything.

This is practical application now. I encourage you, start tomorrow. When you wake up in the morning, anything you want, get a devotional book.

I've mentioned Streams in the Desert, and you've got Guideposts. You've got Our Daily Bread. You've got any number of wonderful devotional thoughts.

Dr. Criswell's got a daily devotional that comes at 6 a.m. every morning in your mailbox. You can get our little app, and it'll come up off of the app. I load those every day, so I get the chance to think about things that aren't in my regular track because it's a part of my other job.

But I don't care what it is. I don't care where it comes from as long as it is the Word of God. Get it somewhere.

When you start the day, do this tomorrow, and you will see the result. You will say, you know what? Sam was right. Start tomorrow.

When you wake up in the morning, grab something. Grab your notes. Grab your Bible.

Flip it open to a random page. Look for notes you've made in the past. Just grab your Bible and read something from anywhere.

And load that. Put that stick in the stove, as I say, and then go brush your teeth, get your clothes on, get the car warming up, whatever you're going to do. But have that in the hopper, and chew on it, and think about it, and say, if all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable, then what does this thought, this principle, this promise, this doctrine, this truth, this statute, this ordinance, this commandment, this proverb, this chunk that we looked at in Timothy, whatever it may be, how can I work that and make it go today? Let me look ahead.

Here's what's going on today. Look at my calendar. Look at my schedule.

Look at my responsibilities. Here's where I'll be and what I'm going to be doing, as far as I know. So how does this bear? If the Word of God is profitable in application, then this thing ought to be applicable somewhere.

Will I be talking to people? Will I be working with people? Will I be under the influence of people or in a position to influence them? Will I be taking in material from the world through the sluice gate of television or social media or whatever? How does this pertain? How does it apply? How can I make this go? A couple of minutes. You don't even have to take five minutes to load something up and then have it percolating, have it working, have it digesting. Give it to God the Holy Spirit and say, Lord, this truth that I have just

reviewed, that I've just taken on board here, help me weave this into the fabric of this day.

Now, if you start your day that way, stop halfway through. This is our evening and morning and at noon idea. Because you do this prayerfully, start with prayer and a promised principle or doctrine or truth or reviewed something from the word of God.

This is the fuel for your spiritual life. So get some fuel, a little bit, a couple of minutes at most. Don't say, well, gosh, if I don't hear an entire Bible class, just grab something, throw it in there, pray over it.

Now go and do and be, talk, work, think. When you get to lunchtime, stop. This is your at noon, evening and morning and at noon.

Stop and call it back to mind. Make this a discipline. What was that thing I looked at this morning? What was it? Has that come into play at all in this day or is it likely to for the rest of this day? And pray, Lord, help me to remember what I know.

It is this or maybe a connected truth. See, the thing is when you pull one of those out, it's got connections. It's like these structures in Proverbs.

When you grab one, you're pulling a lot of other stuff with it. It's a fabric and you're grabbing one little portion and pulling on it. You're going to get a lot of more fabric that comes with and the entirety of the power of God that comes into the life of the believer is going to be at your disposal just by grabbing the hem of the garment, the corner of the material.

Just grab that. But you can't just toss that off in the morning and forget about the rest of the day. So stop part way through and take stock.

What about this? Am I living in its light? Is it having an influence and an effect on my thoughts and my conversation and my actions? And pray. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud. And when I do, he will hear my voice.

God is really there. He is really listening and he is really pleased when any of us set the priority and establish the goal and embrace the value of living our lives to please him. So middle of the day, take stock, do an evaluation.

Doesn't have to be long, a couple of minutes, because the word of God is so alive and so powerful that those few minutes can absolutely transform hours of time. A little goes a long way. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

I can tell you a little bit of the word of God will transform life, thought, conversation, attitude, fruit of the spirit. A pinch is all it takes. It reminds me of Tabasco sauce.

I don't have a great tolerance for pain and spicy, hot pain. There's people that do these

peppers and things. I developed a tolerance years and years ago, but I've lost it.

And if you put more than two or three drops of Tabasco sauce in something, it's too hot for Sam. Well, a little goes a long way and a little of the word of God, it's there and it will have its effect because it is divine and we are human. So see how it goes in the afternoon.

Try to call it to mind as, as we go through. And then in the evening, at the end of the day, before we retire, take stock. Well, how did that day go? And yeah, you know, I got a thought in the morning, but I forgot to review it at noon and see how that day went.

And then anticipate sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Give us today our daily bread. Did I get that bread? Did I eat it? Did I operate in its power? What can I do tomorrow? What am I going to, I can, I can get a preview.

I can say, you know, this is what I'm going to look at for tomorrow. And I can go to bed with that on my mind. You got trouble sleeping, get your tomorrow's thought in your head tonight and start thinking about it.

And you'll wake up realizing that you fell asleep thinking about that portion of the I will both lay me down in peace and sleep for thou Lord only make us dwell in security. I have the security that spiritual life defines my physical life and experience. Spiritual power can overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, but it takes discipline.

One of the fruits of the spirit is self-control. So I need to be sure the Holy spirit is there to give me what I need to make this happen. And if it's not happening right away, I've got a problem in one of those two areas.

I'm either really not feeding the word of God into my soul, or I am not cultivating an environment where the Holy spirit can be at home and speak those words and that truth of Christ into my heart and into my soul and into my life. And am I regarding iniquity in my heart so that the Lord does not hear me evening and morning and at noon when I pray Practical, practical, practical. This will transform our lives.

It's I'm not telling you anything you don't already know, but this is what Proverbs is giving us is that wisdom that we can start the day with that. We can live the day by that. We can review the day in the light of and say, well, did I spend too much time talking with and associating with people or looking up and trying to spend time with somebody that isn't healthy because they're angry and that anger infects me.

They are violent and that violence infects me. They are self-indulgent and their self-indulgence is rubbing off on me. That's what these, remember the companionship verses that we saw in the, in the first session.

Am I a companion of gluttons? Self-indulgence. Am I a companion of those who capitalize

on the tendency of people to self-indulge? I'll, I'll leverage that. I'll take advantage of it.

I'll play them. I'll, I'll use their self-indulgence for my benefit. Don't be a companion of those people.

Positive associations, Elisha with Elijah, Ruth with Naomi and Naomi's not doing all that great at the time, but Naomi brings her to the place where Boaz is. Boaz is a picture of Christ. And even a weak believer, if you stick with the principle of fellowship and association can draw us closer to Christ, closer to our father in heaven.

So, but we can't just live an oblivious life. We can't hear about it and forget about it. We can't see it and then forget what we saw.

So do this tomorrow. You can do the evening prayer and the evening thought tonight, and then start tomorrow. Just remember evening and morning and at noon.

Psalms 55, 17. It's a watchword seeking God. Is that my top priority? My highest goal, my most important value is that I live a life that pleases God, that vindicates his grace in saving me and justifies the blood of Jesus Christ being shed for me.

Is there something more important than God the father looking at me and saying, well done, thou good and faithful servant. You are my child and you've been faithful in a few things. I'm going to make you ruler over many things.

These are things that Jesus said, whether it's God, the father, or the Lord Jesus is saying them, I want them to be said. And I want them to be said about me and whatever it takes. So can I spend a couple of minutes in the morning grabbing this divine power, putting that uranium into the reactor so that its power can be harvested? Can I take a couple of minutes halfway through the day? This is the creator God in heaven.

This is the father who sent the Lord Jesus Christ to save me and redeem me, who gave me the privilege of being a part of the body of Christ and having this bright hope and wonderful eternal future. Can I not take a few minutes out of my quote unquote busy day, evening and morning and at noon when we recognize that this very simple thing is all God needs, just that foot in the door, just a few minutes and a couple of thoughts from his word. And the Holy spirit will take that and start crashing down the gates of hell.

There is so much power in the word. There is so much power in the spirit. And we don't have to spend days in Bible class, but the time that we do spend in Bible class, we've got to take that stuff home and then avail ourselves of it.

And it takes a conscious effort. This is where there is work in our salvation. Work out your own deliverance, your own salvation in fear and trembling.

If I don't do this, I ought to be fearful. And I should be trembling because I have been

given so much. And from those to whom much is given, much is expected.

Much is required. Who in the history of the human race from Adam till now has had more full access to the word of God, greater explanation, greater manuscript evidence and parsing and theological evaluation and interpretation and so on. Who has had more? The reason we have so much now is these times are tough.

There is more distraction. There is more energy being expended by the enemy against us. And we have been given more ammunition and more weaponry because the principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age are on the rampage and they are after you.

And they are after me in not a small way. Why do you think we have been given so much? Because we need it. And what a tragedy to be lulled by the music of the world into a false sense of security.

And we are floating down the stream away from the river of life and into the swamps and into the darkness. And the little canoe is rocking so gently and we do not seem to be having any problems. And every moment, every minute, we are getting further and further from where we ought to be with the full armor of God, quenching the fiery darts of the wicked one, getting a hold of the dark passions within us that need to be subdued.

That song I learned as a child, it's long perished. I haven't heard it in years. But yield not to temptation.

Yielding is sin. Each victory will help you, some other to win. Strive manfully onward, back when manfully was a good thing for anybody, courageously, with purpose, with energy, with dedication.

Strive manfully onward. Dark passions subdue. Look ever to Jesus.

He will carry you through. Ask the Savior to help you. Comfort, strengthen, and keep you.

He is willing to aid you. He will carry you through. How does He do that? We're looking at it right here.

That is the value of these little bite-sized chunks of wisdom. Within these structures, we can understand them. We can make sense of them.

We can see their interconnections. But they're nice little pieces of spiritual jerky, if you will, that we can take with us on the journey. Take a quick bite, and you've got energy for hours.

That's what Proverbs is for. That's what David and Solomon collected these inspired observations into a book to accomplish, is to give Old Testament people and new the

Word of God, which is one half of the power of God. In the Old Testament, you requested the Spirit, and He came, and you had the same energy package that we have by default today.

So now in verse 20, picking up, and all of this that I have just covered in the last 20 minutes is explaining this single word, to walk. To walk. This is our walk.

This is our life. In the New Testament Greek, it's peripateo. Pateo is like little feet pattering around.

Pateo. And peri is around. So peripateo, to walk.

Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. Walk in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. To walk with the wise is wise.

To walk with the wise is wise, i.e., to associate myself, to pursue wisdom and those who possess it and live by it. Wise people, if they are wise, and they are walking in wisdom, I want to walk with them. They are applying God's wisdom.

I want to apply God's wisdom. So I am going to cultivate those healthy relationships the way Ruth did, the way Elisha did, and the way Job's friends did. Job had friends.

He was wise. Turns out that association benefits them ultimately. He's going to offer sacrifices and help reconcile them to God when they are astray.

To walk with the wise is wise. Part of wisdom is to maintain association, not just to visit with or to sit with, but to walk with, to live life with, to maintain an ongoing relationship with wise people is wise. And that's what wise people do.

Wise people find each other and maintain and cultivate those associations. But the companion of fools, and this word is related to the word for shepherd. It is someone who accompanies.

If you accompany the sheep, the sheep didn't choose you. You chose the sheep. And if you're a companion of gluttons, you chose to be with them.

They're busy eating food. You chose to join them. If you're a companion of harlots, they didn't necessarily come find you.

You went to the house of ill repute and found them. They spoke a word to you on the corner, as we saw earlier in Proverbs, and you were ready to go down the dark streets to their little house of pleasure. And to choose to be a companion might be the best way to translate this, to choose to associate.

Sometimes we're a companion and it's not necessarily by choice, but this is manifestly with our personal choice and view. You have the option. And the companion of fools will

be destroyed.

Evil pursues sinners, but to the righteous, good shall be repaid. This is such an interesting verse, this next verse, because who is producing the action of the verb here? God is obviously in the background, but he's not specifically mentioned. He's not explicitly mentioned.

So evil pursues sinners. And so you almost have evil personified. And this is linking back to verse 20, because when you see fools will be destroyed, the word for destroyed is virtually the same.

It's from the same root as evil pursuing sinners. These are all raw words. These are all words for evil.

So it is out of your hands. There's a form of thought that's around today that says, well, people kind of make their own evil. We don't need redemption.

It's not substitutionary atonement on the cross and so on, because we make our own misery. We make our own evil, not according to verses like this. Evil from the outside will hunt you down and find you if you're a sinner.

There is evil out there unconnected to you or your sin that is going to find you and overcome you. It will pursue you. And we don't just simply make our own misery.

There is evil on the outside. There is separate evil that will come in and find sinners in the same way that God's blessing and grace will find those who are faithful. There is a darkness that will find and envelop those who perpetrate sin.

And it may not even be connected to that sin or to the people with whom you commit the sin or anything else, but it is birds of a feather flocking together. And if you engage in sin, willfully so, knowingly so, there is evil that is going to see you on the radar and come and settle like a flock of crows on you, because like is attracted to like. And it's a sobering thought.

I don't just have to worry about the consequences of my own sinful decisions and my willful disobedience. Evil from out of nowhere will come and settle on me. Evil pursues sinners.

But to the righteous, good shall be repaid. What's the subject of repaid? Good is the direct object. Good is what's going to be paid.

Who is the payer? Who ensures that this good finds and benefits the righteous? Well, the unspoken subject here is God himself. I would rather be the target of God's goodness than evil chasing after me to land on me. It's just kind of an easy choice.

Verse 22, a good man. And once again, these verses are stair-stepping together. They're

chain-linking together.

You have the evil in verse 20 connecting to evil in verse 21. Now you have good in verse 21 connecting to good in verse 22. And the meaning of the word changes contextually.

One is moral evil in verse 21, and it's calamity-type evil in verse 20. So the same word means calamitous circumstances. You know, this is an evil day because my house burned down.

And then it's more of a moral evil in verse 21. Well, then you have good, which is going to be repaid. And you get the idea this is a substance.

This is a recompense in verse 21. But now good, this is the *tov*, and *man* is in italics, the good. And now instead of good circumstance or good inheritance or good blessing, this is the good himself.

And so what he receives from God defines him. We choose sin, and evil associates itself with us. We choose good, and we become the good.

God sends good to the righteous, and we are now part and parcel of that *tov*, of that goodness. Because there is power in what God gives us, and it transforms us and makes us something different. When you're a sinner and evil comes upon you, you're still a sinner.

You're just now covered in more evil. When we choose the good and God sends us good, we become part of that. We are transformed, and we become a part of that good, and that God can even associate us with others, and they will be blessed by association with us.

So a good man leaves an inheritance to his children. This good is so good. The good, and it ties right back to verse 21, God is behind this goodness.

And this is a supernatural goodness that lasts and transcends the generations and descends to children and grandchildren, becomes an inheritance. But the wealth of sinners, the same sinners that evil descended on in verse 21, whatever wealth they have, whatever actual beneficial stuff they have, that is also going to transfer to the righteous. God can work things together for good.

Joseph told his brothers, you meant it for evil. God meant it for good. And the brothers are senior to Joseph.

They have more flocks and herds and families, and Joseph is a young boy and unmarried. But everything that used to belong to his brothers eventually, Joseph is the one who is supplying his brothers and their families and their children and grandchildren and so on. And that idea is intrinsic here.

The wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. Ultimately, anything that's beneficial and worth having, the righteous are going to end up with it, even though the sinners tried to accumulate it. Then in verse 23, and this is really the center of this chiasm, and I'll explain this.

This is kind of an unbalanced chiasm. But here we've come to the center. Much food is in the fallow ground of the poor, and for lack of justice, there is waste.

We're going to hold this in abeyance for now, because it needs some explanation. But notice as we come back out of the chiasm, we would expect verse 24 to link to verse 22, right? What did we have in verse 22? Children's children and possession, both moral and material that will be passed along. Now look at verse 24.

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. So this inheritance of good is available and is perpetuated by instruction and training and discipline. This is the structure.

This is the family unit coherence that enables the inheritance to go to children and children's children. Remember, God manifests himself to a thousand generations of righteous, but after three generations, the wicked will be cut off, and they don't follow this guidance to not spare the rod, to inculcate via discipline and structure. And the rod is not just a rod for beating.

It is also a rod for guiding. This is sort of a metaphor. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me in Psalm 23.

This is not just a rod for the back of fools that is in Proverbs elsewhere, but this is a rod of guidance. These people were agricultural. They understand that sometimes you've got to really thump a sheep that insists on going a bad way, but most of the time you can tap them and they'll correct.

You just give them a little tap and, okay, don't go that way. There's thorns. There's a ditch.

There's a cliff. Tap, tap, and they'll move this way. They respond to a light touch.

They don't have to be beaten with many stripes. He who spares his rod hates his son. You think you're sparing discipline because you love them? That's hate, to deprive them of the opportunity to learn submission, subordination, and self-control.

You may pretend to love, and you may think you love, and you may be doing this in the name of love, but that's hate. In practice and in policy, it is detrimental. You are harming.

You are depriving. You are starving a child of something it needs. And you are never

going to be able to leave an inheritance to someone who has not learned discipline and self-control.

That inheritance will be frittered away like the prodigal. He who spares his rod hates his son. He who loves him disciplines him promptly, effectively, for a useful and beneficial purpose.

It's do it and do it now. This is the problem with our justice system. Our speedy trial is a joke.

And the prompt redress of crime left our system in this nation decades, if not centuries ago. It's just pathetic. It's speedy trial.

There's nothing speedy. And in the interest of benefiting people, we end up hating them. And we've destroyed our society with crime.

And where our crime is rampant, our prisons are full. Our streets are overflowing with crime and criminals. Our borders are swarming with criminals who are coming over to commit more crime.

It's just pathetic. And this is a biblical principle. We can't do anything about the nation as individuals, but we can do something about our own house.

And we've seen that in the exhortations for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy chapter three. You've got to rule well your own house. And what does it mean to rule well? Well, it's right here.

Prompt and fair discipline. If you love your child, you will discipline them. And discipline them promptly.

And if you love them, you're not going to be abusive. You're not going to be beating people senseless in wrath and lack of self-control. This is all in the section that talks about wisdom.

It opens with wisdom. To walk with the wise is wise. Don't be a companion of fools.

And the wise person is going to know how to discipline and discipline well and discipline usefully. Then verse 25, the righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, but the stomach of the wicked shall be in want. This is a parallel to verse 21.

Evil pursues sinners. And when the wicked tries to fill his stomach, he's only going to find evil. He's going to have a bellyache.

He's going to have wind and not useful, digestible substance. The righteous eats to the satisfying of the soul. Good is repaid to the righteous in the parallel.

And you see how these inform each other and help us understand that these are not abstractions. They're not sort of weird, little trite sayings. What does it mean that the righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul? Well, because he's righteous, God is providing good, good teaching, good insight, good memory, good answers to his prayers when he asks God for wisdom and for help in applying the word of God.

And that satisfies the soul. And we realize that we're successfully putting one foot in front of the other spiritually. And we're handling the stresses and the tests that come our way.

And we're able to not only fend for ourselves, but hopefully be a blessing to those around us. Be an example, be someone who speaks the truth in love, someone who is patient and kind and has those first Corinthians 13 aspects of love. God gives us the good and we eat that good to the satisfying and the strengthening of our own soul.

It is the opposite for those who don't get out of sin. Evil comes. And when you try to have a full stomach, all you do is belch wind.

You're empty. You haven't got it. And you'll be in want you lack.

And you know, you're in lack. You know, you don't have strength, but you don't have the way out because we haven't followed the way well. And then the outside of the bracket here and these two verses, it takes two verses here.

It reminds me they used to talk about when I was taking some instruction in art that we love symmetry and beauty is in things that are symmetrical, but almost always they're not exactly symmetrical. If you look at a beautiful person's face in the mirror and you say, oh, I didn't realize that that right jaw bulges a little bit more than the left. And, you know, that one eye is a little bit higher.

I'm so used to looking at them and they're just beautiful. It's my favorite face in the world. But when I see it in the mirror, I realize that it's not perfectly symmetrical.

And part of the beauty is in the slight asymmetry that makes it unique and special and one of a kind. And this proverb is, is, has, we've come far enough in the structure and God in his wisdom and in the inspired structure of this book says, are you ready now? I'm going to start playing with the symmetry a little bit because just about the time you're going to be an Israelite and think that it's formulaic and it's a wooden repetition. I'm going to see if you're sensitive enough to, to benefit from a little bit of asymmetry.

And from this part forward in Proverbs, God is going to start playing with this symmetry in a very interesting way. We're going to see in the next structural unit, it's not a chiasm, it's a double V. It's a set of three, a center element. And then the bottom set of three is in the same order as the top set.

And he says, just when you think you've got this symmetry figured out, you're going to start being mechanical and you're going to forget to think and to analyze and to process. So I'm going to give you some variation. This is where it starts.

First of all, this chiasm is longer and it's got a two verse center. And now if there was any doubt that we're going to start looking at two verses instead of one, the final element of this chiasm is two verses balancing the very pithy and very concentrated verse 20. So verse 20 is balanced by chapter 14, verses one and two.

So you will notice that the idea of a companion and accompanying someone and choosing to be with someone, choosing voluntarily to walk with someone as a companion. Well, now you have the woman, a wise woman, a companion of the wise. That's to be wise.

Wisdom is choosing to be a companion to the wise. Well, in a marriage, you hope that you are choosing to walk with someone who is wise. So here, balancing verse 20 in 14, one, the wise woman builds her house.

And that's wise to support the house, to construct the house, to preserve and maintain, clean the house, build it, build it up. What was the concomitant in verse 20? Someone who is a companion of fools will be destroyed. What happens to the foolish woman? She pulls her house down with her hands.

Instead of using her hands to build it up, she pulls it down to destroy it. And notice the concept of companionship and walking with someone. Nobody walks closer than a man and a woman who are united, right? So is this a companionship of the wise or a companionship of the foolish? If it's a foolish woman, she's going to destroy her house.

She'll pull it down with her own hands. But if she's a wise woman, that this wise companionship is going to be edifying and building up. And that idea of walking is not exhausted.

So we need another verse. So we go to verse 2. He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord. Here's where you get the formal explicit declaration that God is behind this.

God ensures that the righteous receive good and can pass good along by association to future generations. He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is perverse in his ways despises the Lord. And this is the vertical post that puts all of this preceding structure into perspective.

God is behind us. This is God's wisdom and God's will. Well, there's a lot to chew on there, but we'll be ready next time to begin in chapter 14, verse 3, where we have a new structural unit.

And this is going to be the first of our new, it's not a chiasm, I call it a V-ism. It's a double

V with the central idea in the middle. You can watch for that and look at it, but we've got plenty to chew on.

Remember, tomorrow morning, tomorrow at noon, tomorrow evening, watch how God will bless our attention to his word and to his spirit. A little bit goes a long way. Father, thank you for your provision for us, your faithfulness.

When we are faithless, you remain faithful. We are so blessed to be in Christ and to have the opportunities to learn and grow. We pray that these things will, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, renew us, restore us, and thoroughly equip us for every good work.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.