



**HILL COUNTRY**  
BIBLE CHURCH | AUSTIN

# THE **BIG** PICTURE



CURRENT SERIES

## Poetical

Tim Hawks, Lead Pastor

May 12, 2013

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Good morning and Happy Mother's Day. Mother's Day has got to be one of the best holidays of the year because everybody can participate because everybody has a mother, right? No matter who you are you have a mother. Now it doesn't necessarily always mean you understand your mother. Sometimes you have to

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seek outside wisdom to completely grasp the magnitude of the role of what it means to be a mother and who a mother is, and so some people went out and started interviewing kids, the greatest source of understanding motherhood, and here's some of the questions they asked. One of the questions was "How did God make mothers?" One girl said, "Magic plus superpowers and a lot of stirring." (congregation laughs) One boy said, "God made my mom just like he made me, he just used bigger parts." (congregation laughs) In answer to the question "What ingredients are mother's made of," one little girl said "God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean." (congregation laughs) Hmmm that's probably true. In answer to the question "Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom," one little boy said "God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me." (congregation laughs) I guess he was one of those children that only a mother could love, right?

Moms do really have some supernatural powers, some super powers, and you can see that expressed in a number of different ways. Former First Lady Laura Bush tells the story about the time that she and the then President George W. Bush went to visit his parents. And so they get to the house, they spend the night. The next morning the President of the United States, George W. Bush gets up, he goes down and gets his cup of coffee at 6:00 a.m., sits down on the couch with his father, George Sr. and his mother Barbara. He pulls out his coffee cup and begins to drink it and immediately puts his feet up on the coffee table to which Barbara screams at him, "Get your feet off my table." (congregation laughs) His dad coming to his defense says, "Barbara, he's the President of the United States." And Barbara promptly responds, "I don't care, get your feet off my table." Laura comments on that by saying, "Even moms can tell the President of the United States what to do." (congregation laughs)

So when God created woman and gave her the special capacity to be able to be the bearers of life, Adam acknowledged that calling his wife Eve, the Hebrew word which means "living thing." He called her the mother of all living things. I don't know what you believe or where you're coming from, but I can tell you this. There is no CEO pay in the world worthy of this incredible gift of being able to bring a child, the hope of the world, into the world and nurture that child. That is an incredible gift. Women, you are highly esteemed in the eyes of God. He's given special favor to you, and I don't know where you are in life today, but I hope just in the very nature of being a woman you feel affirmed by God because he deeply loves you and has vested the history of the world in your hands. Happy Mother's Day. (congregation claps)



Today we are dealing with the fifth lesson in our Big Picture study and we're looking at the Poetical books. So as we've been in the study together, kind of walking our way through the whole Bible from Genesis all the way to Revelation we come to a section of scripture in the Old Testament that is special, sacred scripture. In order to contextualize this there are three kinds of books in the Old Testament.

## THE THREE KINDS OF BOOKS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

HISTORICAL	POETICAL	PROPHETICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Genesis</li><li>• Exodus</li><li>• Leviticus</li><li>• Numbers</li><li>• Deuteronomy</li><li>• Joshua</li><li>• Judges</li><li>• Ruth</li><li>• 1 Samuel</li><li>• 2 Samuel</li><li>• 1 Kings</li><li>• 2 Kings</li><li>• 1 Chronicles</li><li>• 2 Chronicles</li><li>• Ezra</li><li>• Nehemiah</li><li>• Esther</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job</li><li>• Psalm</li><li>• Proverbs</li><li>• Ecclesiastes</li><li>• Song of Solomon</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isaiah</li><li>• Jeremiah</li><li>• Lamentations</li><li>• Ezekiel</li><li>• Daniel</li><li>• Hosea</li><li>• Joel</li><li>• Amos</li><li>• Obadiah</li><li>• Jonah</li><li>• Micah</li><li>• Nahum</li><li>• Habakkuk</li><li>• Zephaniah</li><li>• Haggai</li><li>• Zechariah</li><li>• Malachi</li></ul>

The first kind of book we've been talking about, those are the historical books and you'll remember those. Those are the ones that tell the storyline. And so we started off in Genesis and we found out that God creates Adam and Eve, puts them in the garden, but they sin plunging the world into sin and so God in his steps to redeem the world picks a man named Abraham and says, "I'm going to bless the whole world through your family." So he picks Abraham and the Jewish nation is born out of that. Moses comes on the scene and delivers them from the bondage of Pharaoh, and in the delivery God demonstrates himself powerful through miraculous signs. He gives them the law, and then Joshua takes the nation into the land of Canaan where they now have a land. So at the end of the book of Joshua we have a people that are supposed to represent God, we have God's presence with them, they have God's Word, the law, and now they have a place to live. And you'd think at that point in time that they would set about their missionary work of taking the gospel to the nations, but that's not what they do.

They immediately begin to dive into culture. They get involved with the gods of the Pagan world and in the process of that they begin to fall away, and so God raises up judges. And these judges are people who come on the scene who lead the people back into worship of God, who lead them into battle, they are victorious over their enemies, and as soon as the judge dies they go right back to it.

The next step is that they begin to ask for a king. They say, "If we're like all the other nations, we had a king to fight our battles for us, everything would be wonderful." And so reluctantly God gives them a king and says, "They're not rejecting you Samuel, the prophet, they're rejecting me their king. They want a human to lead them and tell them what to do instead of listening directly to me. And then we have the process of the kingdom starting with first of all Saul, a very weak, poor king, and then David the greatest king of all, and then Solomon. At the end of Solomon's reign the kingdom divides into the Northern and Southern Kingdom.

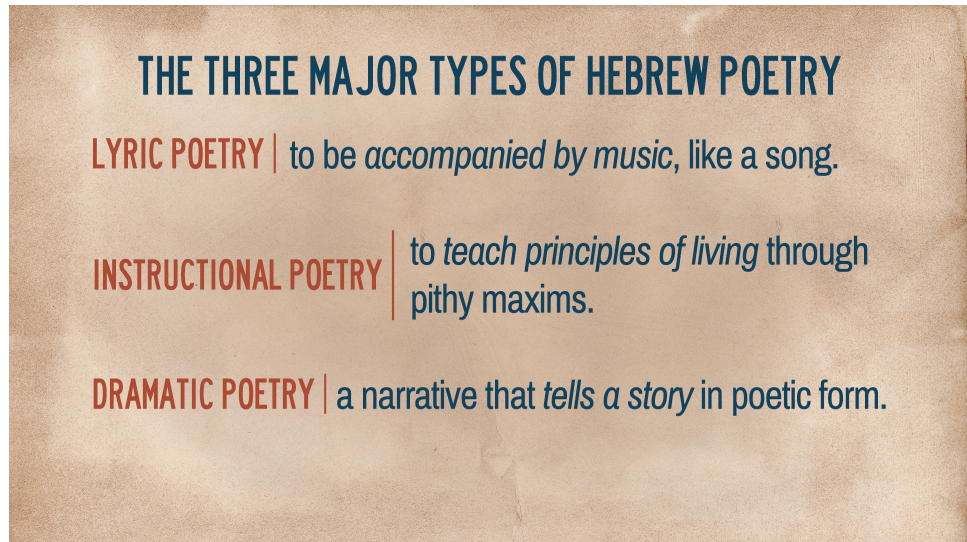
The Northern Kingdom has a series of 20 bad kings, and they're carried into captivity in 722BC. The Southern Kingdom has 8 good and 12 bad, and they last a little longer to 586BC and they're carried into Babylonian captivity. And so that's laying out the history and we'll talk a little bit more about the exile and what happened after the exile in our next session.

But right in the middle of the section of the kings with first and second Samuel, first and second Kings, first and second Chronicles we have something good that comes out of all of that, and that is the poetical books. Job, Psalm,

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, and that's what we're going to be talking about today.

So as we talk about the poetical books and how they fit in, the three major types of Hebrew poetry that you'll see within these books as you begin to read and study these

books you're going to come across three types of poetry. The first is "lyrical poetry." That is poetry that is accompanied by music, it's sung like a song. Secondly you're going to discover



instructional poetry. Instructional poetry is poetry that's given to teach or to communicate truth, often in kind of pithy sayings or memorable sayings. And the final kind is dramatic poetry. That's actually a narrative story, that actually tells a story. So the book of Job would be narrative poetry that walks through a story.

Now with that in mind you have to ask and answer the question, "Why poetry?" Why does God include five major books that are poetical in nature, and here's the storyline. So as you're working through your Big Picture book, the storyline for this section is **Since the Hebrew poets wanted mental pictures to pop into the reader's mind** - so when they heard the truth they got a mental picture that popped into their mind - **a prime consideration was creating visual images, which they accomplished with vivid "figures of speech."** They accomplished this with vivid figures of speech.

So let me show you what I'm talking about. Most everybody has heard, and maybe some of you have actually memorized the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. That would be an example of a lyrical poem, a poem that was set to music, and that poem paints a picture that goes further than what the actual propositional truth would be. And so we know this Psalm, right?

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The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down by green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the path of righteousness for his namesake. And even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you are with me. Your rod, your shepherd's rod and your staff, your shepherd's staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me even in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love, loyal love, or mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.



Now here's what he could have said. God loves you and he's with you all the time no matter what happens, on good days and bad days. He's always with you and you can count on him to take you into his presence when you die. That's essentially the theology of the sum and every word of that is basically true, but when you see the picture "the Lord is like a shepherd" which means I am like sheep, I'm dependent, I'm needy, I need help. And he will care for me like a shepherd does, making sure that I have all that I need all of my life, all the way until the very end. Good and bad he's going to be there through all of it, protecting and guiding. When you get that mental picture in your mind it stays with you. You never forget it. Oh that's what God is like. It hits at the emotional center and reaching that emotional center makes it more memorable and fills out details of emotion that you may miss along the way in the process.

And so if you are an aspiring musician, maybe an aspiring artist, maybe you're a young person and you're thinking, "Well like how do I break into the big scene. I want to be a rock star someday. How do I do that? Where would I start?" Some of you went and got headshots made or you're using your social media to promote the stuff that you're putting out there so far. Let me give you some advice from someone who has actually made a living doing this. The man's name is Bono, the front man for the group U2. Listen to what Bono says about the Psalms and about music. He writes:

*"At the age of 12, I was a fan of David. He felt familiar, like a pop star could feel familiar. The words of the Psalms were as poetic as they were religious and he was a star. Before David could fulfill the prophecy and become the king of Israel he had to take quite a beating. He was forced*

*into exile and ended up in a cave in some no-name border town facing the collapse of his ego and abandonment by God. But this is where the soap opera got interesting. This is where David was said to have composed his first Psalm - a Blues. That's what a lot of the Psalms feel like to me, the Blues. A man shouting to God 'My God, My God why has thou forsaken me, why are thou so far from helping me'"*

Psalm 22. He goes on to write:

*"Psalms and hymns were my first taste of inspirational music. They prepared me for the honesty of John Lennon, the baroque language of Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, the open throat of Al Green and Stevie Wonder. When I hear these singers I am reconnected to a part of me I have no explanation for, my soul I guess. Words and music did for me what solid, even rigorous religious argument could never do. They introduced me to God, not belief in God, more an experiential sense of God over art, literature, girls, my mates. The way into my spirit was a combination of words and music, and as a result, the book of Psalms always felt open to me and lead me to the poetry of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, the book of John. My religion could not be fictional, but it had to transcend facts. It could be mystical, but not mythical.*

In other words what he's saying is it needed to be both true and it needed to touch my soul. And Bono has gone on to incorporate major portions of the Psalms into music that he singing to adoring fans, many of whom do not know the inspiration that's behind the truth of what they're hearing. There is a power in music. There's a power in rhyme. There's a power in figurative language that captures more than the propositional truth and drives it home in a memorable way.

And so we have these five incredible books included in our story of the Bible. So what we're going to do today is we're going to run through all five of those very quickly. And so I'll just tell you, we're going to mow through five books of the Bible. At times I feel like there's so much here that I'm going to miss, but I'll give you a big overview, and hopefully this will inspire you to get into these books and take them deeper. And so we're going to start off with the book of Job. We're going to start off with the book of Job.

The book of Job is a book that answers one of the most fundamental questions of the human experience. And by the way, why don't you turn there -- Job Chapter 1. We're going to be looking at a few verses in Job Chapter 1. Job wrestles with and answers the question of suffering and the sovereignty of God. In other words, the question is, is God paying attention to the human plight, the goods and the bads, and it really wrestles and answers the



question "Is it possible to be doing everything right and still suffer? Or do I have to assume that if things are going bad for me it must be because I've done something wrong?" And here's how this plays out.

Oftentimes what we think is that if I can just do the right things, say the right words, get to the right places on time then everything should work out and I shouldn't have any pain in my life. And the book of Job answers this question. Now this is the oldest book in the Bible, written about the time of Abraham -- maybe a little earlier than Abraham, and so that question is a question that predates not only us, but even the first chapters of Genesis. And so this is a question of human suffering throughout history. So what happens in the book? It starts off in Chapter 1, God's having a conversation with Satan, and God seems to be bragging a little bit. We pick up in verse 8:

*"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.'"*

And then the question.

*"Does Job fear God for nothing?' Satan replied. 'Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that this flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.'"*



Do you see what he's saying? The only reason why Job worships you is because everything is going well. Take away what's going well and he will curse you to his face. Anybody here ever been guilty of that? I have. Think about it. When things don't go right in your life what do you do? Who do you blame? "God you don't love me, you don't care for me, you're not paying attention to me. God what's the problem, what are you doing here?" And so Satan thinks this is going to work, and so God said "Okay, you can do whatever you want to. You can mess with all of his stuff, just don't touch him." And so Satan basically comes in and wipes out all of his herds, all of his business, kills off his family and in the last verse of this chapter it says:

*"In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."*

So the last time you lost your job did you say to God, "God what in the world. I've been tithing, I've been going to church, and I've been trying to love my neighbor, and what in the world! What are you doing here God - I lost my job." Or your health went south or something went wrong in your life, somehow "God, it's your fault." In Job's case he doesn't blame God.

And so Satan says, "Well that's easy because he's still got his health. Take his health away from him and we'll see what happens." And so God says, "Okay you can take his health away from him." And God afflicts him with terrible sores, boils, the guy's in constant pain. His wife shows up and says it would be better to be dead than to be you. I wonder if that's why she looks so ugly in the picture - I don't know. (congregation laughs)



But anyway she's kind of grumpy about the whole thing, and so she says that and then his three friends show up and his three friends basically argue with him. They say, "Job listen. If you were doing right then you would be blessed, so you must be

doing wrong. So what's your sin? You need to confess it because this is your

fault.” And in the process of that Job keeps saying, “Listen, my conscience is clean before God. I can’t confess to something I haven’t done.” And really the whole book is this dialogue that goes back and forth and back and forth between the two of them to where finally Job begins to question God. Not in a disrespectful way, but he begins to say, “God if you would talk to me, if you would face me, if you would come, then maybe I could get some clarity on this.”

And in the last few chapters of the book of Job God shows up. And God takes Job on a whirlwind tour of the mysteries of the universe, showing him the intricacies of creation and his divine plan and how humans work, and all of these things. And at the end of it Job goes “Whoa God, you are way above me, you are mysterious beyond measure. I can’t even begin to question you. There is so much about the world, about the future, about mankind, about history that I don’t even know. Why am I questioning you?” And Job begins to learn that in the midst of pain and suffering we sometimes just need to trust that a good God is there. A good God is in control. A good God has a plan, and we don’t want to push away from him, we want to lean into him during that time.

Some of the most beautiful verses in all of the Old Testament are recorded in Chapter 19, and I want you to see those. Chapter 19 verses 25 through 27. In the midst of his frustration with his friends calling him out, Job speaks this very prophetic phrase. Look what he says:

*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

Job says, “Listen, I have confidence that someday I’m going to stand face-to-face with God in the flesh on this planet,” and he’s calling him my Redeemer. He’s going to redeem all of the pain. He’s going to redeem all of the struggle. “I am confident of this, I yearn for this. This is going to happen.” And this was predicted before Abraham was called. In other words Job is saying, “Jesus Christ, the Son of God is coming.” He didn’t know his name. He didn’t know who he was, but he knew the promise that God was going to come in the flesh. In the midst of your suffering keep in mind that God is not absent from the world of pain. Christianity in the Bible, that’s the only religion that teaches that God himself actually became one of us, came to earth, lived among us, suffered and experienced pain with us in order to redeem our pain. And the oldest book in the Bible reminds us it’s not what you can earn that makes your life good. It’s what you can trust in, and that’s in the sovereign hand of a good God. That’s the book of Job.

## PSALMS: PRAISE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP



The book of Psalms, one of the favorites of people down through the years is a massive work. Written by David and Solomon and some of the other temple leaders and some individuals, this book has included in it 150 Psalms that were written. And the Psalms describe the human experience in relationship to the magnitude of who God is. And the Psalmists would actually put on paper their personal experience or encounter with God. Let me give you an example of that. Psalm 3 is a great example of that. Psalm 3 starts out with a Psalm of David, so David's the writer, when he fled from his son Absalom. So when Absalom revolts, when the kingdom is in jeopardy, when David is fleeing the palace for his life, he's thinking about this experience in its relation to God, and afterwards he's going to write down what was in his heart, what was in his mind, what was going on at the time. Look what it says:

*"O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me 'God will not deliver him.'"*

So as he's fleeing from his palace he's listening to people saying, "Oh look, David's done this time. He's going to lose, God's not going to help him, he's done." And he says in verse 3:

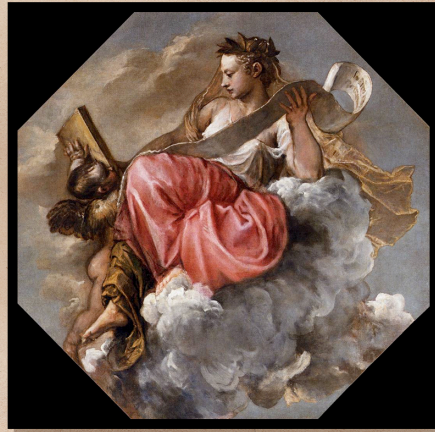
*"But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill."*

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And he goes on to describe how God answered him. Now here's how this works. In temple worship when you brought your offering, whether it's a fellowship offering, whether it's a fulfillment of a vow, whether it's a guilt offering that you're bringing for sin. When you brought your offering, you would on that occasion give credit or praise to God, and these Psalms were used. And so it was not uncommon for David or one of the leaders to come in, offer a sacrifice to God, and stand up in front of all the people gathered and read a song. Sometimes they would actually get the temple choirs to put them to music beforehand, and the temple choir would sing these songs as an act of worship. In other words, the worship of the nation of Israel was very personal. People would talk about what God had done on their behalf. They would write it down. It would be said or sung.

We have a tendency not to do that, right? We have a tendency to talk about everything that we did, and so "Hey I graduated from high school, graduated from college. Wow, look what I got, look what I did. Got a new job, going to pay a lot more. Wow look what you did. Got me a girlfriend finally - it's about time. Oh yeah, look what you did. I'm going on this vacation or look what I just bought - I got a new motorcycle. Man it can fly." We praise us and we talk about those things, but the idea that we as individuals would ever take the time to gather family, friends, or our small group together and say, "Listen, God's done something in my life that's phenomenal, and I just want to share it with you. In fact, I wrote a poem." I mean people chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle. "You did, wow! You're one of those weird people." No, in the Old Testament it was considered sin if God did something on your behalf and you did not publicly praise him. It was considered keeping the blessing and the glory of God to yourself instead of allowing it to be something shared by other people. The Psalms are a collection of people sharing their lowest points and their highest points of the songs that the nation sang together. You know how we have songs that we sing as a nation, and our songs are like America the Beautiful and God Bless America. So many of these Psalms are songs that they sang about their nation together. As a church we sing songs together. We sing things like "Holy, Holy, Holy", "Amazing Grace", "The Solid Rock." Well they had songs that they sang together that grew out of somebody's experience. You may be very, very poor at putting your thoughts into words, but God is very worthy even of your feeble attempt. I would challenge you. Put some of those into a song, put them into words, put them into a poem, or just write out the prose. Make sure that we are following the example of this incredible book. And you say, "Well I don't know how to do that." Spend time in the Psalms and you'll learn how to do it from people who have done it before. It's been passed down through history. So that's the book of Psalms.

## PROVERBS: WISDOM, SKILL FOR LIVING



The next one is the book of Proverbs, and Proverbs is a book about wisdom. In fact, the book of Proverbs is all about answering this question: “When I come to the basic decisions of life, I’ve got to make a decision between two options: where do I go to get the insight or the wisdom to know which of these decisions is the best.” And the book of Proverbs answers that question. Now the question is “Where would I go to get that information, to get the wisdom.” Would you go to your peers? Would you go to your profs? Would you go to the popular opinion or the politically correct of the day? Would you go to your feelings? Would you go to your experience? Where do you go to get this information?

Well Proverbs sets us up with an understanding of who we have to choose from. Look at verse 7 of Proverbs 1. In Proverbs 1:7 it says:

*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Now you could translate that, that the fear of the Lord is the starting place. That’s where true knowledge starts. It starts with an understanding that there is someone above me that’s bigger than me, that’s smarter than me, that’s wiser than me. Someone who put the world together, someone who actually wrote the code for the operating system of how life works, and that one above me, bigger than me, I ought to be fearful to try to make decisions to step out of his direction, because there’s another approach to life besides the wise one. There’s the foolish one, and there’s all kinds of negative things that happen when we

choose a path that's broken, when we make decisions based on things that are not reliable. And he says "fools despise wisdom and instruction." In other words fools say that there will not be anybody that tells me what to do. I will chart my own course, I will go on my own path. There is nobody up there - and there are a lot of fools that believe in God. They just don't listen to him. Just don't listen to him. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. It says:

*"Fools despise wisdom and discipline."*

Let me tell you, there is a lot of things that are good for you that are not popular, that don't feel good, but ultimately they will save your life and help you, they will bless you, they will build a heritage. And it requires a level of discipline to stay with the wisdom of God. And so the Proverbs kind of lay that out. In fact they just go through one case after another, situation after another. So you want to know how to find friends? It's in the Proverbs. You want to understand how to deal with money, how God says money works? It's in the Proverbs. You want to understand how relationships work? How human interaction works? You want to understand how to make good decisions? You want to understand how economics work, how government works. These things are laid out over and over and over and over again in the Proverbs. That's why I took all my kids through the Proverbs as they were growing up. We used to meet at McDonald's and do one a week. We'd sit down there, we'd open up the book of Proverbs, we'd eat a McMuffin and sit down there together, and we'd just go through the Proverbs and talk about "What does God say in here and how does that apply to your life." Incredible book. Let me show you how wise this book is.

If you'll turn over to Chapter 26 for just a couple of examples. I love this book, but I don't have time to go through it. I just want you to see just a couple of examples of how clearly they are laid out in poetic form. So let's start with verse 17 of Chapter 26.

*"Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passerby who meddles in a quarrel not his own."*

Next time you want to get a reaction, go up and grab your neighbor's Doberman by both ears and squeeze real hard. What happens? He turns on you. So here's the poetry, here's the image. You grab this dog by the ears, he's going to turn on you, right? You walk into a quarrel that's not your own and you grab ahold of both of these people and guess what happens? They turn on you, right? We do not need to bring in some kind of a human expert in relationships to know it's right here in the book. That's just one of them. Look at the next one.

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*"Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"*

Go out in your back yard in the middle of the Texas summer, light up your arrows, start shooting them out there and see what happens. Some of them are going to start a fire, right? When you mess with your neighbor and then when things go wrong, you say, "Ah I didn't really mean it." Yeah. Watch how well that goes.

Here's another one, verse 20.

*"Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down."*

Huh. "I got so much drama in my life. I don't understand it. Like everybody's talking about stuff and it seems like this person talks about - and then they talk to that person and pretty soon it comes back around to me, and then I talk to them and I try to get that cleared up and then they tell so and so." Wow. Why doesn't everybody stop the drama? Well stop running your mouth. Like the gossip is what causes all of this. Duh?

Let's do 22.

*"The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down into a man's inmost parts."*

So gossip and a big juicy steak. Or if that's not working for you a large slab of turtle cheesecake. (congregation laughs) Whatever it is. I mean how many times have you made a commitment to yourself, "I'm not going to listen to gossip. People come up and they start that stuff with me, I'm just going to bow out of it." And then all of a sudden someone comes up and says, "Hey have you heard about Joe?" and all of a sudden you salivate at the mouth kind of like you would if they put a big ol' steak in front of you. And before it's all over your listening to it, and it says they go down into the innermost parts. In other words, that steak is going to slide down your esophagus, I mean your throat and it's going to hit your stomach. When it hits there it stays there and that's what gossip does. Because when you see that person next that you heard the story about, your opinion or idea of that person is now shaped by what you heard no matter even if you think it's not very true. There's something about it that gets down in you. So stop it. Stop it. Go on a diet for crying out loud. Get yourself a Bible verse and quote it or just do what we did when we were kids. Somebody comes up and says, "Hey let me tell you about Joe." (Tim demonstrates by putting his hands over both of his ears and then with his tongue makes a noise like blah, blah, blah.) (congregation laughs) Whatever it

takes, cause it just ruins you. Now that's just a little - like we just spent what two minutes, two minutes. And if we just apply this just think how much better your life would be. That's just a few verses. This thing is loaded with wisdom. Loaded with wisdom.

## ECCLESIASTES: FUTILITY OF TEMPORAL PURSUITS



The next book is Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is an incredible book because it would fit right in today with most of our modern T.V. shows because it's about money, sex, and power. That's what it's about. It's about money, sex, and power. Solomon, the wisest person that ever lived thought that he could beat the system and get the world to give him satisfaction, and so he went hard after it. He built a financial empire parallel to none. He built an incredible house for himself, building cities. He built a standing army. He defeated everybody that he fought against in his early days. This guy was a diplomat, he was a rock star and he wrote over 1,000 songs. He delved into - well delved into is a little light. He went head first into the whole sex thing. Seven hundred wives and 300 concubines, and he said "I'm going to have it all and see where it's going to get me." And at the end of the book he said, "It got me nothing, miserable. I worked really hard and all I amassed were things I was going to have to leave behind, and I actually was depressed because of my success." And we've come after him one after another and said, "Oh yeah. You were depressed because of your success, but I'm going to beat the system." And the book of Ecclesiastes ends with this powerful statement to young people. Remember your creator when you are young. Pay attention to God early. Don't do the stupid thing that



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- well right now when I'm young I'm going to have fun and I'm going to have a blast. I'm going to do whatever I want to, and then one of these days I'm going to wake up and I'm going to get my life right with God. Don't do that Solomon says. You will hate yourself for doing that. And some of you will never rebound. Some of you will never come back and you will have lived a wasted life.

You say, "Well I'm an adult, I've already done that. What do I do now?" Well today is the closest you're going to be to being young that you've ever been in your life. This is the last chance, so if you're 72 you're as close to being a kid as you'll ever be. So just start today, okay? Just get it going on today.



The last book, Song of Solomon. Oohh la la. Verse 2, Chapter 1:

*"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth - for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume pouring out. No wonder the maidens love you!"*

Oh wait a minute - this is the woman talking. She's talking about his perfume. So I guess guys you can wear perfume, huh? Please don't. (congregation laughs). In Solomon's day and before the creation of Old Spice, most men stunk. They just plain smelled badly. To find one that actually smelled good was hard to come by, so this guy is a good kisser and he smells good. This is a catch, and she says in verse 4:

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*"Take me away with you - let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers."*

We are talking about at least a Rated M for Mature book about sexual love and the joy and beauty of the sexual relationship that God created for two people to experience in marriage. Solomon wrote this book early on when he was in love. He wrote it about a woman that he married. He went on to violate that, thinking "Well if this one is that good, just think how many more will make it even better." And he found out that God was right. When God says, "I'm going to give a man and a woman a special love for each other, and then I'm going to give them a gift in that love called sex, that's for a committed lifetime relationship." And when that is the case, love, romance, passion, can experience their fullness in the presence and the joy of God. And we have decided to do it another way. And because of that we have divorce and pain and alimony and broken homes and latch-key kids and all kinds of other things that we've added into our world. I'm not saying that as a condemning statement. I'm just reminding us. This is God's wisdom. God intends for us to experience his love and beauty.

And so as we think about these five books here's my challenge to you. My challenge to you today is that you would come to a firm understanding that the God of creation loves you and is interested in every aspect of your life. He's interested in your relationships. He's interested in your sex life. He's interested in your business. He's interested when things are going really good and when things are going really bad. He's vested in you, he's vested in you. He sent his Son Jesus Christ to purchase you back, to buy you back to Him. He cares about every detail of your life. So my question is do you know this God? Do you understand? He wants to connect with you at every level. Spend some time in these books. You're going to discover the God of the universe knows you and wants to walk with you every day.

Let's bow our heads for prayer. Father in heaven it is just phenomenal to just kind of work through these books and see that you are really involved -- you're not absent, you're present. Take us into this experience Father that we may understand the fullness, the mystery of the supernatural connecting with our ordinary lives. And may you move us into the fullness that you intend in Jesus Christ. For we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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