

1 Samuel 1:1-31:31

[Date]

Let's turn to the book of 1 Samuel. We are moving right along through our projected project of coming through each book of the Bible, kind of giving you an understanding or a viewpoint of the Word of God so that you can put it all together and get enough of the framework to really begin to see how the Bible lays itself out.

Last week, we studied and outlined the little book of Ruth. You saw how, in the midst of Israel's sin and apostasy, which is the book of Judges, we find a little book that shows you how to build a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I need to point these things out to you as we see them. I have told you many, many times how every New Testament principle, everything that is laid out in the New Testament, you will find a story or a picture of it in the Old Testament that illustrates it.

The reason why God does this is because God knows that the way we learn things is by illustration. You remember something a lot more when you see it happen than you do just by reading it happen. When you come through the New Testament, you find principles that are in place for your life and my life that Paul writes to the church. Those principles are very exact, and they really set the course of our lives, and we can follow those principles right down the line. But you are going to find that in the Old Testament, God has given you examples of that, and those examples are stories that illustrate those principles.

The book of Ruth, remember, we talked about how it was written during the time of the book of Judges. Here in the book of Judges, we see the nation of Israel going into apostasy in a great way. It is a time that shows the depravity of man and the collapse of man when he rejects the Bible and the Word of God. Yet, in the middle of that, you find a little book, Ruth, that shows you and I that we can build a working relationship with the Lord in the midst of that apostasy.

If there is any story that illustrates the great truth taught in the book of Revelation 3:20, it is the book of Ruth. You need to be able to mark these in time and see them. Revelation 3:20 is probably one of the greatest verses in the Bible that shows you that in the midst of the Laodicean church period, as I have said many, many times, you can build the right kind of relationship with God.

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

That verse clearly shows you that in the midst of apostasy, you can have a relationship with God. That is what the book of Ruth illustrates. You are going to find that every book in the Bible will have a storyline, and many times those books of the Bible will break down as individual storylines to show you great New Testament principles. We do not have time to lay them all out as we come through, but certainly I want to be able to point out some of them to you and show you how you find them, so that once you learn the process, you can find them for yourself.

I. The Historical Context of 1 Samuel

Today, we are going to look at the book of 1 Samuel. I want to take a few moments and put everything in perspective. One of the problems when you start laying out the Bible is you get so many lines going, so many things running through here that you have to keep in perspective. So, every once in a while, we will stop for a moment and come back and put things in the proper order so you can figure out where you are and keep the consistency going.

The Bible, as you already know, is a great historical book. Not only does it take care of your spiritual problems, not only does it show you what God is doing or the theme of the Bible, the second coming of Christ, but it also shows you accurately down through history exactly what God is doing. That is the line we want to really protect here as we come through. One of my goals is for you to be able to, when we are finished, look at the Bible and see how every book fits into the line of historical accuracy.

We have come to a major point now: 1 Samuel. We saw in Genesis where we have the creation, and God goes through a series of men after He calls out Abraham, and He brings out men. At the end of the book of Genesis, they are down in Egypt. We see God taking them down in Egypt for 400 and some years so He can establish them as a strong nation through the affliction and all the persecution that goes on. So, the book of Genesis shows us how God calls out a people unto Himself.

The book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, all books that we have looked at, all cover the same 40-year period. Each of them deals with a different aspect of the nation of Israel, but nevertheless, they all deal with them coming out of Egypt in Exodus 12, and then the events that take place for the next 40 years as they wander because of their unbelief.

Then we come into the book of Joshua. In Joshua, we see them coming to the point where they cross over Jordan. We see the conquest of the land, and then in the last part of the book, we see the colonization of the land where the nation of Israel actually gets physically into the land and begins to claim what God gave to Abraham back there in Genesis 15. Even though they are a long way from where God wants them to be, they are now in the land.

Then we see a process begin to happen here that I have talked about many, many times: every time God does something in the Bible, the devil is going to do something to counteract that. So, we see the book of Judges. God puts them in the land, and then in the book of Judges, we see them going into apostasy. We see them departing from God, doing their own thing. We saw the book of Judges; there is no need to go back through that. Within that time frame of the book of Judges, we have the book of Ruth, which shows you that in the midst of apostasy, you can build a relationship with God.

II. 1 Samuel: A Transitional Book and the Four Books of the Kings

Now we come to 1 Samuel, and really we enter into a series of books: 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings. Commonly, all those books are in many places you will find, especially some of the older books, some of the older books written at the end of the Philadelphia Church Age or in the part of the Philadelphia Church Age, they will call these books "the four books of the Kings." Sometimes people are confused because it says 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings, and then you will find a reference to "the four books of the Kings," and you wonder what it is talking about. In the old days, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel were recognized for what they are, even though their names differ. They all represent the same period of time, and we are going to talk about that in just a little bit.

1 Samuel, one of the things you have got to remember about this book, is that it is a transitional book. There are a few key transitional books in the Bible that you have to mark as such. When you see them, you know you are at a crossroads in the Bible where God is changing direction. That certainly is the book of 1 Samuel. The book of 1 Samuel transitions you from the time of the Judges up to the Kings of Israel. It is where God now takes the kingdom and establishes it under a monarchy.

God's purest form of government is a theocracy, and that is the government that will be in place during the millennium and into eternity. A theocracy is when God is on the throne and God is king. But in 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings, we begin to see the beginning of that theocracy by what they call a monarchy. A monarchy is a literal king. We do not have a monarchy in America, but we have anarchy. England has a monarchy; they have a king and they have a queen. We have a democratic form of government that does not have a king or a queen.

The nation of Israel was set up in its beginning after a monarchy. That monarchy was the trial period for God to establish the nation of Israel by an earthly human line of kings, that in time, the greatest king the world has ever seen, the Lord Jesus Christ, would come from that kingly line and make this world into a theocracy. That was what God was establishing to do. 1 Samuel is the first book that introduces that line of monarchy.

You are going to find that Samuel is commonly called the 13th judge. There are some people that argue that Eli was, and he is. It does not make any difference. It is a transitional book that brings you through. We do not want to get hung up on things like that.

What we begin to see in the book of 1 Samuel is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Remember that in Genesis 15, God took Abraham out, showed him the stars of heaven, and said unto him, "Abraham, someday your seed is going to be like the stars of heaven." The Bible says that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. We see that at that point, God has given to him the kingdom of heaven, the literal visible kingdom on this earth. From that point, everything that transpires is bringing us to this point where God can give them a monarchy, which in time God can give them the theocracy that God wants to have.

These books start with Samuel, they move to Saul, and they move to David. I am talking about the four Kings books now. In 1 Samuel, we are going to see three men that are characterized: Samuel, Saul, and David, the two main characters being Samuel and Saul. David comes on in the

middle of the book and rises to power here at the end of the book. But basically, the book is built around those two guys, as we will see here in just a moment.

The book starts with Samuel, it runs through Saul, it then runs through David, then it runs through Solomon. We find with Solomon, the nation of Israel gets to the highest point in this monarchy that it ever gets. Solomon, here again, I keep telling you over and over again that when God moves to do something, the devil moves to counter it. When Solomon comes to the throne, the Bible says that he has all the wisdom of God. He has everything that God wants him to have. But the devil does his work, and the Bible says very clearly and plainly that Solomon's heart is turned from God, and he goes after other gods. At that, we begin to see the demise of the nation of Israel.

After Solomon, the kingdom gets split with Rehoboam and Jeroboam. From that point on, we follow through all the way through to the book of 2 Kings 25. By the time you go through 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings, at the end of 2 Kings 25, you find the end of the kingdom of heaven on this earth and the destruction of the nation of Israel under Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar. So, we find that those four books really give us that picture, and that picture covers the time of the kings. We will follow that through and see it. That is the historical layout. I wanted to bring you up to speed as far as that is concerned, and then you can have that in mind as we look at some of the great principles.

Let's go to the Lord this morning and ask Him to bless us now as we look into His word and try to find the great principles that will impact our lives.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Lord, we ask You this morning, Lord, that You open our hearts, show us and give us wisdom and insight into everything that is said and done today. We will give You the honor and glory. Thank You for those that are here today. May the word of God be true in our lives and impact us, Lord, and teach us and mold us and make us into Your image. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

III. The Underlying Theme: Obedience to God's Word

In the book of 1 Samuel, there are a number of great truths and great principles for us to look at. One of the things that we see is an underlying theme in the whole Bible, and that is, you find it in every book of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, that Israel's success or their failure is based on their obedience and their attitude toward the Word of God.

There is a reason why men do not like the Bible today. Men do not like the Bible today, and I am not talking about just unsaved people; I am talking about saved people. People do not like the Bible today because the Bible is a negative book. There is nothing positive in the Bible. You say, "Well, salvation is positive." Yes, but salvation is positive only after you look at the negative and you have to see yourself as a sinner. In other words, there is nothing positive in the Bible about man.

The reason why we hate the Bible and feel like we have to change the Bible today is because the Bible is such a negative book, and we want to live in such a positive society. In our society, we do not like differences. In our society, we do not like things that are not right and right in our own eyes. That is why we always put a positive spin on everything. That is why you are going to hear all the words that they use to describe our society will all be in a positive mode: affirmative action. You say things that always give a positive.

But the truth of the matter is that the Bible is the most negative book the world has ever seen because the Bible shows you man's true condition. The reason why men do not like the Bible is because they do not like to look at the way they really are. One of the things about every one of us, and it does not matter if you are saved or you are not saved, you have to really, the reason why you have to work and love the Bible is because the Bible in its basic form is totally contrary to where you and our nature are. You do not like to be told how rotten you are. I do not like to be told how rotten I am. We like positive things.

I am not saying you need to be told how rotten you are all the time, but you need to accept how rotten you are all the time so that when somebody tells you how nice you are, you really know they are lying to you because they want something from you, and you are really not that way. That is the truth of life. That is the reality of life. You need to understand that the reason why men hate the Bible is because the Bible paints the true picture of man. It paints the true picture of us, and you have to get past that before you can accept the Bible, love the Bible.

The Bible says, talking about the Word of God, in the book of Proverbs, "He that loveth the honeycomb," the Word of God, "he that loveth the honeycomb, even the bitter things become sweet." That tells me that for you to love the book, you have to get over some things, and you have to get over and accept the fact that you and I are not where God wants us to be, and very rarely are we ever. Our whole lives are built on trying to be everything that God wants us to be. That is why God gave us the Bible.

That is why in the Old Testament, especially in the book of 1 Samuel, you see this great truth over and over again that Israel's success and failure was simply based on their attitude toward God and His word. One of the things that just impacts us is simply this: things never change. Man's problems are always the same. The cause and effect of man's problems have not changed in 6,000 years of history.

We are given the impression that because we are more advanced, we are given the impression that because we have more things in our society, that we are more civilized. We are given the impression that because we are more educated, we have more knowledge and we have more things in our society that make society a better place to live, that there is a difference between what it was in the Old Testament and what it is today. That is simply not true. Man's basic problem has always been man's basic problem, and that does not change with time. The old sin nature of man, the old unregenerate spirit of man, and the old sin nature of a Christian will always be the same, and it may look like it changes.

One of the greatest lessons you can ever learn, and this is why the Bible is always so relevant, is how many times I have heard somebody say, "Well, the Bible is really not relevant today because

back then..." No, no, no, back then, that is just as relevant as it is today because man's old sin nature has not gotten any better. It is the same today as it was. That is why the great truth comes home when you restudy the Old Testament, that the principles of the Word of God, when we violate them, they have consequences, and the consequences are the same, no matter where you are at in history.

When you look at this and you understand, you will find that the nation of Israel failed because they failed to keep and follow and obey the principles of God. In your life, in my life, 4,000 years later, when we fail in our marriages, when we fail in our mothership, our fathership, when we fail with our family, when we fail in our own personal lives, when we have trouble, we have heartache, when we do dumb things that cause us the consequences of sin, it is simply because, and no other reason ever will it be other than the fact, we have violated biblical principles.

When you violate biblical principles, sometimes you can get away with it. Most of the times you cannot. Violating the biblical principles in the Bible are like the law of gravity: what goes up must come down, and everything that we do wrong, there is a consequence. Maybe some things we do are not as big a consequence as others, but when you compound them and you add a life of violated biblical principles of not doing what God wants you to do, it catches up with you after a while.

IV. Breakdown of 1 Samuel

The book of 1 Samuel takes place about 300 years after the book of Judges. The breakdown is really easy to follow. All these breakdowns I am giving you, you need to put all this information at the first page there in the beginning of your Bible, if you have a large margin Bible, so when you look at it, you have everything at your fingertips. Someday, most of you are going to be teaching somebody the Bible, and when you are teaching somebody the Bible, they are going to ask you questions about the Bible. When you go to that book, you want to, and this is the way it works for me. If you think I am smart enough to know everything about the Bible that I can answer the questions that you ask me on Thursday night or whenever, you are crazy. I cheated. I put all those answers in my Bible. When you ask me, I may know the books of the Bible a little bit, and I may know some things about them, but I do not know much more than I am giving you. But what I have done is I have cataloged in there that when I go to the book of 1 Samuel, when I open that first page, I have everything at my fingertips right there to take you anywhere and wear you out for the next 10 hours with information about the book of Samuel. Why? Because I have had people ask me, "Do you have a photographic memory?" No, I do not have a photographic memory. I am not a film. I do not even have flashbulb memory. I cannot remember anything. I lose my car keys 10 times a day. You are talking about I can go to the mall, and if I did not have a little button on my thing that makes my horn beep, I would never find my car. No, I do not. But I do have a book that has wide margins in it, and when you write down those things in there and then you spend time with the Word of God, then you learn how that thing lays itself out.

The book of Samuel breaks down real easy:

- Chapter 1 through Chapter 12 talks about Samuel as judge.
- Chapter 13 through Chapter 31 talks about Saul as king.

That is a natural division. You are going to find along with that in those stories, you are going to find some of the greatest New Testament principles for your life and my life that are apropos to the 20th century that you are ever going to find.

From a doctrinal standpoint, as I have taught you many, many times, it relates how the Bible relates to the theme of the Bible or the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom. That is the doctrinal application. From the doctrinal aspect of the book of 1 Samuel, it is filled with passages about the Second Coming of Christ, the tribulation period. There are at least two types of Antichrist in this book, and there are types of Christ. You have all that material that points to and gives you pictures and understanding of those prophetic events that are going to take place. Obviously, we do not have time to go through all of that. My plan is, as we spend time on Thursday night coming through the Bible and one-on-one in Bible study, those things will actually be filled in in time once I give you the outline. So, it all works together.

Basically, when you come to the latter part of the book under Saul, Chapter 13 through Chapter 31, Saul is our next type of the Antichrist. He is the next type of the Antichrist, no question about it. He takes over the nation of Israel, just like the Antichrist will do in the tribulation period. You will notice that he is not God's choice; he is the people's choice. The Antichrist comes first, and then Christ comes second. So, Saul shows up first, and then David, the greatest type of Christ outside of Joseph, shows up second. That is how it works. All those principles are built around that. You will find that taught in the book of Revelation 12 and 13, where the Antichrist comes to earth first, and then you will find in Revelation 19, where the Lord Jesus Christ comes to earth second. Saul sets up the false kingdom, just like the Antichrist does. David sets up the real kingdom, just like Christ will in Revelation 19. We will talk more about that later.

As you look at it, that is the kind of way the doctrinal thing lays out. But for us, we see the great New Testament principle that is taught really in Philippians 4. Here is the picture of it.

Philippians 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The Bible says that God shall supply all of your need. The principle that we have in the book of 1 Samuel is what happens when you get more than what you need. What happens when you ask God for what you want instead of what you need? There is a process in the Bible of asking God for things. The process in the Bible of asking God for what we think we want, there are biblical principles. The book of 1 Samuel, firstly in the first 12 chapters, shows us the cause and effect of what happens when we want something that God does not want us to have, and we take what we want over what our needs are.

You see, the nation of Israel had a need. That need was for a king, and God wanted to give them a king. But they did not want the king that God had. They did not want the king that met their needs. They wanted the king that met their wants, and that was Saul. That little story right there that we are going to look at here in great detail, we are going to look at those two aspects. You

are going to see those great New Testament principles, and you are going to look and understand, hopefully by the time we leave today, that when you violate those, you see what happens.

V. The Life of Samuel

Looking at it in our breakdown, let's talk about the book of 1 Samuel. At the first part of the book, we have the life of Samuel, and there are some great lessons in this. I wish we had time this morning to do this in the detail that it deserves. But here again, this is another Thursday night question at some point. Let me kind of break the book down for you by chapters here, and then we will come back. The things we have already talked about, we will put them in perspective as we go through.

When you come to Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4, what you have there is a great story about the little guy Samuel. You have a great picture of his mother, and a great picture of how God calls a young man or a young lady into the service of God. We find all the elements here, all the components. I know that you look at this and you think to yourself, "Well, I read it and I did not see that." Let me kind of break it down for you.

First of all, let's talk about Hannah. Hannah is his mother. Hannah is one of the seven barren women in the Bible. Remember last week I told you that there were seven marriages in the Bible that picture our marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ at the marriage of the Lamb? Well, there are seven barren women in the Bible, and those seven barren women represent the nation of Israel who are barren, who is barren and cannot bear fruit.

I do not know if you have them, and I will give them to you very quickly:

1. Sarah in Genesis 11
2. Rebekah in Genesis 26
3. Rachel in Genesis 29
4. Hannah in 1 Samuel 1
5. Manoah's wife in Judges 13
6. The Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4
7. Elizabeth in Luke 1

These are seven women who are barren, who do not have children. Maybe they have them later, but they do not have them at that point when they want to have them. What they picture is the nation of Israel, who right now is barren. Therefore, when you look at these women, instead of their lives, when they bear the fruit, that fruit is always usually a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and how He comes to deliver the nation of Israel. Samuel is no different. When you look at this thing and you see the young man Samuel, you have a picture of exactly what God sees in some of you guys and some of you gals sitting out here right now.

For you ladies, let me give you a great devotion on Hannah. Hannah is a great study in the Bible, and there are four aspects of her life that you really need to see:

8. Her sorrow, found in 1 Samuel 1:11.
9. Her supplication, found in 1 Samuel 1:11-19.

10. Her surrender, found in 1 Samuel 1:20-28.

11. Her song of victory, found in 1 Samuel 2:1-11.

It shows you her sorrow over not bearing fruit. It shows you her prayer life and asking God and dealing with God and telling God what she will do if God gives her the fruit. But then it shows that she has to surrender some things first, and then it shows that God gives the victory. Because of that victory, she has everything that God wants her to have. God gives her her supplication and ends her sorrow. What a beautiful picture it is as far as us as Christians. Because sometimes when we want something, sometimes, and what she wanted was right. She wanted to bear fruit; there was no problem with that. But she had to get to the point where she surrendered all before she got it. What a great principle that is for you and for me as a Christian.

Sometimes when we ask God for something and God does not give it to us, it is because we have not surrendered everything we have already got to God. God looks at it like this: "How stupid for Me to give you something else you are asking for when you want it from Me, and you are telling Me that this has to come from Me, when everything else you have got, you have kept for yourself." That is a basic simple principle, but that is the way God looks at it. In other words, God wants us to surrender it all. When you come to that point that you can surrender it all, then you are going to sing the song of victory because God is going to give you the desires of your heart.

We see from this that God uses her and God uses the man of God, Eli, together to train this young man to bring him to the point where God uses him. Her responsibility was, among others, not only is she a good mother, not only is she a mother that really takes charge of teaching him the Word of God, but this mother understands how important it is for that young man to be with the man of God, because young men today need a role model. Young ladies today need a role model. Her job, outside of teaching that child at home and loving that child and praying for that child and recognizing from God all the things that she was supposed to, the second thing she saw her responsibility was to get her little boy where the man of God was so he could get the principles of God from the perspective that God wanted it to have. That is why God put the church.

Obviously, the most important aspect in your life, without a question about it, is your family. That is your first ministry. That is where the home base starts. You study her life, you see that her life in her home, she recognizes it. She loves God. She wants what God wants. She sees in her. She just wants her boy, her child, to be used of God, and she does everything in her power to make that happen. The second thing she does is everything in her power to make sure that boy is where the man of God is in her life, that that man of God is able to give that boy what she cannot. It is those two aspects that build a young man or a young lady's life. That is why God gave the church, and that is why God gave men. I am not just talking about myself. I am talking about godly men who are in the church who teach and live the life of example that other young kids growing up can see. There has to be that balance in their life. Between those two in concert, they produced one of the greatest young men that this world has ever seen as far as the Bible is concerned.

I have to tell you this thing about Samuel is really an incredible thing. Because when you come to Chapter 3, there are some weird statements here that really step outside of the time period that we are in and almost put this thing in a New Testament context. For one, it says this in Chapter 3:1:

1 Samuel 3:1

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

That is a verse that is a great verse, but you do not find any other verse anywhere in the Old Testament like that. You could lift that thing out and put that in the New Testament anywhere in the church age, and it would fit. It is really out of place in the Old Testament simply because they did not have the complete Word of God. But yet, here is a place that shows you that this picture in this story about Samuel in the first four chapters is a picture of a young man in a young life today, and how a mom and a preacher took this kid and trained that kid with the same desire in their heart to make him God's man.

The Bible says in 1 Samuel 3:19:

1 Samuel 3:19

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

You see that thing? He has got the right attitude toward the Word of God. You know what you have got in this story very quickly? Here is what you have got: she raises him up, she brings him to the man of God, and she says, "Here, I have taken him as far as I can. I have laid the foundation in his life. He now needs a man in his life that is going to lay out the principles and be for him." She has got much wisdom in this thing.

When that takes place, he goes to work. It is a picture of a young man going to work within a local New Testament church ministry, and in the process of working in that temple, God calls him. God calls him three times, and the Bible is very clear in those passages that he does not understand the voice of the Lord. That simply means that a young Christian and a young man, when they have just got saved or they are just getting into the Word of God, they do not always understand when God is speaking to them. They do not know how to separate emotion from truly when God speaks to you. They do not understand. They may go do something, and it not work out the way they think, and because it did not, they may think that God is now against them. They do not understand the biblical principles to the point where they understand how to live their lives, operate their ministries, and in time raise their families by biblical principles.

So, he wakes up. He thinks he hears God speaking to him. He goes to Eli and he says, "You called me." Eli said, "I did not call you. Go lay down." He goes the second time, "You called me." Eli says, "I did not call you. Go back to sleep." The third time the Bible says he goes to Eli, and the Bible says that the old man perceived that God was calling the child.

Let me tell you what happens in most churches today. A young man comes down. He says, "Preacher, I think God has called me to preach." The guy says, "Praise the Lord," slaps him on

the back, hands him a brochure to a Bible college someplace, and ships him off. They always ship him off to the one where you get the kickback from. That is how it goes. That is how it is supposed to go. The old man, when he heard him first couple of times, he said, "You know what? Go back to sleep." In other words, when you come to me and you say, "I think God is calling me to do something," I am going to tell you the same thing Eli said: "Keep on doing what you are doing. Do not jump to any conclusions, and just give that thing some time." Second time, "Go back to sleep. Stay with it." But in the process of time, it was clear to Eli that God was going to use the kid. Their lives, one of the greatest principles anywhere in the Word of God of how to deal with young men and young ladies, as God begins to work in their lives and to train them from day one to the finished process, that they come to the point where they grow in the Lord and they understand that God was with him. They understand how to discern God's voice. They understand how to discern the Word of God. Then they firmly understand that the rest of their lives, the rest of their ministries, that none of the words of God can ever fall to the ground. Incredible study.

VI. The Danger of Wanting Over Needing

Chapters 5, 6, and 7: We see Samuel trying to apply the Word of God in the age where they do not want to listen to the Word of God. We find that he struggles. He tries to bring them back on track. The Philistines give him all kinds of problems, taking the ark of God. He is single-handedly trying to stand for the Lord in a place where nobody wants to stand for the Lord.

When you come to Chapter 8, probably one of the greatest chapters in the Old Testament that teach this great principle: be careful what you want. Be careful what you wish for. Be careful when you get your will over God's will. Because, oh my, what a great lesson this is. In Chapter 8:1-9, we see the great principle where they get their man instead of God's man. That simply is a teaching, and it shows you and I what happens in our life when we get what we want instead of what we need.

My God shall supply all your need. The worst thing you could ever have in your life is what you want over what your needs are. How many times I have heard, and I am just as guilty of it as anybody else, how many times have I heard somebody say, "What would I give anything in the world?" This week the lottery was 290 million dollars. Everybody that has got any sense sat down and thought to myself, "Man, if I could just win that, my problems would be over." You know what? If you won it, your problems would just start.

You think 200 million... I had an old preacher say one time to me, I heard him preaching and say to me, he said, "I would rather be on a," and he was an old southern guy, he did not have a lot of couth. He said, "I would rather be on a railroad track in a stalled car with a door jammed, with a freight train 20 feet away, moving 90 miles an hour in the will of God, than to be home in my bed, sleeping with my family, all snuggled up, nice and warm, out of the will of God." There is a lot of truth to that. There is a lot of truth to that. The will of God and being where God exactly wants you to be is incredible. Yet, I know that we think, "Wow, if I was rich, that is all my problems." No, no, no. It would just give you a bunch more problems you do not have. You say,

"Well, God can trust me with a million dollars." Well, then how come He has not given it to you? I mean, I am not just talking to you and giving it to me either.

There is a great concept here of getting what you want versus what God wants you to have. There are some things right off the start you better begin to understand. I know this is going to be a new concept to some of you, but you better learn it. Come on with Ezekiel 14. Here is why you can ask yourself many, many times when you see a circumstance and you see a situation and you say, "How did that happen?" Here is the answer. Here is what happened. You better learn this about God going in. Because it is easy to get what we want and then give God the credit for it.

I will tell you what, we live in a day and age. I do not know. I just do not know how God changes His mind so much. I have had people tell me, "Well, this is what God called me to do." And then three weeks later or a year later, God changed His mind. Somebody said, "Well, this is what God wanted me to do." And then two weeks later, God changes His mind. Let me tell you something. Here is the problem, and you better get this down because this is a great principle.

Ezekiel 14:1-5

1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

Broken down in a simple translation: God will give you a lie to believe if you want one. You see, God always answers us on the basis of our attitude of heart. The problem with the nation of Israel is when they came before Samuel and they said, "We want a king." Samuel said, "God is going to give you a king." And they said, "We do not want that king. We want a king like all the other nations have." Samuel said, "But you do not understand. You are not supposed to be like all the other nations. You are supposed to be a peculiar people, a different people. You are supposed to be somebody that is set apart. Your king God has for you is going to be the great king. It is going to be God's choice." They said, "We do not want God's best. We want what we want."

You know what God gave them? God gave them what they wanted based on the multitude of idols in their heart. When you come to God with a preconceived idea in your mind, "This is the way it is, and this is what I want," how many times we have come to God to ask God for something knowing in our hearts we were going to work it out to get it no matter what God did. How many times we have come to God with a supposition in our hearts, "God, I want this. I want this." But really, you already had it already worked out.

I will tell you something. I told you this before. I have said it many, many times that you better be prepared to change anything in your life, anything you believe, anything you have ever wanted, any desire you ever had, when God shows you clear in the Word of God that is not what you are supposed to have. It is not about what you want. It is about what you need. It is not about what I want. It is about what I need.

Now, we have all found ourselves in this place with the nation of Israel. That is why some of us, some of God's people, have never come to the point where they could ever get out of the problems that they have got into in their life simply because they built their whole life building what they wanted over what God wanted to give them. They go to church. They talk about loving God, and they are so far from where God is in their own life. They are so far, and this great principle has weighted them down to the place where they just wanted what they wanted over what God wanted. When you put your will over God's will, there are some natural consequences that go along with it.

Ezekiel 14:1-5 is one of that great principle that simply says, if you come to God with something in your heart already that you want and you are not open and honest before God, you can fool your wife. You can fool your kids. You can fool me. You can fool everybody in this world, but you cannot fool God. When God sees you, He looks right down in your heart, and He sees the very dark, naked depths of your soul, and He knows exactly what your motive is. God will give you a lie to believe if you want one. You reject truth. You have your pet doctrine, your pet sin. I have seen God's people justify everything in their life because that is what they wanted to do. I have seen them justify everything. When the Bible is very clear, and yet their circumstances gave them a clause that made it different. God gives you the answer to your prayers based on your attitude of heart. So when you come to Him, it just better be, "God, whatever You want is okay with me."

When I look at this, I see in a lot of ways that Samuel is just like a preacher today. He preaches what is right to his people, and they reject it and do what they want to do. He tells them what the Word of God says. He tells them what God expects of them, and they take it and they do not do anything with it, and they turn around and do exactly what they want to do. That is the day and age that we live in.

VII. Saul: A Type of the Antichrist and a Warning

From Chapter 13 through 31, we see the man Saul. When you get your way, and this is incredible, not only do they get their own way, but before they ever get their own way, God in Chapter 8, Chapter 8 through 10 through 18, somewhere in there, He tells them what this guy is going to be like. He tells them what he is going to do to them. He tells them what the consequences of their bad choice are going to be. This book tells you what the consequences of you not doing what God wants you to do are going to be. And you know what? We still do it. We are a mess.

I heard a liberal preacher say one time, "I do not know how God gets in." They went to hell. My problem is I do not know how God, knowing where I am and where you are, God can take

anybody to heaven. I do not have any problem at all seeing God sending us to hell. I just do not understand what He sees in us and He wants us up there with Him. No wonder we have got to change this before we get up there. You think the devil let a revolt by a month? Baptists would revolt that thing in half the time the devil did. That is why God is going to change it. But I am telling you, God said, "You guys, you are going to get your way." When you get your way over God's way and you throw that thing out and you throw the principles out, you get a life that goes along with it. This is why all this stuff helps you figure out why today God's people's lives are the way they are. This is why they get so messed up: violation of biblical principles. Your will over God's will. God says one thing. God says, "Do not marry this person." You say, "I am going to marry him anyhow." God said, "Do not do that." "I am going to do it anyhow." That is where you are at. I mean, I do not know how clear it can be.

On top of that, Saul is a type of the Antichrist. We already talked about that. You will see that as we go through here. He is a type of the Antichrist. He is also a type for the 20th century Christian or the 20th century pastor who leads God's people into apostasy. All they get is a lie from him. He is so typical. He is so typical.

You have to remember, I have told you this before, that we are in a Laodicean church period. I have walked you through time and time again those seven periods of church history. I have showed you how they relate to history. I have showed you how they relate to your life. I showed you how all the warnings in there, and yet over and over and over again, when we come through the Bible, it keeps coming back to this period of time. Somebody said, "Well, you know what? How come he cannot preach a message without coming back to the Laodicean church?" Because every message I get into in the Bible takes me right back to the Laodicean church. I am telling you, if there is any point you have got to get today, you have got to get the point that we are living in a day and age of apostasy, and you are going to have to work at building your relationship with God, and it is going to be tough because every pressure around us, every peer pressure we have to deal with, wants to carry us the other way.

When you get into Chapter 13, 14, and 15, you see the kind of leader Saul was. It is a tragic thing. What does Laodicean mean? Laodicean means "rights of the people." That is what it means. I brought you through those seven churches, told you what every one of those names mean. The Laodicean church. The word Laodicean means "rights of the people," "justice for the people." It is a picture of the time and day and age we are studying right now when Israel wanted their rights and wanted their justice over God's rights. God gave him a king, and we are living in a day and age today where God's people want their rights. Remember, I told you, boy, this answers a lot of problems for you. I told you that we are living in a day and age that is just like this time where men want to take what they want over what God wants, and they do not care what God wants. They want what they want because we live in a very fleshly Christianity, a very unspiritual Christianity, and men want what they want when they want it and give God credit for it. Just like the nation of Israel, God has given them a pastor. God has given them spiritual leaders based on the attitude of their own heart. Simple.

You know what Saul does first thing he does in 1 Samuel 13:19? He takes the Bible away from them. He puts all the smiths out of business, the blacksmiths who made the swords. He took the

sword. He took their weapons. He turned it over to the Philistines, and the Philistines made sure that they did not have a sword to do battle with. What we have done in Christianity, we have taken the Word of God and we have turned it over to the secular world to print our Bibles, and therefore they have taken the Word of God, and I am telling you something, you better stock some up. If Jesus does not come in five or six years, you will not be able to buy a King James Bible. They would have got rid of it now if they could have. He takes the Bible from them.

I will tell you something else he does in 1 Samuel 13:3. He takes credit for something somebody else does. That is the way they are today. They never leave their palaces. They are always out there, and they never really do anything, and when the little guys out there who love God, who try to serve God, who try to do what is right, they always are taking the credit when they go someplace, when they speak at some conference. Everybody looks at them and says, "Wow, what a great church you have got. What a great pastor you are. What about this? Look at that. Look at that." And he does not know what is going on. It is a little guy out there that is building it.

Long before I was a Christian, I understood this concept. Long before I ever loved God or ever read my Bible through one time, God taught me this. God taught me this when I was in the army. There are two kinds of commanders you have in the military. You have the guys that the men trust, and you have the guys that the men do not trust. In Vietnam, we shot a lot of, we saw a lot of bad things happen. One of the bad things that happened was a lot of American officers got killed, unfortunately, not by the enemy, by their own men. They used to call it fragging because the leadership was so bad, and young men were not disciplined anyhow, and they were in a place they did not want to be in, and they were not going to let some 90-day wonder who did not know what he was doing lead them into a place where they were going to give their life in a war they did not believe in anyhow.

Now, it is a tragic thing to say, but that is the way it is. But not everybody was that way. I had the privilege years ago to meet one of the greatest men that I ever thought that he influenced my life, and he, I do not even know it. I mean, I know about him. He does not know me. I saw him one time when I was in the military when he came to our base, and they had a big thing for him. His name was Arthur Simons. He was a colonel. He never got to make general. He never got to make general because the other generals did not like him. You know why they did not like him? Because he was politically incorrect. You know what they used to call him? They used to call him "the Bull." Bull Simons. He is the guy that led the Son Tay raid to get the Vietnam prisoners out of Son Tay back there in the late 60s, early 70s. He was something else.

You know what his role was? He never let his troops go anywhere he did not go himself. You see, most guys, they stay back at the base and call it in from there. Some of the guys get real brave and get in a helicopter and stay five miles away so they can do by radio. Not the Bull. He was right down in the middle of it. There was not any firefight you were in in your life where you could look around and the Bull was not right there. They were trapped. I read the guy's life story. I talked to guys who talked about it. I have seen him on video, and I have seen him talking about it, and talking about the way that he was. You are out there, and it is hitting the fan, and they are coming over the walls, and they are down there, and you are all surrounded, you are cut off, and there is nobody to help you. Let me tell you something. It is so reassuring to look behind

you and see the big old Bull walking up and down that line in the middle of everybody firing at him and telling everybody to hold that line. "I am not dying here today." That builds something in you that makes you just want to stay there and fight.

Some of you saw the movie *We Were Soldiers*. How about another one, Colonel Moore? You know what his philosophy was? "In combat, first man in, I will be the last man out." He never went into combat that he was not the first one off the helicopter, and he never got back on until all his men were accounted for. You know what? You may die in battle, and you may die in combat, but there is an assurance that there is somebody leading this battle that wants your best interest at his heart. I cannot tell you what that instills in young men. I cannot tell you what that instills in a soldier that he knows he may get killed and he may die, but he is not here by himself. The guy that is telling him what to do is not somebody back there in air-conditioned offices talking between beers and sending letters down and radio messages down. He is right there in the thick of it with you.

Let me just say this. Let me make the point for you. That is the kind of pastors we need today. That is the kind of men we need to lead this church today. We need men that are going to stand in there, and you do not have to look around and wonder where they are at any battle and the spiritual warfare you are in. You are shoulder to shoulder. You are in the same trench. You are in the same mud. You die, we die. We all go down together. We all stand together. It does not make any difference. But as long as we do it together.

That was not Saul. Saul was one of those kind of guys that he sent everybody else to do it, and then he took credit for it, never did it himself. When it came down to fighting David and Goliath, he was the biggest man there. The Bible says he was head and shoulders above everybody else. What did he do? He sent David in. He sent David in. Why? Because he was a coward. That is why.

He puts them under an oath in 1 Samuel 14:24. When he puts them under that oath, it is a Christian oath. Oh, yes, it is exactly what they do today. He said, "You guys are going to go up there and fight," but he says, "I am going to put you on an oath before God: do not eat anything before you fight, while you fight, or after your fight." Then the people go out there, and they are getting whipped because they are hungry and they are weak. They have not eaten because he put them under a Christian oath that has nothing to do with God, having to do with Saul. I have seen him do that today. I have seen him put you under that old oath of legalism. "You have got to do this and you have got to do that," and they give you a set of rules that have nothing to do with the Word of God, and then they wonder why you fail in your families. They wonder why you have problems. They wonder why you cannot have the victory.

You know what Saul did? He did the same thing 20th century preachers do when he told them not to take the food and he put them under an oath that God had nothing to do with, and then they failed. Instead of getting up and saying, "I was the problem," oh, no, no, the 20th century modern-day preacher is never the problem. He always blames it on his people, and it was not the people's problem; it was his problem. He leaves his son in 1 Samuel 14:45, his own son, to die in

a battlefield. In 1 Samuel 13:8, he offers up the sacrifice of a priest when he is not a priest, clearly showing me that most of these guys are trying to be something they are not.

In 1 Samuel 15:1-35, the whole chapter, you have the story of Agag and the sheep. God says, "You know what? Kill Agag, kill the sheep, kill everybody down there because of what they are associated with." Samuel shows up. Saul won the battle. He is popping around like some old big guy with all medals on his chest, walking around, shaking hands, and talking to his cronies, getting ready to plan the next fellowship meeting, talking about all the great victories God has done. Samuel comes up, and he says, "What is going on?" Saul said, "Well, God gave us a great victory." He says, "Great victory? What is this bleating of the sheep I hear?" All his life, Saul, as the modern 20th century spiritual leader in America, who are the people's choice because God gave them to you after your own heart, had total disregard for what God says to him to do.

In fact, 1 Samuel 15:23 lays it out very clearly:

1 Samuel 15:23

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

It winds up a spiritual suicide. He loses God's spirit and gets an evil spirit. He never learned the great principle in 1 Samuel 15:22 that is the greatest principle taught probably in all the Bible for you and for me.

1 Samuel 15:22

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

God does not care what you do. How could you do it if you do it in violation of the principle of the Word of God? You wasted your time.

VIII. David: God's Choice and a Man After God's Own Heart

Then in Chapter 16, you have the introduction of God's man. When you have this thing, contrast, remember, contrast. The contrast between Saul and David is much to learn. In Saul, we saw the people's choice. In David, we saw God's choice. In Saul, we saw a man who always perpetrated to be a great leader but never was. In David, we see a man who took the humble position of just being a servant and became a great leader.

Let me tell you something. I have heard them say it so many times, every time I hear them saying, I want to throw up. How many times I have heard them pat so and so on the back, bring up, and he said, "Now I want to introduce to you, I want to be one of the greatest men in Christianity, one of the greatest preachers you are ever going to hear, a man who has built a great church, a man who is a great Christian, a man who is great doing this, great doing that." Let me tell you something. There are no great men in Christianity. There are no great pastors. There are

no great preachers. There are no great men who build great works. There are just men who are sinners saved by a great God, and God uses them.

So, he was the great David. He was a little guy. But when you study their lives, you see what God looks for when God looks for a man. You will see it. You will see it. The calling of David was God's man over Israel's man. The people have their choice, and God gave them one after their own heart, and he persecuted him, and he brought him into bondage, and he put him under false Christian concepts and principles, and he tried to almost destroy him, and he wound up being a mess in his own life. They violated Bible principles from one day to the next. Finally, God gave them David.

When you find the calling of David, you know how it goes down here in Chapter 16. They are down there looking at the sons of Jesse, and they are bringing them all through, and they are looking how tall they are, how big they are, how strong they are, and they pass through and pass through and pass through, and at the end of that procession, one of them says, "Well, he is not here." And he says to Jesse, "Do you have any more sons?" And he said, "Oh, yes, I have got a little scrawny runt out there, but his name is David, but I did not even bring him in because he is just a youth. He is just a kid, and he only weighs about 90 pounds, and he is out there, and he is keeping the sheep." He said, "God said bring him in." They brought David in, and God said, "That is the man I want." God taught him a great lesson in 1 Samuel 16:7. You better look at it, and you better take it with you, and you better never forget it because God gave His personal opinion on His man.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

David may be little, he may have been the runt of the litter, but let me tell you something, he teaches you a great principle, a great principle that it is not the size of the dog in the fight, but rather the size of the fight in the dog. I learned that every day in my house. I have three of them. I have a brown one that weighs about 67 pounds. He looks like a brown bear. I have a black one that is sleek and is fast, and she has got more wisdom, and she can out-turn, out-burn, and she can do anything. I have a little runt, a little white one, a little runt, and she has got bad legs. She limps all the time, and she does not have, and I will tell you what, that little runt will whip the snot out of those two other dogs. That big old brown one, he can knock things over. I mean, he bumps, and I will tell you what, I have seen her where she chased him with his tail between his legs, and the big goof hides under the table and looks around the corner with his tail between his legs, and that little blonde, snarly little dog just stands there with those sweet little brown eyes and that little brown face and those teeth hanging out about the hair, and she barks, everybody listens. You know why? She is the runt. She has got some fight in her, old buddy. He is the big boy. I mean, he is, I know he is mentally retarded, but he is the big boy. I mean, you throw the, take the tennis racket with Tinker and you whack that tennis ball, and that thing will be coming at 60 miles an hour, and she will go "skunk" and grab it. I hit that thing straight up in the air.

Tinker is looking around for it. Daisy is looking up. She sees it, never loses it. She runs in stride, and she will jump to that thing and catch that thing in her mouth. I take the ball to Buddy, and I, because he never gets it, I throw it to him from here to you. It hits him in the nose, bounces off, and he goes after the fact. You just take the ball over and get it to him and pet him. He runs around like he just won the World Series. I am telling you, it is not the big guys in this world that are getting the job done. It is you little guys. It is the guy that everybody looks at and says, "He will never do it." You better learn this great principle. God does not look like man looks. Man looks at his degrees. Man looks at his countenance. Man looks at the way he speaks. Man looks at where he has been to school. Man looks at all the titles he has got. Man looks at all the greatness that he has. God just looks deep down inside and sees some little guy that just wants to love His word.

Chapters 17 and 18: You see the story of David and Goliath. Saul is a coward. He should have fought him, but he sends David in. Just like most 20th century preachers, when he sends somebody out to do his work, and they do the job, and people recognize that they are doing the job because he is so inferior in himself and has such an inferior complex, and he is so intimidated by everybody, he hates David because David got the victory instead of him. All the great story of David and Goliath. I wish we had time to do it. We do not. On one side, it is a great picture of the second coming of Christ, Revelation 19:11. On the inspirational side, it is a great picture of the great battles of your life and the giants out there that try to stop you in your everyday life, Ephesians 6.

It all lines up. Saul is the leader. He should have been the one, but he did not. After that thing, you start to see something. Because in 1 Samuel 18:9, right after David kills Goliath, the Bible makes one little statement. You better mark it.

1 Samuel 18:9

And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

Saul was a coward, just like most guys today, and he has guys in his church that can do the work and do the job, and when he is too scared to do it, he sends them out to do it, and they go out and get it done, and the people in the church look at him and say, "Well, you did a good job." The Bible says in 1 Samuel 18:9 that Saul eyed David from that day forward. Target on his back.

I will tell you something, that book will put a bullseye on your back quicker than anything in this world. In Chapter 19 through Chapter 22, you have the story of Jonathan and David. What a great story this is. This is the fulfillment of that verse in Proverbs that says, "A friend born for adversity." You see, as you go through the story, Saul hates David, but the reason why he hates him is because David has the power of God in his life, and Saul does not have it. That is so typical of Laodicean preachers today. They are scared to death. They do not know the Bible themselves, and they are afraid to death that somebody will find out. They do not want to ever get into a conversation with you, they never spend any time with you in the Bible because you may ask them a question they do not know. After that battle with Goliath, as I said already, we see it, and we see the Bible says that he eyed David. He did not like David, and that dislike turns

into a great hatred, and he tries through the next couple of chapters a number of ways to get David killed.

1 Samuel 18:12

And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

Here is how it works. Any time in the ministry at all, here is how it works. Trust me. Here is how it works. They are going to hate you because of that book. When you have the Word of God in your heart and you love that book, they are going to hate you. God uses you in your ministry and not them in theirs. God hands it in your life. Whatever checks you write, God cashes because of the book. They devise every way in the world to kill you, but God blesses you. They are scared to death of you. They are intimidated by you and unable to stand in your way, and they will try to do everything they can to stop you. But you know what? God is with you, and as long as you stay with God, as long as the book is yours and you love it with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, in time they will wind up to be a spiritual suicide, and you will wind up to be a man after God's own heart. Let me tell you something. I am going to explain in a minute: spiritual suicide does not always mean you die.

You know how David got through it? David was the most hunted man. He was the most hated man. Saul hated him with a passion, tried to kill him, devised every way from marrying his own daughter. He came up with every scheme in the world to get rid of David because he hated David because David had a God and had a book, and God gave David what he needed to survive in this whole world. You know what He gave him? He gave him a friend named Jonathan. Jonathan knows who is the problem. Jonathan knows who is right, who is wrong, and Jonathan very quietly protects God's man and God's King David. You see that Jonathan takes that under his wing to make sure that David does not get killed.

We see Saul continue to go on without the power of God, and you begin to see another great principle: how the farther you go without God, the farther away you get, and the more desperate you become. In Chapter 23 through Chapter 31, Saul turns to witchcraft. He comes to the place where he goes down to the witch at Endor, and the farther you get from God, I am telling you, the more desperate you get. Finally, his death by suicide. I am telling you, not every time you read suicide in the Bible does it mean that God is going to kill somebody or somebody that does not do what is right with the Word of God dies. You can die spiritually long before you die physically. There are lots of God's people walking around, breathing, talking about this, and going to church and carrying their Bibles, and they are just as dead spiritually on the inside as any dead man in the cemetery. But old Jonathan is there. Jonathan gets him through those times. Thank God for the Jonathans of life.

IX. The Passing of Power and Team Ministry

Chapters 30 through 31: We see the great passing of power from the people's choice to God's choice. Over the years, as I have studied this thing and laid this thing out, I have seen some great principles, and the Bible never ceases to amaze me how you can be reading someplace totally

different, and God will bring up a principle and a verse that brings it right back to where you are at.

I have talked to you about God's choice versus the people's choice. I have talked about Saul and David and all the New Testament principles that go along with it. But you know what? There are two verses in the Bible that lay these men out better than anything I could ever say. I do not even think when he was talking about it, he was talking about these two guys. But that is the beauty of the Bible. It is principles. Even though it may not be talking about these guys particularly, it is talking about these guys in general because these guys picture something that is in our world today. David pictures God's man who believes the book, who stands by the book. Saul pictures the people's choice that God gave them because of their attitude of heart, because they already had their mind made up that the Word of God was not true, and they wanted a better rendition.

But when you come back there to Jeremiah 3:15, he says this to the Nation of Israel:

Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

You see, that is God's choice. That was David. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Then you come over to Isaiah 65:5, and you find Saul:

Isaiah 65:5

Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

One is Saul, one is David. One is God's man. One is the people's man. That is pretty much the way it lays out.

Lastly, I want to give you this, and then we are done with the book of 1 Samuel. This is probably, for you as a husband and wife, the greatest verse I could give you. As a husband and wife ministry team, this has been my wife and I's verse for 20 some years, more than that, as long as we have been married together. It is an incredible verse.

Let me just say this. I know we are young right now, and I know that we are in the process of building a lot of things. One of the things that I will never do that I have learned over the years is never to get in a hurry. We have got to build it one block at a time. There is no use trying to plan a lot of things and not doing anything well. It is just taking a few things and doing them really well.

My goal is simply this. God has given us a bunch of young couples. God has given us some older couples. God has given us some great singles. I know that all of you in the mix, you see, I never bought into the concept that I never bought into this. A lot of things that are taught in churches that are just crazy. I have heard all my life, "Well, you cannot mix singles and married together because they do not have anything in common." I have heard them say, "Well, you know, you

cannot mix younger people and older people together because they really do not have any social things in common." You know what? Let me tell you something. I found this to be true: when you make the basis of your church social issues, that is true. But when you make your church ministry-oriented, that is not true. Because I do not care if you are 20, 50, 30, 70, 80, 90, or 12, you all have ministry in common, and that is something that no age barrier blocks.

I will tell you something else I found. I found it in the process of time. Your social circles take care of themselves. Somebody does something over here that the younger people go to. Somebody does over here that the middle-aged people go to. Somebody does over here and shuffleboard, and all go to. It is a thing where they all take care of themselves. The bottom line is ministry, and that is the tragedy in most churches. They build it on the fun game stuff. They build it on the good times of having fun, and in that, that is true. You guys play softball on Friday night, and you get somebody that is in their 60s or in their 70s or 50s. 60s and 70s do not move as fast, maybe do not move at all. They are not going to want to do that. But you take a sitting down with somebody, some of you older ladies, you are taking time with some of these younger ladies and teach them the Word of God and show them what you have learned in life that they have got to learn in life. No age barrier there. Take some of your older guys who have been through some tough things in life. Take some of these younger guys that are just starting out in life, being able to let them glean from your experience. The mistakes we have made, the good things we have done, invaluable. You see, that is the bottom line.

I know this in time, my goal, and I know we do not have a lot of people here today, but if you pick us up and you listen on a tape, I am talking to you too. My goal is to take every one of you that wants to and is willing to help you become everything that God wants you to be. Whether you are single right now, whether you are married, I do not care. My time is your time because I know that right now that that is the bottom line and the foundation of what we have got to start with. In time, once we get some things done here, I want to start taking you and showing you how to work with people in the Bible. I am not limiting it to anybody. I am telling you right now, if you want to do it, it is up to you. It is your choice. This church will always be your choice. I will never come to anybody and say, "You need to do this." Let me tell you something. If you do not have the relationship with God that God speaks to you, and if He does, you do not yield to it, that is your problem. My job is to be open and honest and give you everything that you need. Your job is to do what God wants you to do with it.

But I know this. If Jesus does not come two or three years from now, God keeps adding to us. God keeps giving us young couples and couples and older folks that really want to learn the Bible, that we can really teach the Bible to and get it ready. Let me tell you something. All of you will be working with people's lives in the Word of God. Not in just discipleship. My goal is to fine-tune you to the place that you can take a marriage as a couple that is fallen apart and use the Bible and meet with them one on one. What a great matchup that is. The wife takes the gal. The husband takes the guy. Work with them separately. Work with them together. Help put that marriage back together. That in every aspect, no matter what the problems are, that you people are trained to be able to do that. That is ministry.

I will tell you what. You get a lot more than you do. I will tell you what. You get a lot more fulfillment and happiness out of that than hitting the ball over the fence on Friday night. I mean, I do not know what to tell you. There is nothing more fulfilling in my life, and in anybody's life, you just some of you have not tasted it yet. There is nothing more fulfilling in any Christian's life than to be used of God in the Word of God in somebody else's life, one-on-one. Nothing in this world. That point is going to come. Some of you, maybe it may come faster for some of you than the others.

In a husband and wife situation, there will be times that maybe the husband seems like he does more or gets to do more than you do in some situation. The woman may get, because of the husband's job, the woman may get to do more than the husband does. If you are not careful with that, you see that can, you can let that defeat you. I want to give you a verse that you need to take with you if you are married today. This verse, if you have not already got it, needs to be your verse for ministry. It needs to be the verse that you build your life around together as husband and wife. It needs to be the verse that you understand where you are at with the Lord. It is found in 1 Samuel 30:24.

It simply says this. This is really all we are doing in the Bible is to get you to that point. I am trying to lay out. I am trying to do a number of things right now between Sunday morning and Thursday night and a one-on-one time with you. I am trying to do everything that I, and then add the other things into it. I am all trying to bring it about to one goal, and that is to get to the place where together, whether you are single, you are married, or whatever, you minister.

Here is the bottom line. 1 Samuel 30:24. This is for you husband and wife. This is for you if you are single and someday you are going to have a prospective mate, you are going to get married.

1 Samuel 30:24

For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

It simply says this. Wives, if you stay home with the kids while your husband goes out and does something, do not feel discouraged because you did not get to go. I mean, you can be discouraged about it, but do not let it defeat you. Husbands, if there are times that you do not get to do something that your wife gets to do, it is okay. If you have the right attitude of heart, the Bible says you are a team, and as a team, the Bible says the person who goes down to battle, whether it be the husband or wife, and the person that stays by the stuff, stays home with the kids, whether it be the husband or wife, the bottom line is at the judgment seat of Christ, they part alike. God blesses the attitude of your heart in serving Him. You are a team.

My job is to make you a cohesive team. I have told you from the very beginning, this church will only be as strong as the individual members in it, and this church will only go as far as your attitude of loving that book more than anything else in this world. Your own personal marriages and your own personal lives and your own personal families will only go as far as the principles of that book that you can believe and claim for yourself. If we are going to do anything for God these last days, and I am betting we will, it is going to come down to taking concepts just like

that and understanding that husband and wives are teams, that we are all a team. There will be times that you guys go preach that I will not. There will be times that I preach that you do not. There will be times that I work with people that you will not. There will be times that the guy next to you works, your time that your husband is working with somebody as the wife, you are not. The time the wife is working for somebody, the husband is not. Do not get, it is been in a joint because you are not there yet. You get there in God's timing. But you know what the attitude is? "Honey, I will hold down the fort. You do what you have got to do. Honey, you go ahead and do it. I will stay home with the kids." The bottom line is this: at the judgment seat of Christ, attitude of heart. It all goes back to that book. You are both part alike. God looks at the one who went down and did it and said, "Well done, thou faithful servant. You did it." He looks at the one that did not get to go but stayed home and did the stuff that they were there. He said, "You know what? You get the same thing because it would not have been possible if you would not have done your part. You are a team." That is why a guy got a help meet, not a helpmate. God had a plan for Adam. All the animals got mates. Adam got a meet. Because they helped meet the mission of God because they were a team together.

Father, thank You for today. Thank You for Your word. Thank You for Your love for us and for Your goodness to us, and thank You, Father, for this book, and I thank You for these people. I love them so much, and they are so good, and Lord, I just pray that You will protect us. I pray that every heart will be.