

The title in the Old Testament was not going to work anymore once Christ came and died on the cross. We saw the nation of Israel, the Jews, and we saw that particular situation in Chapter 2 where even though they followed the law in the Old Testament, we saw that once Christ came, who did away with the law, that that was not the way to do it either. Then we saw in Chapter 3 how that in both cases, Jew and Gentile, there had to be a change because the great event of Christ coming down and dying on the cross literally changed the course of the world.

I. The Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness

In Romans 4, we begin to see that the only way a man or a woman today can find Christ as their own personal Savior is to get God's righteousness. In Romans 4, he shows us how we do that. The whole book of Romans, basically in the early part anyhow, was built around the lives of two men: Abraham and David.

The lives of Abraham and David represent the two aspects of us getting God's righteousness. The life of Abraham shows us the doctrine of getting God's righteousness that is imputed to us by faith without works. In other words, Abraham's life shows us that we get God's righteousness, or get saved, without being able to do anything to merit it. No works involved. The life of David shows us the great doctrine of getting God's righteousness being imputed to us in a situation where under no circumstances do we deserve to get it.

So, one shows us that we get it by grace through faith plus nothing, and the life of David shows us that we get it when we shouldn't get it at all and certainly don't deserve it. These two concepts, through the lives of those two men, are incredible studies to help you basically understand how it all goes together in the book of Romans. That's why God picked those two men.

You've heard me say many times that the Bible is its own dictionary; the Bible defines itself. You take the word "imputed," and that's a word that most people understand is a Bible word, but they don't really understand how the Bible defines the word "imputed."

When you go over to James 2:23, and we talked about this when we looked at James and studied the great so-called contradiction there, the Bible says, and it's talking about Abraham now:

James 2:23

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Now, there's a verse in James 2 that talks about what happened to Abraham in Genesis 15. The Bible tells you there that God imputed His own righteousness to Abraham. Then you go back to Genesis 15, where the story actually takes place in Genesis 15:5-6, and it's talking about the same story:

Genesis 15:5-6

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

If that wasn't enough, when you go over to Galatians 3:6, you find again another reference to the same account back in Genesis 15:

Galatians 3:6

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Now we've got the Bible definition. The word "imputed" means that God put something on your account. The Bible says that when Abraham believed God, it was counted to him, and in Galatians, it says it was accounted; it was put on his account. The day you and I got saved, this is where the life that we're studying of Abraham and David comes in as the focal point of the book of Romans. The day you and I got saved, God took His righteousness and put it on your account. He imputed it to you and me. Then, without us deserving it, He took our sin debt and imputed that to Jesus Christ and put it on His account. Of course, we know that on the cross of Calvary, Jesus basically paid the account, and that's the whole concept of salvation.

In your Bible, both men are tremendous studies. Let's stop for a second here and ask God's blessing on our time this morning, and then we'll continue.

Father, we thank and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and we love You today. I thank You, Father, for all that You've given us, for those that You brought here today. I pray, Father, that in the midst of this crowd, Lord, You'd be with each one in their individual need and their individual heart. You're the only One, Lord, who can discern the thoughts, the motives, and the intents of God's people's hearts. Then, Lord, take the Word of God and meet their need today. Father, we ask You to do that, and we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

II. The Purpose of Ministry and the Seven Old Testament Men

You'll remember that last week I told you that there are seven men in the Old Testament that really form a composite of what your life should be. As I've come through the Bible over the years, I've found basically, and I guess you could say this a couple of different ways, I've found basically in your life, and you remember now, when you get saved, God saves you for one purpose, and that purpose is to minister the Word of God to somebody else.

We have a bad definition of the ministry today, and it's because we don't understand the Bible anymore. This is why I push you so hard so many times, to prod you, to get you to move forward, because ministry in the Bible is not you coming to church. It's not what you do where you work, though obviously your job, you should view your job as your mission field, but not necessarily your ministry. Your ministry is in this church. Every ministry you have, that would be an extension of your ministry that you're doing here. That's why ministry in the Bible is only defined as you working one-on-one with somebody in the scriptures or teaching somebody the

Bible in whatever form. In this church, we have a number of ways that you do that. This is why I take the concept of discipleship and develop it in so many people's lives. I'll put maybe a new girl or a new guy with somebody, and then in time, I'll put somebody else with them that they can learn the ropes and how to do it. It's all about getting you to the place where you legitimately, in a New Testament Bible format, minister to people in the Word of God, because that's what ministry is.

I also say this: nowhere in the Bible, nowhere in the scripture, and if you've been saved five years or more, I kind of give everybody around here five years grace just to figure out what's going on, but if you've been saved five years or more and you're not actively involved in teaching somebody the Word of God, there's something wrong in your life. You can justify it all you want; you can say whatever you want to say about it, but nowhere in the scriptures does God ever acknowledge a child of God that is not involved in ministry, and ministry is teaching somebody the Word of God in whatever format through your local church.

You're going to find that the ministry, I've found this to be true when you come through the Bible, you'll find that there are men in the Bible that form a composite of what my life as a minister should be. Not a pastor; not all of you will be pastors, but every one of you that is saved this morning should be a minister. What you do is you learn the ministry through your local church by growing, getting involved yourself, being disciplined, discipling somebody else, and then basically moving up those levels to get to where God wants you to be. Nothing exposes, to me anyhow, nothing exposes where a person is really at and what they're really all about until they're faced with the aspect of getting their eyes off themselves and beginning to minister to somebody else. That is one of the greatest tools that you read in people's character, or in some cases, lack of character.

You're going to find that I've noticed over the years in my own life as I've studied the Bible that there are seven areas as a minister, and when you begin to work with people, you're going to find these same seven areas. There are seven men in the Old Testament that really form the composite of how we're to deal with these things.

III. Lessons from Old Testament Men: Overcoming Challenges

Now, one of the things that you're going to struggle with and you're going to have to deal with is obviously the world. I talked to you last week about how the number one problem most of God's people have is they're yoked to this world; they can't make the break from the world. You're going to have to deal with that because you're not going to be able to exclude yourself from the world, and whatever ministry you have is going to be in the world. You're going to have to see and hear many times all the ungodly stuff that goes on, and you're going to have to come to the place where you're so insulated from it that it doesn't affect you in ministry. Of course, if you want to learn how to overcome the world, then you study the life of Noah. There's certainly a man that when you study his life, he stood alone in Genesis 6. He stood alone against everybody on planet Earth for 120 years. He understood how to overcome the world.

Another aspect of ministry that you're going to have to learn and begin to deal with is the aspect of keeping your attitude as a servant within ministry. That's probably one of the hardest things to do because the ministry constantly will thrust people into the limelight. Many pastors lose their ability to minister to people simply because they take themselves too seriously, and they actually believe that they're in some way in tune with the Godhead. You see them distinct themselves from their people more and more. Of course, the real key is to learn in ministry how that even though you may be ministering to somebody and working with somebody, and you may be in charge of two or three people, you never lose the attitude of being a servant. I guess the greatest example of that in the Bible would be Moses. Moses shows you how to keep your sanity in the middle of God's people and God's ministry and still be a servant. If you study the life of Moses, it shows you very clearly what you're up against when you get into ministry in God's church: a bunch of people that complain about everything, whine about everything. His whole, one of the greatest character studies in the Bible is Moses, and to watch him go back and forth and what he struggled with, but yet he understood he had a calling of God to minister to God's people.

It's comical sometimes, and you see the relationship that God and Moses had, and it shows you the relationship you and I should have with God. There are some points in the first five books of the Bible that Moses is so mad at the people of God because of their stupidity. He comes in there and gets along with God, and the Bible says that he spoke with God face to face, like a man speaketh to his friend. He's one of the two men in the Bible that talks about being God's friend. There are times in there where Moses goes in with God and he says, "God, these people are the worst people, the dumbest people, the stupidest people. I want You to come down and kill every one of them right now, and wipe them off the face of the map." God says, "Now, Moses, now, Moses, now, Moses, come on now." Then there are times when Moses comes in with God, and God is ticked off, and God says, "Moses, those are the dumbest, stupidest people I ever met in My life. I don't know why I called them out of Egypt. I'm going to wipe every one of them out." And Moses says to God, "Oh, come on, Lord, You know You don't want to do that." See, if you sitting here this morning don't understand that kind of relationship with God that you can have, you miss out on the intimacy of a relationship with God, and Moses shows you how to maintain your attitude of a servant in the midst of ministry, which is pretty tough sometimes. As Will Rogers once said, "The more you're around people, the better he likes dogs," and I understand that.

If you want to understand the ministry itself on all the aspects—God's calling, the ministry, the holy things of the ministry, the things that you ought to be doing as a minister—then you want to study the life of Samuel. If you want to study how to survive your adversary, the devil, who the Bible says in 1 Peter 5:8:

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Then you'll want to study Job. If you want to study how to overcome your flesh and the things of the flesh, and this is another great problem that many of God's people have, and we all struggle

with it to some degree, if you want to understand how to overcome your flesh and get a handle on the things of the flesh of this world, then you're going to want to study the life of Daniel.

Now, coming to our two guys. If you want to learn, and I gave you that because nine or ten of you called me this week on one of these guys, and I said, "I'll just do it this coming Sunday," so I'll give them to you, but I have to do it ten times. But if you want to really learn how, once you get saved, you begin to perfect your faith to become God's friend, then you study the life of Abraham. If you want to understand God's righteousness imputed to you with nothing you could do to get it, study Abraham. If you want to study how to have a relationship with the Word of God that will change your life, that will transform you into the image of Christ in everything that you do, study David. The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart, and what a tremendous study that is, and shall fulfill all of God's will. We saw from these last two men, Abraham and David, the two aspects last week that you have to have to fulfill all of God's will in your life, and of course, that's being God's friend and getting God's heart, God's heart being the Word of God.

A study of Romans would be totally incomplete and completely lacking without a study of these two men's lives. At the same time, so is your Christian life. Your Christian life will never be what it needs to be. At some point in your life, you're going to have to do a study on these seven men, and you're going to have to go in there. If you ever really take the ministry seriously and you ever fulfill God's will for your life, you're going to have to put aside the tribulation period, put aside the Antichrist. All those things are good, but you're going to have to take a practical approach to the seven men in the Old Testament that illustrate the seven aspects that you and I need to have that makes up a complete composite. By the way, there are seven men in the Old Testament; there are also seven men in the New Testament. They show you something different, but they're an incredible study.

IV. David's Life: A Framework for Study

Now, you take David as a study of his life, and we're going to look at David for the next three or four weeks, and we're going to kind of break it down so you can understand some things. We don't have time to go into everything about his life, but I think that now that we see that Romans is built around the life of Abraham and David and what they represent, it's useless to go any farther in Romans 4 without laying a foundation as a point of reference about these two guys. So we're going to talk about David, and then a little bit later on, in the latter part of Romans 4, we're going to talk about Abraham. But we want to begin to look at David today, and I think it'll be a study. His life is an incredible study.

I always make things easy because that's the way I have to do it. I'm not the brightest light bulb in the box, and I have to make things easy for me. A study of David's life, when I broke it down and came through his life, I broke David's life down into three aspects, and those three aspects really made it easy for me to grasp a lot of material. That's basically the same thing I do for you in Institute; you know how I break the Bible down.

- 1.) David as a young shepherd boy.

- 2.) David as the king.
- 3.) David as God's man.

Those three areas, breaking a man's life down into those three areas, gives you everything that you need in a very systematic way to grasp what you've got. That's the way, by the way, we're going to study it today. It will be a kind of an introductory message, and then we're going to take David as the shepherd, David as the king, and David as God's man, and hopefully, in those three areas, we'll be able to lay it down and give you a foundation that you can really look at.

In your Bible, not only do I break David down into three categories that help me understand it, and I didn't do it this way because I saw this, it just happened this way, but there are also three books of the Bible that break David down to give you what you want.

When you study 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, you're going to find that these books record the physical life of David. They're going to bring you from David as a little shepherd boy to David the king. They're going to show you everything that you need to know about how to build a relationship with God in the tender years. I look at many of you right now that have come into our church, and I look at you in those very formidable, tender years where right now what you're doing with God, or what you get with God, or the instruction that you get from me, or how I help you, or how your discipleship person works with you, is going to be absolutely vital to how you come out on the other end. We see that; we see his formative years, him being a shepherd, the tender years with God. We see his battle with Goliath. Then we come up to the point where he rises up the level, just like you do, and we see his anointing as king. We see some of his fatal errors in judgment, and we see his penalty for it. Some of the greatest parallels you'll ever find from his life to yours, lessons to be learned in the life of David, lessons to be learned in the life of Abraham, that show us underlying all the time that here's a man that got God's righteousness imputed to him when he didn't deserve it, and he should have lost it, and we'll talk about that as we come through and we'll tie it all together.

Your first two books are 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, and these books, as I said, deal with the physical life of David, and they show you the first two aspects: David the shepherd boy and David the king.

Then we have 1 Chronicles. 1 Chronicles, on the other hand, deals with David in an entirely different light. Here we see his connection to Christ as God's man. You know what you find? In 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, you'll find all the negative things that David does. You'll find in 1 Chronicles not one mention of Bathsheba, or Uriah the Hittite. You won't find one mention of anything he does bad. You know why? Because in 1 Chronicles, he's portrayed as Christ, and you see the personalities and the character traits of Christ in his life in that book, and there are no negative things about David in that book. It's incredible, absolutely incredible.

You're going to see that in 1 Chronicles 1-9, it basically deals with the genealogical line back to Christ. If I remember right, I think there are nine chapters on genealogies in the first nine chapters there that all document and deal with the fact that David is in the line of the Son of David, or Christ. When you get into 1 Chronicles 10-20, it deals with the character traits; it shows you his personality traits that make him the man after God's own heart. You'll find there is what

God saw and what God had with him, and it's not focused on the physical things; it's focused on the spiritual thing.

I remember one time reading that a number of years ago and putting that in my Bible, and it hit me like a ton of bricks: the way his life is broken down itself. Now, keep in mind that David and Abraham represent something in parallel in your life and my life. I remember looking at it and thinking to myself, "Wow, the way his life breaks down into two sections, one physical and one spiritual, is exactly the picture of how our life breaks down with our old nature and our new nature." You're going to find there's a side of you and me that is very wicked; there's a side of you and me that is not pleasing to God. But then there's a side of you and me that is very pleasing to God, and when God looks at it, it's sinless and it's perfect. It's the flesh versus the new nature, the old nature versus the new nature, it's the old man versus the spiritual man. When you come through those books in the Bible, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel represent the physical man, David, but when you get into 1 Chronicles, it represents the heavenly man, the spiritual man, David, and it shows you the picture of your and my relationship, our character.

If you want to chart out your own life course really, and you want to stay on course, and you don't want to get off the track, and you want to make sure that you keep your life as functional as God as you can, and I know in this world everybody's crazy and gets messed up at some point, I'm not saying, but the bottom line is, don't get too far off course. If you want to keep your life from making some really bad choices in life, study David. Study the lessons of his life and what he went through, and how, in spite of it all, study the physical man and the spiritual man, and you're going to come up with some great things that will help you keep from making some really bad choices in life, which obviously are going to lead to some very bad tragedies in your life.

Yet, I'm sure as I'm saying that, to some people probably sitting here in the sound of my voice, you've got them in every crowd, somebody out there is probably saying, "Well, look at David. There's a great case. David screwed up and made all kinds of bad choices, but God said at the end of his life, he was God's man." In fact, the Bible said that at the end of his life, he only had one thing against him: that was the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Some people are going to listen to what I'm saying today and are going to walk out of here saying, "Well, you know what, that works for him, it'll work for me. I'm just going to do my thing and love God and go to church and do this and do that, do what I want to do. If David could get screwed up as much as he did and still God say he was a man of my own heart, then I'm going to try it." You actually got people who think that way. I've actually had Christians tell me, honestly, this is true, I've actually had Christians tell me that they were going to take their chances at the judgment seat of Christ. The fact was, they're saved, and they know they're going to heaven, so maybe the judgment seat of Christ is a bad thing, but so what? You're going to get to go to heaven after the end of it, so I'll just, you know, take a leather thong and put it in my mouth and bite down on it, or a stick, you know, and when I get through the other side, then I'll be okay, and I'll be in heaven. You're an idiot. You're an absolute fool. Somebody that says, "Well, David went through..." Yeah, he did, but did you see the price tag that he paid to get back? Sure, yeah, you can live your life and do what you want to do and then just say, "Well, you know what, I'm going to, I'm going to, David

did it, I can do it," but don't make that rash statement without stopping and looking at the price tag that he had to pay by making some of the decisions that he made. Incredible.

As I said, we're going to look at his life the next couple of weeks, and I want to bring you through, starting next week, and show you David as the shepherd. I want to bring you through and show you David as the king, and I want to bring you through and show you David as God's man. Do you ever see the composite of that? Right now, if you're saved, you ought to be, and I'm giving you again three or four years to get your feet on the ground. I'm not, every time I start talking like this, I know all you young Christians start taking it too personal, and all your older Christians just let it blow over your head. So the bottom line is, I'm not talking to you young Christians, but do you ever see the composite of that? Right now, if you've been saved three or four years, whatever the case may be, you ought to be a shepherd. You ought to have somebody that you are shepherding in this church. You know why? Have you ever seen that? David started out a shepherd, and he wound up being a king. Now you see the process. Right now, you ought to be a shepherd, but someday, if you do what's right as a shepherd, you're going to be a king when Christ comes back, and in the process, you ought to be God's man or God's woman.

See that thing works. Right now, you ought to be a shepherd. You may not like it; I don't care if you like it or not. If you've been saved five years or more in this church and you're not shepherding somebody right now... I had a guy, good wife, about two or three years ago, maybe four years ago, they left the church, and one of the things they left is the fact that I didn't give money to anybody to disciple. My answer was, "You want somebody to disciple? Where is it in the bylaws that I have to give you somebody to disciple? You want somebody to disciple? Go win somebody to Christ and disciple him. Why do you always look to me to give you what your ministry is?" Now, obviously, when people come in this ministry, there are people that I'm going to use to work with that. But if you really are just that dogging that you want to get on your knees and don't get off your knees till God gives you somebody to win to Christ and then disciple them. See, you ought to be a shepherd right now. Someday you're going to be a king, and you ought to be God's man in between the two points. Great study. That's a good sermon, by the way, if somebody wants to steal it. Well, don't laugh, I stole it. You think I come up with it on my own?

I think that looking at shepherd, king, and God's man, I really think that putting this thing in a context, I think we'll learn more if we take the time to look at the first thing. You know, that's the way I am. When I buy a book, I always read the last chapter first. I do, because that way I can tell if I really want to say... you're laughing, and you do the same thing, don't you? You give yourself away. You've got to learn to have a strong look on your face. You know why? Because then if I don't like it, I don't read the whole book, and if somebody gets killed, I don't have to read it. That's the best part anyhow, the gory part at the end.

Did you know that God wanted you to read the last part of His book before you read the first part? The last part, I don't mean this in a bad way, but the last part of God's book, Revelation, is more important than the first part of His book, if you know what I'm talking about, because the last part of His book is the last prayer in the Bible, and that last prayer in the Bible, that'll be your prayer this morning. So I'm going to keep in keeping with the way I do things. I want to preach a

message on the problems David got into before we get into those three things. I think it'll give us a perspective. I think it really will. I thought about this all week, and I want this to be on our minds as we study it as a point of reference. If I would wait till the end and do it, you'd already forget what I'm going to say, but I guarantee you, I promise you today, you will not forget in the next couple of weeks what I'm going to say to you today, and I think it'll be a good point of reference for all of us.

V. The Danger of Bad Choices and Their Consequences

I've been around in Christianity for a number of years and dealt with many, many people, but I don't think there's ever been a time in my life, looking across Christianity, where I have seen a time where some of God's people have made more incredible bad choices in their lives. I look at the disasters that are unfolding in people's lives, and I'm not talking about necessarily here, though I'm sure there are. I'm talking about in Christianity in general. Some of God's people have made some really bad choices in life after they have been saved, and they make those choices not understanding that with every bad choice comes a consequence.

Now, I'm going to be very honest with you: some consequences are less than others. I mean, obviously, if you go out and speed down the I-70 and you get pulled over by state highway patrol, you know the consequence of speeding was a ticket that's probably 150 bucks. Now that's bad, but you go out and murder somebody, the consequences are a lot worse. In other words, what I'm saying is, there are some bad decisions you can make, you can skate by, and there are some bad decisions you make that are going to kill you dead in your tracks spiritually. The key is, don't make any more than you have to, and the real key is, don't make any at all, but I know that's, for us, not going to work too well.

I've seen people make bad decisions that have affected their children. I've seen husbands make bad decisions that affected their wives, affected their marriages. I've seen people make bad decisions that have disrupted their lifestyle in a great way, and not even to bring into fact, and I don't mean to minimize it, but I've seen them make bad decisions that at the end of the day affected their walk with God and their relationship with God. It's easy to do. Violations of God's principles always come and always set in motion an automatic law, a number of automatic laws. It just happens. The fact is, the laws sometimes, the offense or the violation is lesser than other offenses, but there's never a time... it's like I said, you get caught speeding, the consequences are a fine. You get caught murdering somebody, the consequence is probably probation in our world we live in today. But the consequences go up as the offense goes up, or the bad choice goes up, as I should say.

I want to tell you something: the easiest thing in the world today for you and me to do, and I'm speaking to myself too, the easiest thing in the world today that we all do, and for easier to do, is to deceive ourselves. We really do. I guarantee you, if most of God's people knew what the Bible put down in detail as a critique of what it takes to have a real working relationship with God, you'd find that very few of God's people really have that relationship.

I remember reading a story in Luke 2:42-46, and it's one of my favorite stories, and it illustrates my point. It's a story about the young Jesus when He was just a boy of 12 years old, and His parents and a group of His brothers and sisters were all going someplace, and on their way to another place, and they were traveling for like two days. Then they're all going around having a great time talking and everything, and suddenly, after two days' time, somebody said, "You know, Jesus hasn't been with us since we left." They had gone on a journey God knows how many miles, had all kinds of family interaction, but it was only after a day or two days that somebody suddenly missed that Jesus wasn't in their midst anymore. You know what that tells me? That tells me that you can go on down the road of life thinking Jesus is walking with you when in actuality He's not. You know what happened to that family at that point? They were so busy talking about everything else and getting involved in everything else that Jesus became a non-event, and they just assumed that He was back there in the back somewhere. "Oh, you know how He is, He's probably catching tadpoles, He'll catch up. You know how He is, He's out there throwing rocks at the scribe." Whatever He's doing, "He'll catch up, He'll get here." The truth of the matter is, He wasn't there at all.

In our lives as Christians, we go down this road where we think He's with us. Now, I'm not talking about not being saved; I'm talking about in your walk and your fellowship. We think He's with us. We think He's in what we're doing. But that's why when you get into the Bible, you'll find out what it really critiques, like I gave you last week when I gave you the pre-controversies. Boy, my phone was buzzing off all week on that one. I ask you what it really takes to please God. You see, we get those suppositions in our minds that we think, "Oh, if I go to church, that'll please God. If I give this or do this, that'll please God. Well, if I'm discipling somebody, that pleases God." None of those things please God. Those things are things you ought to be doing because you're a Christian. What does it take to please God is one thing, and unfortunately, most of us don't have that one thing, and that's what I'm talking about. That's what you've got here. It's an incredible thing.

The older I get, I call myself an "exacto." When you go to Hobby Lobby, you buy those little exacto knives, those little sharp razor blades that you can, not like scissors or a machete or a regular pair of scissors. An exacto knife means you can cut exacto. Exacto is Spanish for "exactly," and an exacto knife means that you're going to cut exactly. It's so fine, it's so sharp, it's like a surgeon's scalpel. You don't... it ain't like, you know, if you went in to have surgery and you looked on the table over there and you saw these real fine razor blade scalpels with a real curved edge that fits the surgeon's hand with that little sharp razor blade, and you looked over the other side and there's a chainsaw and an axe and a big pair of scissors, you're going to get a little nervous. I want the surgeon to be an exacto. You and I, when it comes to the Bible, ought to be an exacto.

The older I get, the more I realize, and I'm not saying that I've figured it all out, I'm as dumb as the next guy, probably dumber, but I do know this: I know that everything in that Bible is important, and the older I get, the more exact I want to be with the Bible for my own personal relationship with God. I don't want to miss anything. I'm 58 years old, and I don't have a lot of time to spend. I've missed a lot of things in life; I don't want to miss much more.

The Bible does many, many things, and one of the attributes of the Bible is the way that it lays out every problem that man gets into. There isn't anything that you and I aren't going to get into that the Bible doesn't show you the cause and the effect. We call it attitude and action. When you develop the wrong attitude, it's always going to produce the wrong action. It's just that simple. That's why I push and push and push and push and push for some of you, or all of you, to make your decisions in life based on biblical principle, because that's what I call exacto. That's exactly the way you're supposed to do it. When you come through, you'll find that the Bible lays out every sin that a man or a person can get into. It shows us the cause and the effect. It shows us the basic laws: the law of sowing and reaping, the law of violated principles, and then it shows us the law of compounded sin.

But the Bible not only by men's lives does it show me the problems man gets into and the consequences, but if you're really paying attention, you know what it does? And this is more important to me, and if you're going to ever deal with people, if you're ever going to get into the mode of ministry where you're working one-on-one with people that have severe issues, when it comes to dealing with people, when we get into counseling in the Institute coming up here next year, I'll show you that dealing with people, I categorize it in three levels. I kind of categorize it in the medical world.

- 1.) There are some people you're going to work with that I call "band-aids and Merthiolate." They just got little ouchies, and you can work with them and help them through that. Sometimes they're just lonely, or sometimes they're just not fulfilled, and it's no real problem. It is the natural little band-aids and Merthiolate. You be with them, you disciple them, you bring them in, you get them involved in softball or volleyball or whatever we do, and that pretty much brings them right in and gives them what they want.
- 2.) Then you have the next level, you have what I call "broken arms and appendectomies." They require a little more than band-aids and Merthiolate. You've got to be able, and that would be somebody in a bad relationship or a broken relationship, or somebody that maybe is depressed, or somebody that's lost a job, or somebody that's got a sin in their life, or whatever, just a good, whatever.
- 3.) And then you have those that what I call "brain surgery and heart transplant," the third level. That requires somebody who really knows what they're doing. That requires somebody who understands just about everything in the Bible that it lays out and dealing with human nature and how to deal with it.

Along with that, you've got to understand, not only does the Bible lay out the cause and effect of man's problems, but you know what else it does? And this is where you really get into it: it shows you long before that sin ever manifested itself, the bad choice that that person made that opened up the door for that bad sin to manifest itself someplace down the line. It's an incredible study. You just don't learn what the man did. When I deal with somebody that's got some real issues or some real problems, you know what I do? I don't want them just to, I don't want to just fix their problem. I think I do them a severe injustice if I just show them how to fix their problem. I think along with that, I've got to take them back and show them the bad choice they made that got them into the mess that they're in. Otherwise, they're never going to learn from the

mistake. It's not just about what you did or what you didn't do; it's about what was your thought process, what was your decision-making, on what principle or lack thereof did you make that decision that brought about... And so many times we focus on the problem, and we never go back and look at the decision-making process that put that problem into flourishing and brought it about. I think it's an incredible thing.

I've got a list of about 20 of them in the Bible, and I keep adding to them as I go through and over the years, maybe more than that, I don't know. But stop and look at just a couple. I'll show you what I mean so you don't follow what I'm saying.

You take Samson. Samson's found in Judges 13-16. Samson's life, when you read it, is a picture of what your life and my life should be. God called Samson; God called Samson to deliver the nation of Israel. You know the story: the Philistines are oppressing the nation of Israel, and God called Samson, set Samson apart to take God's side with God's people against the enemies of God. Basically, that's what God has saved and called you to do. We talked about this last week: God saved you, you're saved here this morning, God saved you so you would take God's side against the world and help God's people. There are a lot of people out there, saved people, lost people, that are under the bondage of this world that God has called you to liberate them through the Word of God, just like He called Samson to liberate His people from the Philistines. You know why most of God's people will never realize that in life and never do it? The same reason that Samson didn't.

Now, what was Samson's problem? You say, "Oh, his problem was Delilah. Delilah got him, gave him a haircut, lost his hair and lost his strength, and then he wound up..." No, no, no, no, no. You see, that's what I mean. Delilah was not his problem. Delilah was just the manifestation of a problem, of a bad choice that he made. No, no, his bad choice and his problem goes all the way back at the beginning in Judges 14:2 with the worst words out of his mouth: "I have seen a woman; get her for me." His problem was an attitude that he had about only what he wanted. It was about what he wanted. That's where the problem started.

You look at Rehoboam. Rehoboam was Solomon's son. Under Rehoboam, the nation of Israel goes into a great disaster, one of the greatest disasters that the house of Israel really never recovers from. It was the fact where he split the kingdom of Israel, or the house of Israel. He split it north and south, and it just devastated. In fact, that's what the devil did: the devil divided Israel, and then he conquered Israel. That's what he did. Now, Rehoboam, again, he had the opportunity to take over after his father Solomon. He had the ability to be and do everything that carried the thing on, but what happened? He screwed it up, and the reason he screwed it up, and the reason the fact that he split those tribes, was because of a decision that he made long before he did what he did. Somebody said, "Well, Solomon really messed the thing up when he split the nation of Israel, and the devil came in, and that division, and the house of Israel got divided, and they got conquered." Yeah, but that wasn't his problem.

Have you ever seen what his problem was? His problem is in 1 Kings 12:6-10. You know what he did? He forsook the wise counsel that his father listened to, and he got eggheads around himself that were young and didn't have no experience in life, and he listened to them instead of the old

men who knew God, and he took some bad advice, and he ruined the house of Israel. You know, I've seen God's people do the same thing. I've seen you, and I'm going to tell you right now, the devil is after your house. He's after your house. This would be one thing if the devil was just after you. You're going to see down through here when we get to David that he's after your house, and the devil split the house of Israel, and when he did it, it was because of the decision that Rehoboam would not listen to the wise counsel of somebody that knew what they were talking about. He got his advice from all of his buddies out there, and everybody today has their own homespun remedy for solving your problems and your issues, and he got into the biggest mess he ever got into, and it split his house. How many times have I seen a child of God in a family where the house gets split right down the middle because of the fact that they don't listen, they don't listen to the biblical principles? They're too busy getting what everybody else's opinion is and try to run their life like that. It's never about the end result; it's about where did he get messed up?

You take Israel itself as a nation. Here's a good one. In 606 BC, the nation of Israel went into an absolute tailspin from which, even to this day, it's never recovered. You know where it started? It started when they got the wrong king. It didn't start in 606 BC. It didn't start with Rehoboam. It didn't start with Ahab. It started when they were looking at two choices: one of them God's choice, and the other one the devil's choice. Now, here's a great example: they took Saul, which was not God's choice; it was the people's choice. What was the first clue that Saul was not going to work out? Oh, hey, I know, by appearances, he looked like he was God's man. The Bible said he's taller than anybody else in the kingdom. The Bible says that he had a magnetic personality, and people were drawn to him. But what was the kicker? What should we be looking at in any decision process other than the guy's stature? The Bible says David, on the other hand, was a little runt. Why, when they brought the sons of Jesse before Samuel to make the king, they didn't even bother calling David up? You know why? He was little, he was scrawny, and nobody thought this guy would ever be king, and that's exactly the man God wanted. You know how Israel got messed up? They took the wrong king. You know why they took the wrong king? They weren't paying attention to the little things in the Bible.

Somebody raise your hand and tell me, if you would, what that Jew should have known: Saul will never work out if he was paying attention to his Bible. Anybody? We won't spend here all day. I'll tell you. You know what the problem was? He's from the wrong tribe. He's from Benjamin. Genesis 49 says that when the scepter comes, it'll come from Judah. You've got to pay attention. You've got to be an exacto when it comes to that Bible. You don't ever look at the apparent, "Well, he must be the guy. Look how big he is, look how tall he is. Wow, what a charismatic personality. Whoa, is he ever away with people?" Yeah, but he's from the wrong tribe. That's how they got messed up.

How about Paul? Let's jump over to the New Testament. Paul is a great example of what I call the burden of God versus the bullheadedness of man. Paul was the greatest Christian ever lived, but he could not get out of his head he was going down to Jerusalem. God told him in the book of Acts three times, "Don't go to Jerusalem," but he's bullheaded. Nobody's going to tell Paul what to do. Here's a classic example that he wanted the Jews to do right more than they did.

Counseling rule 101: he had it in his heart; it became a burden. He wanted the Jews. God says, "You're not going down there. I've called you to the Gentiles." But he's so bullheaded, he's going to do it his way no matter what God says. God sent people to him; He sent his friends to him. Everybody said, "Paul, don't make that choice." Lost the last two years of his ministry and wound up being in jail for those two years. God only knows what he would have done if he'd had a full ministry. I mean, God used it the way it was, and he tells us that.

Solomon was another great example. Solomon was another great example. Solomon was a great example of what? He's the only man in the Bible, you've heard me say this before, he's the only man in the Bible who is both a type of Christ and a type of Antichrist. Now, I know what that means doctrinally, but you know what that parallel means to me? Have you ever studied his life back there when he goes down the tubes after 1 Kings 10 down around the middle of the chapter? You realize what he does? You realize here's a saved man who followed God, wrote four books of your Bible, and laid those things out and put them in there, what will be called the wisdom books. You know what he did? He took his children and burned them in the fire of Molech to the false gods at his lowest point. You know what that tells me? I'll tell you right now, some of you saved people are going to heaven, and your kids are going to hell. You'll put them in that fire just like he put them in the fire. The parallels are incredible. Bad choices in your life are going to lead to disasters because an automatic law, or several automatic laws, kick in when you decide to do something other than what the Word of God says.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, letting his kids go down there and putting those little babies on the fire of Molech, when they crank those arms up and they bring those arms up and dump that little baby into that brass open belly filled with fire, it's a picture of exactly what happens with God's people. You know where Solomon's problem started? You say, "Yeah, yeah, it started in 1 Kings 10:14 where you start coming down there, all of a sudden 666 shows up." No, no, no, that's not where it started. You want to be an exacto when it comes to the Bible. You know where it started? It started in 1 Kings 6:37-38 and 1 Kings 7:1, where the Bible says that he was seven years building God's house, but he was 13 years building his own. Don't ever take more time building this flesh temple that you've got than you do building the one God's inside you. Don't ever make your physical house better off and bigger than the God's house that lives inside you. Don't ever get so caught up that you spend more time with the physical things in this world and the grandiose things you think you just got to have and leave the house of God in disarray. See, that thing works.

Now, those are some of the most incredible kinds, and I could have taken every one of those and added about 20 to it and just ruined our day more than I already have. But you take David. You know what his problem was? Somebody says, "Oh, I know, I know, it was murder and adultery with Uriah and Bathsheba." No, no, no, no, no. That was the fruit spawned by the real issue. The real problem David had was simply this: a choice that he made.

Turn to 2 Samuel 11. I'll show you the choice, and we'll find out, and you look at this, and you'll find out first, before we ever look at David's life and see what God did for him, where he got off track. I think it'll be very instructive to you to keep it in perspective throughout our whole study.

2 Samuel 11:1-2

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

You know what his problem was? It had nothing to do with murder and adultery. That was the end result of a bad decision that he made. You know the decision that got that thing going? You know the decision that brought the end result and put automatically in effect? You know what it was? He stayed out of the battle. He stayed out of the battle. The thing that's going to get God... You want to study the life of David and make the parallels to your life? I'll tell you, you and I as a New Testament Christian, the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 8:8, "There's no discharge from this war." No reason at all. You can't ever get out of the battle. It doesn't matter the reason you do. The problem is the fact that you think you can and you can survive. We're just using David as an example.

People get into a jam. I watch it all the time, all my life. They get in the jam, and the first thing that goes is God. The first thing that goes is God. Automatically, they drop Bible study, they drop ministry, they don't have time. They've got to get two or three jobs to do this or that. You see, you got into a mess by a series of bad choices. Now the devil's got you right where he wants you. The pressure's on, so you'll make another bad choice by cutting God's program out of your life. You say to yourself, "Well, you know what, when I..." How many times have I heard this over here? "When I get this fixed, then I'll get back in." You're a fool. Once you're out of the battle by a bad choice, the devil makes sure you don't get back, and if you do get back, when do you see the price tag that comes with it? You're kidding yourself.

I know a kid right now, and he comes to church every once in a while, one of the nicest guys you ever met, and I love him. He came back here about, oh, I don't know, two, three months ago after the church, and he just pops in every six months when he gets really convicted or some disaster falls in his life. Came in here a couple of months ago, got me aside over there, and he said, "Bob," he said, "you know what," he said, "my life's really a mess." And I said, "Tell me something I don't know. Your life's been a mess forever, and you know why? Because you won't do what's right." He said, "I got problems with my wife, I got problems in my family." I said, "No kidding, but why do you have that? Look at the choices you've made." He says, "You know," he says, "you got to help me." I said, "I'll do whatever I can, but what we've got to do first is stop making bad choices." He says, "I got a daughter who's going to be ready to be saved, and she wants to be saved, and I don't know how to win her to Christ." And I said, "That's the consequences of the bad choices you've made. You're going to have to clean up your life, do what you got to do, and get your family back in church." Haven't seen him now for four months. You know what will happen? He's saved, he's a saved man, he's going to heaven. His kids are going to split hell wide open. This attack is against your house. It'd be one thing if it was just

you. The devil's got his crosshairs on you. He goes to get your kids in hell, and this kid is the tool for the devil to do it. Incredible, absolutely incredible.

I'm telling you what, Paderewski was a great piano player, great concert piano player, one of the greatest the world has ever seen. He used to say, "You know what," he says, "I practiced 10 hours a day, seven days a week. If I miss one practice, I can tell I'm off. If I miss two days of practice, the music critics can tell I'm off, and if I miss a week of practice, everybody knows I'm off." You know what your problem is? You've been away from practice too long. That's your problem. For whatever reason, whatever reason, you've not been practicing.

Some of you are all worried about the Institute. There's tests coming up, 160 questions and counting. Well, let me just say something to you, and I'll give you, if I can give you some good fatherly advice: some of you ought to come in before the Institute and just quit, because if you flunk the test, you're going to come in to me and sit out in front of me and explain to me what part you didn't understand when I told you what it took, and you've got to just save yourself a lot of trouble, because it's very obvious at this point this thing is not important to you. It's like everything else in your Christian life. While it was shiny and bright, you wanted it, but when you do some dumb things because of dumb decisions and the consequences come, God's the first one out. Ministry is the first thing to go. It's a test that you can't study for, so you might as well quit right now studying for it. You can't study for it. There are no deep questions. There's nothing in that that's going to be a trick. It's going to take exactly what I told you. If you should have been putting your stuff in your Bible and learning it every week and putting everything in its place and bringing it right down there and going over every week, you will pass this test. If you've not been doing that, you are not going to pass it, and you're going to tell me why. To whom much is given, much is required. It took me 40 years to learn that Bible. It took me, it's going to take me another 100 years to get it in practice. And for you to take what it took me 40 years, and I give it to you in less time, and then you... I'm not even going to say what you did... well, and you're just going to dump it. You're not going to take it real. We'll see, we'll see, we'll see how many say, "Well, you know what, I'll just, well, I'll get back, I'll get..."

Let me show you what I mean when I tell you that you may get back, but my God, where do you see the price tag? Where do you see what it pays? Where do you see the price tag that comes along with it? Like a guy said one time, "My kids are always saying the grass is greener on the other side of the fence." Yeah, maybe so, but when you see the water bill, there's always a price tag.

VI. The Compounding Effect of Sin

Now I want you to see this thing with David. David's fundamental problem had nothing to do with Bathsheba. His fundamental problem had to do with he got out of the battle. He quit ministry. He got more involved in whatever he was involved in, and he suddenly said to himself, "I don't have to be on Thursday night anymore. I don't have to be at Institute. I don't have to study my stuff. I have a right, or I got so many issues in my life right now, I just can't do all those things." Yeah, you've got those issues in your life because of a bad choice, a bad decision, and

now you're going to make another bad decision and put God out, thinking in your mind, "Oh, I'll get back." Let me show you why you won't, and if you do, let me show you the price tag.

Oh, the law of compounding sin, or one bad choice leads to another. Here's what you're up against. Look at 1 Chronicles 21:1. Now this takes place just a short time later after the first decision. Now we see David making another bad choice, but oh my, my, my, what detail was in this one? Whoa, boy, God pulled back the veil and shows us something here. The devil's watching the whole thing. The devil's watching the whole thing, and then the automatic law, once he makes the first bad choice, the automatic laws begin to go into effect. The devil watches what happens, and he's right on track with it. Now we see the law of compounding effect of bad choices.

1 Chronicles 21:1

And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

Do you get that? It isn't about you. It isn't about just you. If it was, it'd be one thing. The devil wasn't just after David; he wanted to destroy the house of Israel, and David was the tool he was going to do it by. The devil wants to destroy your family. He wants to destroy your kids. He wants to destroy your marriage, and many times God's people are the very tools that the devil uses. You know why? Because they go from one bad choice to another, one bad choice to another.

Now, let me just take a second and explain to you the concept or the problem with numbering the people. First of all, it's a direct violation of Deuteronomy 30:11. You see, when the nation of Israel were going to war, going into battle, it was perfectly acceptable for them to number the people, find out in a muster, in a draft, how many able-bodied combat men they had. No other time, no other time was Israel told to or allowed to number the people, because the numbering of the people, other than for war, was a national pride thing. It was a "look at who we are."

David has already made one bad choice. He's gotten out of the battle, and once you get out of the battle, if you ever get in, once you get out of the battle, it's not, "Well, I'll get back." No, no, no. If it was just the perfect world, yes. The devil's got his crosshairs on you. He's going to compound into your life. He's going to make sure you don't, and if you do, there's going to be a price tag to pay. Look at his life. Don't look at me like I'm a frog in a hailstorm. Look at his life. His life stands in great stark contrast to what God wants us to do with our lives. Yet he was God's man. Don't tell me a Christian can't get into these things.

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people." The devil's just not after you; he wants your house. He'll use you as the tool to get your kids in hell, and you allow him to do it because you just consistently keep on making bad choices and taking, getting out of a battle, getting out of the ministry, and because you've got to do what you've got to do, and because you made a bad choice in it instead of doing what you need to do. That's what David did. David made one bad choice. You know what he's doing now? He's in control. God's not. That's why he numbered the people. He wants to feel good about himself. He wants to feel good about his decision to stay out of the battle. You know what he does? He gets out there and he

says, "Number all the people. Let's see how many people we got. Nine million, four hundred and forty-three. Oh, yeah, that's why I couldn't go to battle. I got a lot of people to take care of. Oh, that's why. No, I feel better about myself now. Oh, yeah, there was a time the kings went to war, and I would have went any other time in my life, but look at all the people now I got. Look at all the responsibility. Boy, I'm glad I numbered the people. I really feel good about my decision now." And my friend, the second decision he made was just as bad as the first decision. It was a second bad decision in a list of long bad decisions David made. When you get out of God's battle and you try to fix it yourself, God's out and you're in. From this point on, David's life is an absolute train wreck, absolute disaster.

You know, the Bible's two books. The Bible, many books, but in particular in my message today, the Bible's two books: the Bible's a how-to book, and then the Bible's a how-not-to book. The Bible's a how-to book to go to heaven, how to go to heaven, how to walk with God, how to perfect your faith, how to be God's friend. But the Bible's a how-not-to book when it talks about how to ruin your kids, ruin your family, ruin your marriage, ruin your ministry, and ruin your life. I'm going to tell you something, once you get into the idea of making bad choices and these compounding effects come into your life, it's really a hard cycle to break. You know why? Because you've deceived yourself. You think God is still with you, and every decision you make is slowly taking you farther away from God.

What in the world do you think that whatever problem you've got, whatever situation you're in, that you've got to cut out God or something God does so you can fix it? Where does that start with? When you get into a disaster, whatever the disaster may be, you ought to run to God, not from God. You ought to make sure the very number one thing you do is God, every duck in your row, and you're in the battle. But when you step out of the battle, you start making bad choices, and those bad choices, every one of them, take you a little bit farther away. Every one of them wear on you a little bit more. Every one of them affects your attitude. Every one of them takes you a little farther away from God. Every one of them says, "Oh, I'm not going to go tonight." Every one of them looks for an excuse that you don't do this, you don't do this, what you once did. Every one of them, and pretty soon you get up and you just simply say, "I ain't doing it anymore." That's how everything happens. It isn't about the end result; it's the process of making a bad decision that puts you into that.

You say, "Well, what can I do?" Short term, very clearly: stop making bad choices. Find out what bad choices you've made. Don't make any more. Long term: get a plan. Find out systematically how you're going to do this. Get out of the mess you're in without violating any more biblical principles, and it may take some sacrifice. You may have to give up some things. You may have to lose some things. You may have to sell some things. You may have to do something. Just make sure it isn't God.

VII. The Price Tag of Disobedience

You say, "Well, David got back." Look at the price tag. You know what it took for David to get back? Now listen to me. You may think I'm mad this morning. I'm not mad. I am burdened for God's people, not just you. This tape will go out, God knows where. God will use it. They go all

over the world. But listen to me, you're going to get back. You see now clearly that it's not about the end result; it's the bad choices we make that bring about that. You realize, "Well, David got back after four trips to the cemetery, bearing four of his kids." Is that what you want? Is that what it's going to take for God to rattle your cage?

He lost the boy with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12:19. He lost Amnon in 2 Samuel 13:28. He lost Absalom in 2 Samuel 18:18. That's interesting: 66666. And he lost Amasa in 2 Samuel 20:10. Then he lost his mind over there in 1 Samuel 21:12-15 when one of the kings of Achish came up. You know what he does? He's so fearful, he's so afraid, he's so lost the power of God, he's so out of control, he's made so many bad choices, he's afraid they're going to kill him. You know what he does? He feigns madness. The king of Israel, the man after God's own heart. The Bible says he's got a beard, and he actually, he actually gets all the spit in his mouth he can, a big load of spit. Now you see, if you were really a child of God and God's enemies had you, you know what the philosophy is, don't you? You know what an old guy said one time? He said, "If the Indians get you, they're going to torture you to death, so that's why I always chew me a big old wad of chewing tobacco." He says, "And I keep it going right in my mouth, and when they tie me up," he says, "I'll wait till the biggest, ugliest, meanest one walks by, and I'll put that right in his face. Chances are he'll kill you right on the spot. You won't be tortured." Now that's a good plan. Hope I never have to try it because I don't like chewing tobacco. I'd have to do grape gum on him or something, I don't know.

But you know what David did? No, no, he gets that big wad of spittle instead of looking at the enemies of God and going... You know what he does? He lets it come out all over his beard and run down his face, and he comes up to the gate, and he acts like a madman, looking around, spittle coming down his face. And the king of Achish says, "Well, we can't kill him, he's nuts. I thought I was going to fight the man of God. I'm fighting a lunatic. Just let him go." What a way for a child of God to act in the face of God's enemies. But he's fearful now. He's afraid. He's lost the power of God. Bad choices that brought him to the place now where he's in a mess. It's an absolute mess.

One of his problems in his family, oh my God, one of his boys kills another. Yeah, Absalom kills Amnon. One of his own boys killed another one of his boys. Killed him. One of his own boys tries to take his kingdom and becomes his worst enemy. Oh, and when you read these things, you've got to get down between the actual events. Read the heart of David. When Absalom leaves and becomes his enemy, never to see David again, and David never to see him. David stands out on the gate late at night, overlooking the balcony, on the balcony overlooking the road coming in, and he says, "Oh, Absalom, oh, Absalom, where are you, Absalom? Why don't you come home?" Never saw him again. There was a battle, and Absalom was killed in that battle, and one of the men came running back to David to say, "We won the battle! We won today! Israel's saved!" And he runs into the king's chamber and he says, "Your Majesty, we won! We whipped them! Israel's saved!" David says, "I don't care about that. What about my boy?" He says, "I'm sorry, sir, he's dead." Oh, the agony, the pain within his life. Oh, the fact that he goes through those things. His friends conspire against him. Israel conspires against him.

If that wasn't enough, Amnon takes Tamar, his daughter, and has incest with her within the family. What a train wreck of a family. And David is enraged. Ah, here it comes, here it comes, here's the chickens coming home to roost. Here's the law of compounding effect. Here's where rubber meets the road. David is enraged. He's insane with anger, and he wants to... What Amnon did to Tamar is punishable in the law by death, and he says to himself, "I'm going to kill that boy." And then God's Spirit says, "Are you? Well, the two things you did deserve death too."

Now, in psychology, ladies and gentlemen, this is called, listen to me, learned behavior. His children learned what they did based on what his bad choices were. You better learn it. You better realize it. You better understand it. It's tough dealing with your, it's tough dealing with your own kids when they look at you and know that you're a phony too. It's tough dealing with them on some issue in their life when they know you're doing the same exact thing. It's tough to tell your boy, "Don't you be smoking marijuana," when he got it out of your stash. It's tough to say, "What are you doing drinking beer?" when they got it out of your refrigerator. It's tough to say, "Don't you ever let me catch you smoking," when he stole them out of your purse.

I had a kid one time, years and years ago, I think I told you this story a while back, I think it was in child training. God, he was a hopeless alcoholic. I said to him, I said, "You know what," I said, he said, and everybody looked at the end result, and I was searching in my own heart, my own mind, I try to help people with severe problems, and I said, "Let me ask you something," I said, "How long have you been an alcoholic?" You know what he said to me? He said, "Bob," he said, "forever." He said, "You know where I learned to drink?" He said, "Every night my dad used to sit down and watch the fights." So this was a long time ago. And he said, "He'd sit down there in his easy chair after a long hard day of work, and he'd have three or four bottles of beer." And he said, "We'd all go to bed," and he said, "After everybody went to bed, I sneaked back down and I drained the suds out of my dad's beer at six years old." He traced his alcoholism all the way back to that, and as far as I know, that guy died and went to hell. You know who put him there? You know who was the tool to get him there? I'll give you a guess, and the first two don't count.

Satan is standing up against your house just like he stood up against Israel. It wasn't just David. It wasn't just David at all. Oh, you may get back. Let me tell you something, you're better off never leaving in the first place. The less bad decisions you make in life, the better off you are. If you've made some bad decisions, life doesn't mean you can't fix them. It means you've got to stop short-term making any more bad ones. Cut the compounding effect.

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot impress upon you, and you know what, I know some of you think, "You know who I am," and this and all that, and "I don't like what he's saying," but let me tell you something, just put that all aside. I cannot impress upon you enough the absolute importance of making good, clear biblical decisions in your life and in your family with your kids. I'm telling you, life is going to be tough enough on you, and you're going to have enough issues you've got to deal with without you being the catalyst that brings these things about. If the devil was just after you, it would be one thing, but he's after your house. He's after your family. He's after your kids. He's after your wife. He's after your marriage, and very frankly, some of you will go to heaven, and your kids are going to die and split hell wide open. You got a free ticket. You got saved. It's always what I tell you. I tell you, whatever you are, your kids will be less than

what you are. And maybe you're a social drinker, you know what that means? They'll wind up probably being an alcoholic. Maybe you just do a little bit of this, a little bit of that, they'll wind up being addicted to it. The law of compounding effect goes downhill. They look at our flipping attitude about what we do, how frivolous it looks like. We just, we just, we say, "Oh, I can do this. I'm a Christian. I don't believe what all Bob says," and I got... Yeah, wait till the price tag comes in. Wait till you've got to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment and point that finger at that boy, that girl, and toss them in the lake of fire, and you get a free ticket. Now you can get mad at all you want, I don't care. It's a reality. It's a reality. God forbid some of you will lose your family. It happens all the time. I've seen it all through my life. The wife will get tired of your stupidity. She'll get tired of your bullheadedness. She'll get tired of you not doing what's right. The devil will do exactly what he did with Israel. He divided them, and Rehoboam, he divided the kingdom, the house of Israel, and then he defeated both halves. He'll divide your family over a bad decision or some stupidity, and he'll defeat both halves. The devil's got you in his crosshairs, and we as God's people are too stupid to see it till it's too late.

I'm afraid that some of God's people, not just talking to you, I see it all the time, I deal with it all the time, I deal with a lot of people who have nothing to do with here, people pastors send me people all the time, and it's going to take a tragedy. I'm going to tell you something, you can say whatever you want to say and think this is playing to your emotions or whatever you want to do, I don't care at this point. The last couple of weeks I've made my intention very clear, but if God can't get your affection set on things above one way, I'll tell you what, He may just come down, pick a little flower out of this garden down here and plant it up here and make it real to you. If you think that ain't going to happen and doesn't happen...

VIII. The Reality of Heaven and Hell

My father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka, most of you don't know, many of you do, one of the greatest men that I ever met in my life, the Apostle Paul in my life, the man that taught me everything I know about the ministry. I mean, he never quits, never stops. When he was in Canton, Ohio, when I was in his church there and helped him as part of his ministry there, working with him, at 56 years old, I'm 58, two years before, he had a nice job. He was, he would get preached any place in the country. He was nationally known. He had one of the greatest ministries anywhere in the world. He had everything he could want, but God gave him a burden for New York City, and at 56 years old, he cast everything aside, left everything, went to New York City where he didn't know a soul, and built a church. Seven years later, he's running six, seven hundred people in that church. Incredible. Up into his 70s and his 80s, still preaching. Got prostate cancer two years ago, dropped, you know, 60 pounds, looked like a skeleton, hardly can walk, still has Bible conferences where he can. They moved down to Florida in a retirement home, thought he'd get away from it. The guy comes up and runs a retirement home and says, "Hey, look, are you, your name Al Sabaka?" "Yes, it is." "Well, you know what, we got a bunch of people in here that can't go to church. We got a chapel, we got no people, we got no preacher." So we start another church at 87 years old, a little chapel down there. He always wanted to die with his boots on. He will, he will, he will. I remember him saying that a thousand times, "I hope I die with my boots on." I said, I used to get me, "I hope when I'm preaching that somebody just blows my brains out and I

die in a pulpit." I don't think we're going to blow his brains out, but he's going to die in a pulpit. He's going to die. God's going to call him home, and he'll have his boots on.

See, that's the other side. I know him like nobody else knows him. I spent so much personal time with him when my dad died and all of the things that I went through, and me and him got from dinner hearts together, and he taught me everything I know. But I know the, I know the other side of him. I used to go with him when he traveled, and I'd work all day long, and we'd jump in the car because he had a revival down in Bridgeport, Ohio. It was 120 miles away. We'd head out at four o'clock and drive down there to get there by seven o'clock, and he'd preach. I'd play the trumpet and lead the singing and do a song. Man, we'd jump in the car and come back. I don't know how many times, how many times, how many times I heard him say in the pulpit, never said it much when he preached at home, but he told the story, you didn't want to put it on his wife, I guess, but he told the story how when he was a, when he was a 32-year-old man, he had life made. He had life made. He had a setup where he had everything he wanted. He worked for the detention center in Kansas. He had everything that he needed, everything that he wanted, good job, good this, and God called him to preach. God called him to preach, and God called him to preach, and he wouldn't, he wouldn't give in. He wasn't, he was getting his, going to Kent State University, a saved man, going to Kent State University, working on his philosophy degree in criminal justice. He wanted, he was a superintendent of a detention home. He wanted to move up the system, and God put the bug in him to preach. Wouldn't, wouldn't. He argued with God, fought with God. He tells the story much better than I could. But they had a little baby girl that was born, and about two years after, about a year after that baby was born, she died, a little girl. God reached down in his garden and pulled her. After that baby was born, she died, a little girl. God reached down in his garden and pulled that little flower up. You know what he tells, and this is his story, not mine. You know what he says? You know what I heard him say? Nobody told me. He says, "You know what, Bob," he said, "Don't ever get your heart so hard that God just can't squeeze it with His hands and make tears come to your eyes." He said, "My heart was hardened. I didn't want to preach. I didn't want anything to do with the ministry. I had a good job, and you know what? Heaven wasn't real to me. Heaven just wasn't a real thing to me. And you know what God did?" He said, "God reached down in my garden here and plucked a little flower out and planted it up in His garden, and suddenly heaven became real."

I've heard him tell the story more than one time. I've heard him, I've heard him tell it when nobody else heard it. I've heard him tell the story that after that all went down, how human God worked it out, and obviously he was mad at God at first, but he realized that God was right and God was good. And when he went to that little funeral, and they were standing around that little white casket about that big, the funeral director came over and he said, "You folks can go now, and we'll put the casket down." And Sabaka said, "Get out of my way! Ain't nobody putting that little casket in the ground with me!" And he told the story how he picked that little white casket up on a cold February day, laid down along that little hole, and laid that little thing down there, and he put the dirt over it. He said to God, "I'll preach! I'll preach! I'll preach!" He said, "I got up that day," and he said, "I said, at that point in my life," he said, "I settled it. He said, "Now heaven was real. I had something in heaven now that was real to me. Heaven wasn't just an

abstract concept anymore. Now it was real, and I had something there." And he preached the rest of his life like he believed it.

But oh, I saw the pain. We'd go down and we'd preach in Janesville, Ohio, someplace. We preached down on one of those little river towns, Bridgeport. We did a lot of river towns. Boy, they were rough. We were rough. That's where we went into the truck stop down there, and me and two other guys, and we're down there getting a little bite to eat before we go to the church. A big old, big old, I don't know what they did. They looked like King Kong, man. They were all monster guys, this little, you know, redneck truck stop. So we get our food, you know, and we bow our heads to pray. One of the guys over there, and he says, he says, "All the, all the, all the people where you come from do that?" Old Sabaka looked at him. He said, "No, son, the hogs don't." I thought we were going to get killed. I've seen him to the place where we're sitting down there, and over there along the thing, there are two guys, we're, "God damn this and Jesus Christ and this and," and I, and, and this, everything in the world. And we'd be down there eating, and Mel'd say, "Here, you kept that, you kept, here's the money, you pay for the tab." And I watched him, I watched him, I watched him walk over to those two guys, and he'd say, "Hey, excuse me, sir. I'm just coming to pass through town here when we preached down here church, but I heard you talking about a friend of mine." The old guy looked up and said, "Well, I don't know you. Whose friend?" He says, "Yeah, you were talking about my friend Jesus." He says, "I want you to know He's not who you think He is. He's not the person that you were talking about over here. He loves you, and I want to, if you would allow me, I want you to, I want you to take this little tract that tells you how you could, that same one that you were talking about in such a derogatory way, to be your own personal Savior." Two guys just looked at him.

He lived the rest of his life like heaven was real. You know what the problem is with us today? Most of us, me included, heaven's really not real. Oh, we come to church, but it isn't real. We don't live our lives. We're Jehovah's Witnesses Christians. We really don't believe there's a place called hell. We talk about it in the abstract. We don't really believe that our kids might go there. We'll even believe that people that we work with are going to go there. Oh, I watched him. I heard him tell that story about putting that little white casket down that ground, and we'd be having a revival that night, and I'd be doing the invitation. A little, maybe a 20-year-old, 19-year-old girl come on down and get saved. Sweetheart, a little gal, blonde hair, so 20 years old, crying, getting saved. When a lady's pick her back in the back, we'd have a whole bunch of people saved, and we'd be driving home that night, two o'clock in the morning, you know, I always want a fellowship afterwards, quiet. He'd look over to me and he'd say, "She'd be about that old right now." I said, "Who are you talking about?" He says, "My little girl." I said, "You know that little gal that came forward and got saved tonight?" And I said, "Yeah, a little strawberry blonde." "Yeah," he said, "She had strawberry hair, a little blonde curl." He said, "She'd be about 20 years old right now." See, never forgot it. Never forgot it.

I tell you something, there's a price tag to our bad choices and decisions. The rule is, don't make any more than you have to. Learn from David. We're going to study him as a shepherd boy. We're going to study him as the king. We're going to study him as God's man. But just like every other man in the Bible, and just like your life and my life, it's not the things that we do that are

disasters. It's decisions that we make long before those disasters ever manifest themselves. It's basically getting out of the battle, thinking that we can serve, that when push comes to shove and times get tough, we can let God on the sidelines. Oh, not completely, but we can take anything out of our lives to get it out of what we're doing so we can fix our problem, and then the devil just puts the crosshairs on it, and it's one problem after another.

Every head bowed, every eye closed.