

# 1 Samuel 2

Sunday 5/14/2017

If you have your Bibles this morning, turn to 1 Samuel chapter 2. This is a message that hopefully will be a blessing for you. It will hopefully go along a little bit with what Bob has been doing the last couple weeks since he came back from his surgery. I think it kind of goes hand in hand with some of the things that he's been wanting to put on record and some things that he wanted to say about what we're doing at this church, what we stand for, and what we want to make sure that we continue to stand for moving forward.

It's interesting because he even talked about Samuel a little bit, and then Joe Christensen asked a question on Thursday night that he spoke about him even a little bit more. So I think that this is one that will hopefully go well with what Bob has been talking about. It's not all that much of a Mother's Day message, so I apologize to you moms that are out there, but there's a mom tie-in, so I'll bring that in as best as I can.

Most of you have a pretty good handle on your Bible, so you understand what's going on in the book of 1 Samuel. But in case you don't, let me give you a real brief history, just to catch you up with where we're at when we get to this passage. It's always important when we study the Bible to understand the context of anything that you're looking at. You want to know what exactly is happening so you don't take something and miss the greater meaning sometimes.

If you go all the way back to the book of Genesis, you have a time period of what we call the formulation of the nation of Israel. God spends many years setting the scene and getting things ready for Israel to come on the scene. You have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his sons. Then you get into the book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. This is the next phase of Israel's history, and we call it the calling out of the nation of Israel.

Of course, you have Moses who leads them out of the land of Egypt. They had been in bondage for 400 years. He leads them through the Red Sea, which is a picture of our salvation, being free from the bondage of sin. Then you get into the book of Joshua. In Joshua, of course, that's a book that we're studying now in the prayer groups, and so you are well aware that in Joshua they cross over the Jordan River and they cross over into the Promised Land. That certainly is a picture for us spiritually of growing and attaining to that point of where God wants us to get. When they crossed the Red Sea, that was a picture of our salvation, but crossing that Jordan River is a picture of spiritual growth to the point where we really reach that point of victory in our lives, where God gets us into that place where He wants us to be.

When they are in that time period, God is continuing to do miracles in their lives. The crossing of the Jordan is certainly one of them. They are continuing to fight and defeat many, many enemies that are in that land that the devil had placed there to try to keep them out.

Then after Joshua, you have the book of Judges. In the book of Judges, Israel has gone into a state of apostasy, and they are beginning to have problems. God sends them deliverers one after another to get them out of the issues that they are in and to deliver them from the enemies that

are oppressing them. Of course, the enemies that are coming in are only there because of their own disobedience, and God is allowing that.

This time in the book of Judges is a picture of the day and age that we live in today. It's a great picture of the Laodicean church period. The key verse in the book of Judges is right at the end, Judges 21:25.

*Judges 21:25*

*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

That is basically exactly what we have going on today. There's no King in the land, as in the King James Bible, the 1611, the Authorized Version that we put our faith and our trust in. That book has been taken out of the hands of the church today. In the day and age that we live in, there are very, very few men that preach it. There are very, very few people that actually believe it and that stand on the truth out of this book. As a result, every man is out there doing what's right in his own eyes. Every church is out there doing whatever they feel like doing. It's just not the way that God intended it to be. So this time period that we're in the Old Testament is a great picture of where we are today.

In 1 Samuel 3:1, it says:

*1 Samuel 3:1*

*And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.*

The word of the Lord today is truly precious. It is very rare. You don't see it very often. It's hard to find it. As I said, you don't find very many churches that preach it or stand on it or believe it. There's no open vision. This couldn't be a better description of the day and age that we're living in today.

## I. The Mother's Day Tie-In: Hannah's Faithfulness

As we get into the book of 1 Samuel, in chapters 1 and 2, here's your Mother's Day tie-in. You have Hannah, who is barren, and she wants nothing more than to have a child. She prays to God and tells Him, "If you'll just grant me this one wish, if you'll give me this child, I will turn him over to you, Lord. I will turn him over to the service, to the ministry, to the priesthood for the rest of his life." Of course, God granted her wish. He gave her the boy, and then she followed through with exactly what she told God she was going to do.

Basically, everything that's to follow in this message, everything that I'm going to talk about Samuel, would not have been possible, obviously, had it not been for the mother that he had. This isn't just a throw-in. It's a short part of my introduction, but I don't want to overlook the fact that, especially on a day when we want to recognize our moms, our children are certainly not going to become what they're supposed to become for the Lord without dads that are going to raise them up in the Bible and train them the right way.

But I promise you, without moms in the house that are going to lead them the way that only moms can, and that are going to hold the line, that are going to force the dads to hold the line the way that they need to sometimes, our families would be in dire straits, and we would have a mess on our hands. So I don't want to overlook the thing that we can learn from Hannah right off the bat: not only the commitment that she made to the Lord, but the fact that she followed through in that commitment.

That's the thing. Guys, we make commitments all the time. We're notorious for going to the Lord and telling Him we're going to do certain things, and then we forget about them. I'll tell you what, it kind of speaks. I have a few friends that we kind of have laughs about the way the prayer groups operate sometimes, because guys are really funny. When we're sitting around going through our prayer requests, it's like, "Yeah, you good? Yeah, I'm good. I don't have nothing to do. It's all good, good, good, good, good. Keep them rolling. Same ones, keep them rolling." But the ladies, they bear their souls to each other. They don't care.

The thing is, we're the ones that are prideful. We're not going to tell anybody what's really going on in our world. I'm not going to tell these guys my inner struggles. But you ladies don't care, because the only thing you really care about is loving and serving the Lord. If it will help you to get seven other women praying for you specifically with what's really going on, it doesn't matter, because all you care about is getting the thing done. I appreciate that about you. We need that. So that's what you have there at the beginning of Samuel.

## II. God's Promise of a Faithful Priest

As you get into the second chapter, you begin to see that we have a problem in the temple. Eli is the priest, and he has allowed sin to come in and corrupt the priesthood through his sons. His sons are a major, major problem, and they are causing all kinds of issues. God basically tells him He's going to cut off his family from that role and out of the priesthood because of his own disobedience and because of his problems.

Then we come to our verse here in 1 Samuel 2:35. This is going to be our text that we're going to roll from this point forward.

*1 Samuel 2:35*

*And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will make him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.*

Let's bow our heads and go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we love You and we thank You for the Lord Jesus. We thank You for all of the many blessings we have in our lives, Lord. We pray for Bob and Barb this morning as they are not able to be with us. We ask that You continue to help them to get better, help them to get healthy, and heal them up. Lord, help them to get all the rest that they need. Father, as we get into Your Word now this morning, I pray that Your Holy Spirit would speak through me, Lord. Give me the right words to say. Let this be a message that is a blessing to each and every one of us, including myself, Lord. Help us to take the things that we're going to hear and look into our lives and see if we're really doing the things

that we need to do, Lord, to be this faithful priest that You describe here in Samuel. We'll be careful to give You all the honor and glory for all that's done and said. We love You and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to look at this verse. We're just going to break it down. There are four pretty simple, basic things that He talks about here, but I want to break down each one of these because this is what God's looking for today. This is what God wants. This is what He wants out of us. This is what He needs. This is what we need in the church today. As I said, the time period that this book happens, 1 Samuel, is a picture of the Laodicean church age. So when God says, "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind," that's exactly what God wants to do today in the day and age that we live in right now, in each and every one of us. He wants to raise up a faithful priest.

### III. The First Requirement: Faithfulness

So that's the first thing that I want to look at here.

*1 Corinthians 4:2*

*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

That term "stewardship" is something that I don't think we fully understand, what that word really means. In the church today, especially in the church today, because it's just what all churches are focused on, stewardship is all about money. It's all about, "Are you giving what you're supposed to give to the church?" That's certainly a part of it. God tells us that we're supposed to be good stewards of our finances and the things that He gives to us. Entailed in that is giving back to the Lord in our tithes and our offerings in that sense.

But stewardship goes beyond that. If you go back to the original use and the original meaning of the word, back in the day when all of the nations operated under kingdoms and governments, you had a king and you had a queen. There were many times where the king had to leave the throne for one reason. He wasn't giving up the throne, but he had to leave. Maybe he was leading his armies into some battle. They were battling against another nation. It's not like it is today where the president can sit in a White House and he can send the military over anywhere he wants to. Back then, the king would get out and he would lead the armies into battle. But he still had the kingdom left behind that had to be run. So there was a steward that would be left on the throne in the king's place to do the job that the king couldn't do when he wasn't there. That steward's job was to do everything that that king did and to make sure that the house was in order, so to speak, that everything continued to function, that the people were taken care of, and everything was handled the way that it was supposed to be handled.

So for us, God tells us that we're stewards over this ministry that He's left behind. When the Lord Jesus Christ was down on this earth, He had a public ministry that lasted about three and a half years. When He died on the cross, then He resurrected, He turned that ministry over to the church. Through the book of Acts, you have that transitional period where the church gets established, and He leaves behind the Holy Spirit, He leaves the Word of God, and He leaves the

church to accomplish the mission that He could no longer accomplish as He went back up into heaven to sit on the right hand of God the Father.

So He left us here as stewards. Our job is to basically execute the role of what Christ would do Himself in His place because He's not here to do it. In 1 Corinthians 4:2, this first aspect He tells us is, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." If we're going to be effective stewards for the Lord and take care of this ministry that He's given to us, He says it's required that we be found faithful.

*1 Timothy 1:12*

*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;*

So you want to be in the ministry? Not in a sense that Bob's been talking about the last couple weeks, about going into the ministry in the sense of as a pastor of a church. That was what Joe's question was on Thursday night. But I'm talking in the sense of just being in ministry, period. Everything that we do that has that mindset of teaching the Word of God, Paul says here that "He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." What that means is that Christ looked at Paul and determined that He was faithful before He put him into the ministry. He had already shown Himself to be faithful before Jesus put him in there.

I think about, have any of you ever been to Yellowstone Park? A couple, a few of you? Okay. So I went to Yellowstone, I don't know, I was in like third or fourth grade, a long, long, long time ago. Yellowstone has a lot of really amazing things to go look at. The other thing that it has is the most horrific smell that you've ever been around in your lives. So go and see it, or better yet, get a movie or get on the internet and look at pictures of it, because then you don't have to smell it and you don't have to do the 15-hour drive or whatever to go there.

But there's a guy, the most faithful thing, the most famous thing about Yellowstone Park that everybody always wants to go see is this geyser called Old Faithful. What it is, you know what geysers are, but Old Faithful is one that basically got named, I think, back in like the late 1800s. It was determined that because it spouted off with such regularity, and it's changed over time because of earthquakes and things like that, but it still goes off like every basically 60 to 90 minutes. You can go there and almost set your clock to it, and it's going to go off at some point.

My point is, the reason that it's called Old Faithful is because somebody started watching that thing, and somebody watched it, and it's like, "You know, this thing seems like it just keeps going off all the time. In about an hour, it will go again. There it goes. Let's watch it and let's see." And after another hour, it goes again. It's not like somebody just came across it, saw this water shooting 70 feet in the air, and said, "That's really cool. Let's call this thing Old Faithful, and everybody will come and see it in 100 years. It will be awesome." No, somebody observed it. Somebody watched it over a long period of time. Somebody timed it out and saw that, without fail, this thing shoots off every hour, every 60 minutes, every 70, 80, 90 minutes. And so they named it Old Faithful.

That's what God wants to be able to do with us. God needs to be able to see in your life a pattern where over and over and over again, you do exactly what He wants you to do. You can be counted on to do everything God needs you to do. That's when you get named to be faithful. You don't just raise your hand and say, "Okay, I'm faithful now. Give me something to do, Bob." You can raise your hand and say, "Bob, give me something to do," and he'll put you somewhere. But he's not going to put you in charge of something around this church. He's not going to give you a ministry to actually run for yourself until you've shown yourself to be faithful. It's something that there's evidence in your life that will show that. That's what Paul says here that Christ saw in him and saw in his life.

*2 Timothy 2:2*

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

He says "faithful men." That's the pattern of ministry that we follow. That's our theme verse for our discipleship program. I'm not just taking the Bible and giving it to you and teaching you some things that I may know about the Bible, some things that somebody taught me, and some things that God showed me so you can just say, "Oh great, I know some things about the Bible now." The idea is that you're to take those things and then impart those to somebody else. Make sure that that person is ready and equipped to then go and teach somebody else after that. It's about being faithful.

God wants to know that He can count on us time and time and time again. Not that when it's just easy, not when it's just convenient, but every time that something is needed of us, that we're faithful and we're going to do what has been asked of us.

It goes without saying that being faithful to God in the ministry for God and having faith in God go hand in hand. Look at Hebrews 10:21-23.

*Hebrews 10:21-23*

*And having an high priest over the house of God;*

*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

He talks about us drawing near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Then he says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith." That's our own faithfulness, holding fast the profession of our faith, doing, executing the job that God has given to us. So being faithful to the Lord is being full of faith.

*1 John 4:19*

*We love him, because he first loved us.*

Therefore, it goes without saying that we have faith in Him, right? Because He's faithful to us. Then the result of that is that we're going to turn and be faithful to Him. I have faith in the Lord because I know that no matter what I ever do, He's always going to love me. No matter whatever comes into my life, I'm always going to have what I need. He's always there. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He promises me that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

I tell people all the time, when I'm going through discipleship with them or marriage lessons or any chance I get, just to say that, "Look, you're going to go through struggles and you're going to have hard times, but the only thing that's ever going to keep you from ever actually fulfilling what God wants you to do is you." Because He promises He's never going to quit on you. We're the ones that quit on Him. We're the ones that decide at some point it gets too hard or we don't want to do it anymore.

Let me share a little story with you. This is from a long time ago. About 16 years ago, I had my first job in what is the same industry basically that I'm in now, but it was the first one I had. I was a sales job in pharmaceuticals, but it was a contract sales job. So I was working for, I was employed by one company, but then I was working for another company. It was supposed to be like a two-year contract, and then I found out after about nine months, I think, that it wasn't a two-year contract, and the company canceled the contract. The people that were employing me said, "Hey, you don't have a job anymore at the end of this month." I was like, "Okay, that's awesome because we just bought our first house and Jamie's pregnant with our first baby, so that'll be swell. No problem."

The company that I was contracting for, they came to me and they offered me a job. They offered me a full-time job with them, which is ideally what I would have wanted all along anyway. It actually paid a little bit more money than what the contract company was giving me, and it had better benefits and a lot of really nice things. The catch was they didn't have a sales territory in Kansas City. The closest one they had was Wichita, and I didn't know you guys at the time, or I might, you weren't even born. Well, yeah, you were. That was like 16 years ago. Sorry. But you were too young. We couldn't have gone to have barbecue together anyway, Josh. But it was like, Wichita was the closest place, and then there was a job in Little Rock, Arkansas, and there was a job in Colorado.

The point being, if I was going to take this full-time job with them, we were going to have to relocate. We were going to have to move from Kansas City, move away from our home, from our family, but really most importantly, from our church. Move away from the man of God that God had put into my life, who just by coincidence also happened to be my father-in-law, who was married to my mother-in-law, who would have killed me if I moved one of her two daughters away from her. But nevertheless, it was the fact that we were going to have to leave the ministry where God had placed us. We would have had to leave the spot where we were.

Again, I don't say this to try to make me sound like I'm some sort of guru. I actually look at it like it's a pretty simple, and it was a kind of a no-brainer decision. The fact of the matter is that we have biblical principles that we're to live our lives by. I know that the purpose of my job is

never to support my desired lifestyle. The purpose of my job is to support my ministry that I'm in. So, why in the world would God give me a job that takes me away from the ministry that He had placed me in? I'm not the smartest guy in the world, but that seems like a pretty easy thing to figure out.

I know that God is consistent. God doesn't violate His principles. God doesn't say, "This is the principle, but just this one time it's okay. I'm going to move you down here, and it's all going to work out, and you're going to be blessed, and it's going to be just fine." No, I had to look at it and say that, "This seems like this would be the thing to do. This seems like God opening this door, yet I have to leave our church. So maybe it's really not." It would be stupid to think that the devil couldn't operate through that company just the same way that God could and get me that job offer to try to get me out of where I was supposed to be, to get me down to some place where I had no church, no place where I was going to get the biblical teaching that I needed, no place where I could be involved in ministry and serve the Lord. If you think that the devil can't do that, you're just an absolute fool.

So, we decided that we were going to turn it down. It was, trust me, it was stressful. Jamie was looking at me with big eyes. I remember it like it was yesterday because I'm thinking about this, and I'm like, Mattie's on the way, and you weren't named yet, but now I know it was you. I'm pretty sure. We literally had just moved into our new house, and like, this is not good. We're going to be, this is just not good. It took some time, and it took a couple of months, and it took a lot of prayer.

You know what happened? God gave me another job in the same industry with a better company that actually paid even a little bit more than the other one was. It's not about the money, but it was just the point of the fact that sometimes if you're just patient, if you just, well, again, as I said, I'm not saying I'm something great. I'm really not. We did it, and God just took care of us in it. But it's something that I've always looked back on my entire life. I've always looked back on that moment. Anytime that we have something that comes up that we're worried about, we always go back and we say, "Don't you remember when?"

All of you have times like that in your lives. The nation of Israel had times like that in their lives, and that was one of their problems. We know to be the case that one of our three infirmities is that we forget. We forget what God has done for us. The whole Old Testament is almost stories of Moses and then other prophet after prophet after prophet going to Israel and saying, "Don't you remember when God did this? Why are you fretting so much about this right now? Don't you remember when God parted the Red Sea? Don't you remember when God parted the Jordan River so you could go through there? Don't you remember when He defeated these armies without you even lifting a sword or a spear in front of you? Don't you remember those times?"

We all have moments like that, and we have to look back on them. That's what strengthens our faith in Him, and that's what allows us to be faithful to Him is our always looking back and knowing that He's faithful to us. Now we don't always have a promise that we're just going to live in the life of luxury. Actually, just the opposite. We should expect to suffer a little bit for Him. But what we can expect is for Him to always provide for our needs and to always take care

of us. It's to know that we're never going through anything alone. Even if we're going through something, we're doing it because He's wanting us to. He's allowing it into our lives. So we've got to be faithful. The first thing that He says about that priest, He says, "I'm going to raise me up a faithful priest."

## IV. The Second Requirement: Doing God's Will

Now the second thing that He says there, He says, "that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind." This isn't a hard one to figure out.

*1 Corinthians 2:16*

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

God makes it easy for us. Back then, there were a lot of things that were quite a bit harder about living in the Old Testament, being under that law, and the fact that during many of the times that they lived, they didn't have it all just written down for them where they could just go to any time. We have it all. We have the entire mind of God, the mind of Christ, put down in this book, and all we have to do is sit our lazy butts down sometimes, open it up, and read it.

Then this is the other part: and then do it. Because that's what He says. He doesn't say, "that shall know according to that which is in my heart and in my mind." Because that would be nice. That's not even that hard to do around here because we get so much. It's like drinking from a fire hose around here on Sunday mornings and on Thursday nights. It gets pretty easy for us to know the Word of God. You really have to try to not learn the Bible if you sit around here twice a week and with all the other things that are going on. You have to literally be trying to sit in here with earbuds and listen to iTunes or something. Because if you sit around here under the preaching and the teaching of this church, you will know the Bible. You will know the Word of God. But He doesn't say that shall know the Word of God. He says that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind.

It's never enough for God for you to know the Bible. It's never enough for you to just know the principles of the Word of God. You actually have to take those things and you have to do them. You actually have to put them into your lives.

*James 1:22-25*

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

I love how he puts that phrase in there. He didn't really have to say that. He could just say, "Don't just listen to the Word, but do it." He tells you what you're doing if you do that. He says, "deceiving your own selves." Meaning if you're just a hearer of the Word and you're not doing the Word, you're not fooling anybody except for you. We do that to ourselves a lot. We deceive ourselves about a lot of things. We tell ourselves that we're great in a lot of areas where we're not. We tell ourselves that we're doing the things that we should be doing for God when many times we're not. Not only is it obviously apparent to the Lord, but many times it becomes apparent to the people around us. It will be apparent to your family. It will be apparent to your friends. It will be apparent to your pastor. It will be apparent to everybody, unfortunately, except for you when you get into this mode. You're just kidding yourselves.

It's not just about what you hear. It's not just about the things that you read in the Bible. It's not just about learning the things out of the Word of God. You actually have to take those things and put them into your lives and do them every day. When He tells you to get into the ministry, when He tells you to do the work for the Lord, you actually have to go and do that. It doesn't matter how much you know. When we get to the judgment seat of Christ, He's not going to judge us on how much we know about the Bible. He's not going to ask you to see if you can lay out Daniel's 70th week and talk about the millennium and eternity. All of those things matter. Don't get me wrong. They're extremely important to have a full understanding of the Word of God. But God's going to judge us at the judgment seat of Christ someday on what we did for Him or what we didn't do for Him, and most importantly, what our heart attitude was in doing it. Not that we're doing it for banners to be put up and for monuments to be erected in our names where people tell us how great we are, but just because He died for us and we love Him so much that we want to faithfully do what He's asked us to do.

#### *Case Study: Saul's Disobedience*

I want to look at a little case study, and we're going to stay here in 1 Samuel, of somebody who had a little bit of a problem with doing what was in the Word of God. Move on to 1 Samuel chapter 13. Let's read this quickly. I want to look at a couple of things with Saul here. This is talking about Saul. He's getting ready to battle. He's got to go into it with the Philistines.

#### *1 Samuel 13:8-14*

*And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.*

*And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.*

*And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.*

*And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;*

*Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.*

*And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.*

*But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.*

First of all, Saul says he waited the seven days, and then they needed to give an offering to the Lord before they went into the battle. Samuel is the only one that's allowed to do this as the priest. Saul had no business offering these burnt offerings to the Lord. So that's the point of disobedience. That's the problem here. That's the mistake that Saul made. But even in what he's saying to Samuel, he waited the seven days, and he says he didn't come. But look what happened. Right after he offers the offering, Samuel came. So he did come in the time appointed. It's not like he came three or four days later still. It's right there. It's right at that moment.

The thing of it is, and this is what you've got to catch, this didn't happen by accident. Samuel wasn't just running a little bit late. God knew exactly what was going on. He knew exactly what was going to happen. I guarantee you that for one reason or another, God held Samuel up to get there just at that time, to show you and to show me that when we get impatient with the Lord and we step outside of what God wants us to do, many times He's right there two seconds after we step out and do it on our own. He was ready to do it for you. The lesson is, if it seems like you've waited long enough, guess what? Wait longer. Don't step out on your own and try to do your own thing and try to manipulate circumstances. It will never work out for you in your favor. It certainly didn't work out for Saul here.

Look what Saul says. Saul's the man of excuses. I'll tell you, if you want to learn some excuses, just study Saul's life. You'll get all the excuses that you ever want, even though I think they sort of come naturally for us, because I've used all these myself. But he tells him first, he's like, basically he's like, "Samuel, I waited for you. You said to wait seven days. I did, and you never came." In verse 12 he says, "Therefore I forced myself." "I didn't want to do it. I didn't want to do it, but I had to. Somebody had to do it, Samuel." He's basically saying, "You're the one that screwed up here, Samuel. I didn't screw up. I had no choice. I had to do it."

Samuel's not having it. In verse 13 he says, he said to Saul, "Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue. The LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee." So he pays a steep price. Samuel basically says, "You know what? You're done." He's not done done. He's still the king for now. But your family is not going to continue on the throne. God's going to remove you from the throne all because of his disobedience and because of his own impatience and because he decided to do his own thing. You can come with

any excuses you want to. Samuel basically very calmly looked at him and said, "Saul, you're a fool. You're a fool. You've absolutely blown it."

Now I want to show you one other example. 1 Samuel chapter 15 now. Just a little bit later on. Saul is still on the throne because we know God's got to raise David up to be able to take his place. So He's going to allow him to stay on the throne for a little while. But He's already told him that you're done. "I'm going to remove you. I'm going to remove your family."

*1 Samuel 15:1-3*

*Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.*

*Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.*

*Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*

You would think that Saul had learned his lesson by not being fully obedient to what God told him to do from Samuel. You would think based on what happened just a few chapters earlier that he would have learned his lesson. But as you're going to see in this story, he clearly didn't. Samuel, God through Samuel, tells Saul to go and destroy the Amalekites, and destroy everything. Literally every living thing that is breathing oxygen, you are to kill them. You are to get rid of every single one. Every animal, every person, even the babies. He wanted all of it wiped out. Pretty clear instructions.

*1 Samuel 15:7-11*

*And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.*

*And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.*

*But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.*

*Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,*

*It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.*

So there's mistake number 1. He wasn't supposed to leave anybody alive, and of all of them, he leaves the king alive for some reason. He utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword, but Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and the lambs and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. But everything

that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night. So he left the king alive and he left a lot of these animals alive. He was supposed to kill everybody, and he left some of them alive. And God now Himself is saying, "It repenteth me that I have set Saul up to be king." He's like, "I don't even know what to do with him anymore, Samuel."

*1 Samuel 15:13-14*

*And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.*

*And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*

Look at verse 13. It says, "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD." Now this is your first clue. This is what we all do. When we know we've done something wrong and somebody comes up to us, it's always, "Hey brother, how you doing? Yeah, everything's good with me. I'm good, I'm good. Me and God are like this." And you're like, "I didn't even ask you anything." You can tell when somebody's got something going on, as they've got a guilty conscience, and Saul's got a guilty conscience because he knows that he was disobedient. He knows that, and he already knows that Samuel's going to let him have it, or at least he's got to think that he does because of what had happened before. But he goes out and he says, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." So here's somebody who, maybe like what we read back there a few minutes ago, is deceiving himself at this point because he's either flat out lying, which we know that he is, or he actually has convinced himself that he did the right thing. He did what he was supposed to do. He says, "I've performed the commandment of the Lord."

Now I love verse 14, it's one of my favorite verses in all the Bible because God's got a sense of humor, right? Because he says, "Hey, I did what I was supposed to do, Samuel." In verse 14 Samuel says, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul is like the guy, it's like, and this has never happened to me, by the way, but I would imagine if it did that this is how it would go. That like, you're shoving the donut in your mouth and you're like, and somebody comes up and they say, "You didn't eat the last powdered sugar donut, did you? I was going to give that to somebody." You're like, "No. Nope." And they're like, "Well, you have powdered sugar all over your face." And it's flying out of your mouth while you're talking to me. Samuel's like, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in my ears? Saul, what is going on? I told you to go down there, the Lord told you to go down there and kill every single thing. And I keep hearing this while I'm talking to you, there's this 'nah' in the background, and I'm pretty sure that dead sheep don't make noises like that." They might lay there and kick their legs a little bit, but that's reflex reaction. But they don't go back and the cows don't moo and all of these other things.

*1 Samuel 15:18-23*

*And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.*

*Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?*

*And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.*

*But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.*

*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.*

*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.*

So what happens? Go on to verse 18. It says, "And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?" Because that's what it is. This is great. Even when Saul is being dishonest and when Saul is lying about what he did, Samuel's telling him what he really did. Because Samuel said, Samuel knows exactly why he kept all those animals. Because why would you kill them? They're good. We can keep them. "I'll put them in with all of mine, and now I got more stuff. I have more stuff than I did before." He says, "thou didst fly upon the spoil." The things that you thought were worth keeping that you wanted for yourself, you kept them for yourself.

Then look what Saul says. He tries to spiritualize it. But Samuel, and this is the thing, don't go to God with your excuses trying to tell Him why you disobeyed the word and trying to make it spiritual. Because God will cut right through that garbage in a second and tell you exactly, He knows what you really did. Saul says in verse 20, he says, "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD." So first of all, he's still clinging on to this, I don't know why he's thinking that he can still say that I obeyed the voice of the Lord. Because Samuel's already called him out on it. He says, "and have gone the way which the LORD sent me and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek." So I guess he's going to say, "That doesn't really matter, Samuel. That's like a little sin. So that's not a big deal. We don't worry about those."

But then he says, "and have utterly destroyed all the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen." First thing he does, so one, he's still trying to say he did what was right. Two, now he's blaming the people. So it's not him, he's blaming somebody else. Remember before he blamed Samuel for showing up late? Now he's blaming the people for taking the spoil and the sheep and the oxen. "And chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, why? To sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal." So now he's spiritualizing it. It's like, "Samuel, I

mean, we didn't see any reason why we should just slaughter all those animals when we could bring them back to Gilgal and we could sacrifice them to the Lord. And we could show God how wonderful we are and show the whole world how much, and I could show them all how much I love the Lord by sacrificing these things."

Don't take your disobedience, your dishonesty, and then go to God or anybody else and somehow try to spiritualize that thing and try to say that you had some great spiritual reason. There are no situational ethics when it comes to the Bible. The ends do not justify the means. If God tells you to do something and do it a certain way, then you better do what He told you and you better do it the way He told you to do it. Don't take it upon yourself to do. As I said, don't miss the part about how Samuel said, "you did fly upon the spoil." Saul didn't have any, I promise you, he had no intention of sacrificing any of these animals to the Lord. That just became a convenient thing that it probably came to him spur of the moment where he's like, "Oh, I'll tell him we were going to sacrifice it. He'll like that. He'll like that. God will like that. That's good. That's good." No, no, no, no, no, no. God cuts right through it. He knows what your real motives are. He knows what your real intentions are. So just keep yourself out of trouble and just do what God tells you to do. That's the easiest thing to do.

In verse 22, Samuel gives you one of the greatest statements in all of the Bible. It says, "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold." So he asked a question, and Saul may be like, "Well, I don't know." And Samuel says, "Well, I'm going to give you the answer." He says, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." That's a principle that you should burn into the back of your brain and never forget. God is never impressed with your sacrifice if it involves any sort of disobedience. You cannot overcome any kind of disobedience to the Word of God by then turning around and sacrificing something to the Lord. He says very clearly, "to obey is better than to sacrifice." That's a pretty simple Bible principle that you can learn, that you can even memorize and understand and remember that the most important thing, because listen, I mean, what would you think is the most important thing out of the whole Bible to God? Maybe the sacrifice that Christ paid on the cross. That's the most important thing to me. Most important thing in my life is the sacrifice that Christ paid on the cross, the blood that He shed. Yet God tells you right here that even more important with Christ's sacrifice that He made on the cross was Christ's obedience. That was more important to God than the sacrifice itself, which means for you and for me, my obedience to the Word of God is more important than any sacrifice. God doesn't want to know all the great things that I did, all the sleep that I lost, trying to study the Bible and learn the Bible or whatever stupid things that we try to impress the Lord or try to impress people with. He wants to know why don't you obey any of the things that are in the Bible? Why don't you just do the things that I tell you to do?

In verse 23, he says, "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." Now, don't try to misapply this. Don't ever let somebody try to misapply this and say that if you're disobedient to the Word of God, that you can lose your salvation because he rejected him from being king. That has nothing to do with that. But don't mistake this. You're never going

to get kicked out of the family of God. Praise God. Because of something that you did. But you can get kicked out of some roles in ministry that God gives you. God may put you on the shelf. He basically takes Saul and Saul eventually dies, but he puts Saul's family on the shelf because of what Saul did. God can take you because of your disobedience, and He isn't going to take you out of the family. He couldn't have even if He wanted to. You'll keep your salvation. But He can put you over to the side and say, "I'm done with you. There's nothing else that I can do with you in ministry. There's no other opportunities that I can trust you with because you're not faithful and you won't do the things that I've asked you to do."

We can't pick and choose the things out of the Bible that we're going to follow.

*James 2:10*

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Now we always use that with an unsaved person in talking about that you can't be a good enough person to go to heaven. That's absolutely an application of that. But you can apply that in a practical sense to a Christian to say that when it comes to the Word of God, you can't just choose and follow most of it and ignore some of these principles over here because as far as God's concerned, if you're guilty at one point, then you're guilty of it all. You better be obedient all the way down the line to every single thing that God gives to you and that God tells you to do.

*Philippians 4:9*

*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

He says the things that you have learned, received, and heard, and seen in me, do. Very simple. One word, two letters. You have to do it. It does no good if you don't do it, but then what happens? He says, if you do, he says then "the God of peace shall be with you." You get blessings in your life when you do these things.

## V. The Third Requirement: A Sure House

That takes us right into our third point. We'll quickly move into this because the next thing that he tells him, he says if he's faithful and if he does all the things that he tells him to do, he says, "I will make him a sure house." Now, doctrinally, this is going to be speaking about the nation of Israel, but practically, inspirationally, this is our own house. This is me. This is my house. This is my family. It's not my physical house. My physical house is just that. It's something that's going to break down, fall down, get torn down just like anything else in this world. Things are going to go wrong with it. One of these days, I'm going to have to put a new roof on it if I'm there long enough. It will break down. This is my spiritual house that God says He will build me a sure house if I love the Word of God and do the things that are in it and if I'm faithful in serving Him. He's going to take care of my family. He's going to build me a sure house.

You want to know how spiritual you are? Look at the state of your family. Look at your wife. Look at your kids. Is your wife a mess? Is she a gossip in the church? Is she just going around

being a busybody and she doesn't do anything except cause trouble? Are your kids just out causing problems, not doing anything for the Lord? They care nothing about the things of the Lord? That's a reflection on you as a leader. That's a reflection on me as a leader or lack thereof within our family.

1 Timothy 3:1-5 tells us the qualifications of a bishop, and it talks about the importance of having children that are not unruly, that obey the Word of God, children that are in line with the things that God tells them to do.

*Proverbs 22:6*

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Our job is to train up our kids the same way, but you can't train your kids to do something that you're not doing yourself. If you're not living and obeying and believing the Word of God and it's not evident in your life, your kids are the first ones that will see it. They will see the phoniness in your world. They will see the phoniness in your life and the inconsistency, and that will cause them to walk away from it someday. While they're under your thumb, maybe they'll stay with it, but at some point they're gone. They're gone because they saw nothing but phoniness every single day. They saw you be one person at church and they saw you be a completely different person at home.

I'm talking to myself just like I am with you guys. I'm not pointing this at anybody in particular other than myself to say that if we're not obeying the principles of the Word of God every day, we're going to have problems on our hands someday. We walk around and we've got good kids. I'm not just talking about we, all of us. We do. We've got good kids in this church. I think Zach and Jenny and the high school counselors would attest to that, and Barb and Phil with the younger kids. So we've got good kids in this church. But don't fool yourself for a second to think that if you don't step outside of the Word of God for just a moment, we can lose them. It will be disastrous in their lives.

Remember what got them in this problem sort of in the first place is Eli with his own kids. Go back and read sometime what Eli's boys were doing at that temple. We know that in chapter 3, it says that the lamp of God went out. Again, that's one of the key things that describes and compares this day that Eli and that Samuel are in back then to where we are today. The lamp of God has gone out. It went out because those boys were screwing around. They brought sin into the temple and they were causing all sorts of problems. Eli ends up getting held accountable for it.

*1 Samuel 3:11-13*

*And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.*

*In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.*

*For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*

All of the problems that were going on and the reason that God had to raise Samuel up in the first place was because of Eli's sin, because of Eli and what happened with his boys. What the boys did was way worse than anything Eli ever did, but that's how it always goes. It always gets worse from one generation to the next. So that's why it's so vital and it's so important for us to be faithful and to stay in that book and keep those principles in our lives and keep those principles always in front of our kids and not just in word. Not just that we tell them this is what it is, but that they see it. They see us make decisions in our lives based on those Bible principles. We can show them, "This is why we did this. This is why we do the things that we do. This is why we have the priorities that we have. This is why you're not going to go and do this. You're not going to go to that party with those friends. You're not going to go here." It's not just because I'm mean and I don't want you to have any fun. It's because there are reasons. There are biblical principles involved with it. If they see me doing it in my own life, making decisions and judging my life by the Bible, they'll understand why I'm forcing them to judge their lives by the Bible. And then eventually they will do it on their own. But if we don't, we run the risk of falling into this pattern that Eli fell into with his boys and the absolute mess that he caused.

So how do we get this sure house? We do it by doing the first two things. If you go back and you look at the punctuation of 1 Samuel 2:35, he tells you a faithful priest that's going to do according to the things in his heart and the things that he says, and then there's a colon. That means that what follows is dependent on what precedes that. So the first two things, if you're faithful and if you do the things that are in the Word of God, then he says as a result of that, "I'm going to build you a sure house." So you want your family to be sure. You want it to be stable. You want your kids to grow up and follow and serve the Lord. You better make sure in your own heart and your own lives you're being faithful and that you're following and obeying the things in the Word of God.

## VI. The Fourth Requirement: A Worthy Walk

Then the last thing he says, "and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever." I have news for you.

*Romans 14:7-8*

*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

*For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

We are walking before the anointed right now. Every day of my life I walk before the eyes of the anointed. I've got the Holy Spirit of God living inside of me. He knows every thought that I think. He knows everything that I do, every place that I go, everything that I don't do that I should do, everything that I do that I shouldn't do. God is right there. Unfortunately, other people

are there too. There are always eyes on your life. The Bible tells us some things about our walk and about how our walk needs to be.

*Ephesians 4:1*

*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

We're called to a vocation. We're called to a job. He says you need to walk worthy of that vocation. Most of you, pretty much everybody in this room has a job. Your employers expect you to act a certain way. If you just start acting a fool, if they find out that you're doing drugs on the side, they're going to fire you. They're going to get rid of you. If you're being an idiot, they're going to get rid of you. You've got to walk worthy of that job. There's a certain way that you're supposed to act. The job that we've been called to do for the Lord, he says, "walk worthy of that vocation."

*Colossians 1:10*

*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

*1 Thessalonians 2:12*

*That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

So the question for us is, how's your walk? How's your walk today? Are you walking worthy? The question you want to ask yourself is if the rapture happened right now, would I be happy? Would I be a little bit embarrassed to have to go up and meet the Lord, being in the middle of whatever I was in the middle of?

*Leviticus 19:1-2*

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

*Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.*

God demands holiness from His people. It's not possible to live your life in absolute sinless perfection. But you better live every single minute of your life trying your hardest to be that because that's what God expects. God expects holiness in your life.

*Titus 2:11-14*

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*

*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

I love that he puts that phrase "in this present world" in there because he removes excuses for us. We don't say, "Well, listen, this is just accepted in the world. This is just what's going on." No. He says, "I don't care what's going on in the world around you. In this present world that you live in, yes, it's an awful, horrible, sinful world. I expect you to live soberly, righteously, and godly in that world that you live in, not get caught up in the things of the world."

Our walk should be peculiar. We should be peculiar to the people in this world, and not peculiar in the sense that we're just weirdos. God can't do a heck of a lot with that. But the fact that you would live in this earth, that you would live on this world and live a life that's based on biblical principles, that you have standards that you're not willing to lower just because your friends are doing it, just because the world says it's okay, that you abide by a book and believe it to be truth and say that this is the Word of God and that's how I'm going to live my life. In today's world, that's peculiar. We live in a world where the Bible prophecy that said that they will call evil good and they will call good evil, that is coming true. The world looks at us if we truly take that stand, and that's a peculiar thing. But that's a good thing because that's what God tells us He wants us to be. Not peculiar because we're just peculiar, but peculiar because we're zealous of good works. Unfortunately, if I could, I'll go one step further. That actually being zealous of good works, unfortunately, that can make you look a little bit peculiar even in this church. That's a sad statement, but we've got people around here that will look at you because all you ever want to do is do ministry. And they're like, "There's something weird about you." But that's where you should be. You should be peculiar to everybody that ever comes around you because what in the world else are you going to invest your life in? Honestly, what else is there? Nothing that has any eternal consequence.

## VII. Samuel's Pattern of Spiritual Growth

I'm going to close with this. This is my final point, and I want to point out just a couple more things that were done. What I want you to see is this process of growth, the spiritual growth of a child of God. When you look at Samuel, you don't want to miss this pattern and what happens in Samuel's life.

If you go back all the way to 1 Samuel 2:11, it says:

*1 Samuel 2:11*

*And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.*

So the very first thing, and this is something Bob was even talking about a few weeks ago, talking about ministering to the Lord, that's the first thing that we should do as a church is minister to the Lord. So the very first thing that Samuel did when he shows up on the scene, it says he's ministering to the Lord, the first thing that he learned how to do.

Then in 1 Samuel 2:18, it says:

*1 Samuel 2:18*

*But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.*

So now he's starting to wear the garments of a priest back from Exodus chapter 28. This pictures us, Ephesians chapter 6, starting to put on the armor of God, starting to put on that breastplate of righteousness, picking up that shield of faith, grabbing that sword and having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of the truth. All of these things that are garments that we're supposed to put on.

Then in 1 Samuel 2:21, it says:

*1 Samuel 2:21*

*And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.*

So now he's growing. So he's ministering to the Lord. Now he's beginning to wear the garments. Now he's growing before the Lord.

In 1 Samuel 2:26, it said:

*1 Samuel 2:26*

*And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.*

So now he's got a testimony. Now men are starting to take notice. People around him are starting to see he's in favor with the Lord and with men. He's developing a testimony.

In chapter 3 is the great chapter, and Bob was laying this out Thursday night at Bible study. He gets called by God. Notice everything that happened in his life before he now gets called by God into ministry. This is what Bob was alluding to the other night about how you have people that want to get in such a hurry to want to go out and start a work for the Lord. None of these things have taken place in their life. They decide, "I'm ready to go. I'm going to go out on my own." All of these things, all of this process when God calls them. We don't have to apply this just to going into full-time ministry because not many of us, maybe none of us in this room are ever going to have an opportunity to go into full-time ministry and be a pastor of a church. But when it comes to really getting active in ministry and taking a leadership role in ministry, these are the things that need to take place in your life before God's going to call you into that role, before you're going to get put in charge of that volleyball team, before you're going to get put in charge of that softball team, before you're going to get put in charge of this ministry over here or over there. You've got to go through this process.

Then he finally reaches a point. Look at 1 Samuel 3:19. It says:

*1 Samuel 3:19*

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

So he's not a child anymore, and now God is with him. We see ultimately what becomes our problem is that we grow to a certain point, and then I think some of us, we start letting God's

words just fall to the ground. We start letting the things that God gives to us just fall by the way. They're not as important to us anymore. But Samuel at the pinnacle of where he is, and this is where he stays at and continues to grow from this point forward, he says, "he did let none of his words fall to the ground." I would imagine that Eli and certainly his boys were letting a lot of God's words fall to the ground. Samuel didn't let a single one drop. He cherished, and because it said that the word of the Lord was precious in those days. We're living in a day and age where it's just the same. The word of the Lord is precious, and God's got words in here for us, and God brings them to us every Sunday morning when Bob gets up here and preaches and every Thursday night when he teaches and when we sit down and we go through Institute or a people ministry or we're going through discipleship one or discipleship two or we're going through marriage lessons or whatever it is or we're sitting in a devotion and prayer group or at the athletics ministry or youth group and any time that somebody opens up that book and shares something with you out of the word of God that the Holy Spirit has given to them. Don't let any of those words fall to the ground. Any time that when you sit down on your own and you open up that Bible and you get into it and God's given you things out of it, he's showing you things, he's telling you things that you need in your life, he's telling you things you need to change about your life, he's giving you promises, he's giving you things to encourage you, to get through those tough times. Don't let those words fall to the ground. You have to cherish, you have to hold on to every single thing that he gives you and that's the key. That's what allowed Samuel to be that faithful priest and then to do everything that was there because he didn't let a single word of God fall to the ground.

Heavenly Father, we love You again and we just thank You.