

the
WELL

DEEP TRUTHS
LASTING
TRANSFORMATION



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“With joy shall I draw water from the well of salvation.” Isaiah 12:3

I heard John Maxwell say, *“The greatest day in a man’s life is the day he was born. The second greatest day in a man’s life is the day he finds out why.”* You are no accident my friend. God created you on purpose, with purpose and for a purpose. A God-designed destiny to impact the world in which we live. The greatest adventure we will ever live is the journey of following Jesus and discovering why He put us here. It is that great adventure that has brought us here to The Well.

The first step on this grand adventure happens when a person makes a decision to become a “follower of Christ.” For example, in Mark 1:17 Jesus is walking by the side of a sea and sees Peter in a boat and says to him - “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” There are 2 parts to this powerful statement - the first is simple “follow Me,” Jesus said. Every person alive at some point will have that same opportunity. To follow Jesus is to first decide that He alone is Lord of every facet of our life. It is to put our full faith and trust that what the Bible says about Jesus and the way in which I should live is absolute truth. It is a great journey into a personal relationship with this amazing God who created the world, everything and everyone in it. When I commit myself to this process I discover the latter half of the statement where Jesus said - “follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Following Him is the key to discovering purpose and fulfilling our God-given destiny.

Anyone who sets out on a grand adventure, must take stock of the necessary supplies and tools we need in order to succeed in our endeavor. According to the Bible, there are really about 5 things we need:

1. Make a quality decision, to be a life-long follower of Jesus Christ.
2. Develop a daily study of the Word of God.
3. Discover and develop a solid prayer life.
4. Become an active part of the Body of Christ.
5. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

The Well is simply a structure, a set of plans, to assist people who are hungry to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and successfully fulfill this grand adventure. Each month we will look at a different theme and take us deeper into our understanding of the Scripture and how to apply Biblical principles to our daily lives. Thank you for joining us on this adventure of learning to draw the water of life, from the well of salvation.

Drawing water from - The Well

Different parts of this discipleship tool.

Exercising my Faith this month

- Each month I encourage you to have a faith goal. What are you believing God to do in your life? As you work through this early in the month. Learn to grab a hold of the promises of God by faith and join together with God to see His will fully accomplished in every area of your life. *(Example on p. 6)*

Weekly: Each Week there are 4 sections:

- **The Well - Daily Devotional thought written by multiple authors from The Father's House.**
 - Each day we will be looking at a small passage of Scripture and drawing truths up from the Word of God that will inspire the manner in which we live. Each month will have a theme we will be pursuing. Each day ends with a prompting for each reader to "put the Word to work." Remember it's not about how much we simply read, but how much of the Word we apply to our daily life that really matters.
- **Weekly Bible Reading Guide** (4 different options to choose from) *(See Page 9)*
 - Daily reading and study of the Scripture is essential for spiritual health. Here we provide 4 possible reading guides.
 - Option 1 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once in three years.
 - Option 2 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once per year.
 - Option 3 - Follow this plan to read the entire Bible once per 3 months.
 - Option 4 - Follow this plan to read the New Testament once per month.
- **Weekly Prayer notes**
 - Recording prayer notes is essential both for remembering what the Holy Spirit is speaking and evaluating what we hear based upon the Word of God. It is also encouraging to look back and see how God has been moving in the areas of life we have been praying about. We encourage you to bring this with you to your prayer time and prayer meetings. Regularly visit and revisit your prayer notes sections and write down what God is doing in and through prayer in your life. *(example, see page 7)*
- **Sermon Notes**
 - Often in services there are many great things said that I want to remember. I have discovered what science has already proven to be correct - if I listen and write down thoughts my retention doubles. Included are pages for sermon notes available to be used for each Wednesday and Sunday of the month. *(Example see page 8)*

In addition, we encourage you to join one of our Growth Groups. Inside these groups of up to 5, people will connect and share insights we are learning and growing in. I highly encourage you to get connected and join one of these groups.

(Example) Exercising my Faith this Month

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.... 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Q: What are 1 or 2 things you are believing God to do in your life this month?

1. I am believing God that He will surround me with His peace in the middle of a troubling time in the world.

2. I am believing God will heal my mother and renew her strength and vitality.

Q: Are there any Scriptures that directly deal with these?

Isaiah 26:3 ~ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. John 14:27 ~ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Colossians 3:15 ~ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Philippians 4:6-7 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, I was healed.' Psalm 103:3 - You have 'healed me from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread'

Everyday, we take the Word of God that deals directly with situations we face, and lift up the promises in His Word that deal directly with these situations. We both remind ourselves that God has spoken and secondly, we take that promise and lift it up in prayer.

Part of my daily prayer: *God You said, You will keep me in perfect peace when I bind You to my mind. I choose today to intentionally think about You and trust that You will keep me in perfect peace. You promised your peace you would give me, that it would remain with me. I choose to let your peace rule in my heart, I refuse to be anxious, but come to You with my prayers and needs with thanksgiving present my requests unto You, and in return I today receive Your supernatural peace.*

"God You said in Your Word - I Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, we were healed.' That according to Psalm 103 - You have 'healed us from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread' and since my mother is a child of God, I thank you that healing is hers, I ask you to heal, and renew her strength this day and exercise my faith believing that you will in Jesus' name."

<p>Specific things I am praying about for my family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Daily for God's protection over my wife and children - (Psalm 91 and Isaiah 54:17)</i> - <i>Daily to hear and know God's voice, to be led by His Spirit in all that I say and do. (John 10 and Romans 8)</i> - <i>To walk in His supernatural provision and wisdom, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge (Philippians 4, Ephesians 1 and 3).</i> 	<p>Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>That God would grant wisdom, protection and provision to our leaders.</i> - <i>Every week, I ask for people to come know and follow Christ, to encounter God's presence and to experience His goodness in every service.</i> - <i>That God would bring every person He has called to be a part of The Father's House here.</i> - <i>That God would heal and deliver those who are in need.</i> - <i>_____, the person who was in my row that told me of his desire to see his son come back to the Lord, I am praying for his son by name all week, that God would send someone across His path to lead Him back to Jesus.</i>
<p>Things I sensed from the Holy Spirit while I was praying this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>When I asked God if there was anything He wanted to say to me today, I heard Him simply say - "You are my son, and I love you."</i> - <i>I was talking to the Lord, and felt like He reminded me this morning of the story in the gospels when He came walking on the water, and said to Peter, "come out here with me." I felt like He was letting me know, sometimes when He leads it will be in areas I have never gone before, and didn't know I could - such as walking on water.</i> 	<p>People I am praying for their salvation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Benjamin</i> - <i>Paul</i> - <i>Keith</i> - <i>Joel</i> - <i>Jordan</i>

Versions of the Bible

There have been many arguments over the centuries about which version of the Bible is the best. Truth be told, I have many versions of the Bible and enjoy reading and studying most. The default version for this study will be the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible. If a contributing author uses a different version it will be labeled as such. Other common versions of the Bible quoted from in The Well include, but are not limited to:

The Amplified Bible (AMP)	King James Version (KJV)
New International Version (NIV)	The Message Translation (MSG)
The Passion Translation (TPT)	The New Living Translation (NLT)
Young's Literal Translation (YLT)	

Often people will ask, why is the language so much different from one version of the Bible to the next. Very important question. There are two basic distinctions to pay attention to as you are reading the Bible - is the version you are reading a "paraphrase" or is it a literal translation from original language into our language? The goal of a literal translation approach is to have a word-for-word literal translation from the original manuscripts into our modern day language. The goal of a paraphrase is to capture the idea as communicated in the original language and attempt to use modern language to communicate that same idea. For example when we look at the famous John 3:16

(NKJV) - ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(AMP) - ¹⁶ "For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life.

(YLT) - ¹⁶ for God did so love the world, that His Son -- the only begotten -- He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-

(MSG) - ¹⁶ This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

You can quickly see the different approaches in these versions of Bible translation. Some are focused on a direct word for word translation regardless of the difficulty in reading in current language. On the other end of the spectrum authors focus on taking the concept and making it easy to read in our current language.

I am not one that will mandate a single-specific version of the Bible. However, three things I would look to avoid in study of the Bible: 1) Any translation that eliminates the deity of Christ. 2) Some "woke" versions of the Bible being made, for example the "gender neutral" Bible. 3) If an author has attempted to "water" down absolute truths included in Scripture I pay no attention to those versions.

There are many websites that provide access to these translations and more such as biblegateway.com providing free easy access to those who want to compare various translations and paraphrases of the Bible.

Bible Reading Plan March

	3 year (2)	Once/year	Once Quarterly	New Testament in a month
1	Deut. 29	Deut. 5-7	Ezekiel 11 - 22	Matt. 1-3; Rom. 1-4; Act 1; Rev. 1
2	Deut. 30	Deut. 8-10	Ezekiel 23 - 34	Matt. 4-6; Rom. 5-8; Acts 2; Rev. 2
3	Deut. 31	Deut. 11-13	Ezekiel 35 - 45	Matt 7-9; Rom. 9-12; Acts 3; Rev. 3
4	Deut. 32	Deut. 14-16	Ezekiel 46 - Daniel 7	Matt. 10-12; Rom. 13-16; Acts 4; Rev. 5
5	Deut. 33	Deut. 17-20	Daniel 8 - Hosea	Mat. 13-15; I Cor. 1-4; Acts 5; Rev. 5
6	Deut. 34	Deut. 21-23	Joel, Amos, Obadiah & Jonah	Matt. 16-18; I Cor. 5-8; Acts 6; Rev. 6
7	Josh. 1	Deut. 24-27	Micah, Nahum, Hab & Zeph	Matt. 19-21; I Cor. 9-12; Acts 7; Rev. 7
8	Josh. 2	Deut. 28-29	Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi	Mat. 22-24; 1 Cor. 13-16; Acts 8; Rev. 8
9	Josh. 3	Deut. 30-31	Matthew 1 - 13	Matt. 25-28; 2 Cor. 1-4; Acts 9; Rev. 9
10	Josh. 4	Deut. 32-34	Matthew 14 - 16	Luke 1-2; 2 Cor. 5-8; Acts 10; Rev. 10
11	Josh. 5	Joshua 1-4	Matthew 17 - Mark 7	Luke 3-4; 2 Cor. 9-13; Acts 11; Rev. 11
12	Josh. 6	Joshua 5-8	Mark 8 - 16	Luke 5-7; Gal. 1-3; Acts 12; Rev. 12
13	Josh. 7	Joshua 9-11	Luke 1 - 9	Luke 8-10; Gal. 4-6; Acts 13; Rev. 13
14	Josh. 8	Joshua 12-15	Luke 10 - John 4	Luke 11-13; Eph. 1-3; Acts 14; Rev. 14
15	Josh. 9	Joshua 16-18	John 5 - 14	Luke 14-16; Eph. 4-6; Acts 15; Rev. 15
16	Josh. 10	Joshua 19-21	John 15 - Acts 5	Luke 17-19; Phil. 1-4; Acts 16; Rev. 16
17	Josh. 11	Joshua 22-24	Acts 6 - 16	Luke 20-22; Col. 1-4; Acts 17; Rev. 17
18	Josh. 12	Judges 1-2	Acts 17 - Acts 28	Luke 23-24; I Thess. 1-5; Acts 18; Rev. 18
19	Josh. 13	Judges 3-5	Romans 1-14	Mark. 1-3; 2 Thess. 1-3; Acts 19; Rev. 19
20	Josh. 14	Judges 6-7	Rom.15 - 1st Corinthians 10	Mark 4-6; I Tim. 1-6; Acts 20; Rev. 20
21	Josh. 15	Judges 8-9	1 Cor 11 - 2 Corinthians 8	Mark 7-9; 2 Tim. 1-4; Acts 21; Rev. 21
22	Josh. 16	Judges 10-12	2 Corinthians 9-13 & Galatians	Mark 10-12; Titus. 1-3; Philemon 1; Acts 22; Rev. 22
23	Josh. 17	Judges 13-15	Ephesians & Philippians	Mark 13-16; Hebrews 1-4; Acts 23
24	Josh. 18	Judges 16-18	Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thess.	John 1-3; Hebrews 5-8; Acts 24
25	Josh. 19	Judges 19-21	Books of 1st & 2nd Tim, Titus	John 4-5; Hebrews 9-13; Acts 25
26	Josh. 20	I Samuel 1-3	Books Philemon - Hebrews 8	John 6-7; James 1-5; Acts 26
27	Josh. 21	I Samuel 4-8	Heb. 8 - 13 & Book of James	John 8-9; I Peter 1-5; Acts 27
28	Josh. 22	I Samuel 9-12	1st & 2nd Peter	John 10-12; 2 Peter 1-3; Acts 28
29	Josh. 23	I Samuel 13-14	1st, 2nd, 3rd John & Jude	John 13-15; I John 1-5
30	Josh. 24	I Samuel 15-17	Revelation 1 - 11	John 16-18; Books of 2nd & 3rd John
31	Jude 1	I Samuel 18-20	Revelation 12-22	John 19-21; Book of Jude

Exercising my Faith this Month

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 - **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.... 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

Q: What are 1 or 2 things you are believing in God to do in your life this month?

Q: Are there any Scriptures that directly deal with these things you are believing in God for?

Everyday, we take the Word of God that deals directly with situations we face, and lift up the promises in His Word that deal directly with these situations. We both remind ourselves that God has spoken and secondly, we take that promise and lift it up in prayer.

Example: "God You said in Your Word - I Peter 2:24 that 'By Your stripes, I was healed.' That in Psalm 103 - You have 'healed me from every disease.' In Matthew 15:26 that 'healing is the children's bread' and since I am a child of God, I thank you and receive healing in Jesus' name."

Week One

Week One Prayer Notes

<p>Specific things I am praying about for my family.</p>	<p>Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.</p>
<p>Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.</p>	<p>People I am praying for their salvation.</p>

March 1**Reward for Obedience****Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 5-7**

Deuteronomy 5:32 & 33, "Therefore, you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess."

This is a very powerful section of Scripture. Moses is recounting to the Israelites the history of their deliverance from Egypt, and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. He reminds them of the miracles that they had witnessed and how the hand of God delivered them from their enemies. He also gives them a stern caution against disobedience and reminds them of the blessings that are in store for the one who obeys God's law, statutes and regulations.

Let me call your attention to a small segment of scripture at the beginning of these three chapters. Some people would say that means, "Do as you are told." The Word is actually saying, follow the things that I have laid out for you, and the following will be your reward:

One: You shall live. That seems to me to be pretty important. How many of us want to live. If you do not live you cannot inherit. Only the living heirs inherit what the estate says that they are entitled to.

Two: You shall be well. Personally, I not only want to live, but I want to live well. This does not necessarily mean that we are going to have everything that we want. Sometimes the things that we want are the very things that are the most detrimental to us. What does it mean to you to live well. Hopefully it will include a close personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Without that relationship, we cannot hope to live well.

Three: That you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess. Note that He does not just say that you will live a long life, but that you will live a long life in the land which you possess. We all have been given a land to possess. Many of us have yet to possess our land, but we still have one that is ours. God wants you to bring heaven down to earth and live long in the land that you have taken from the enemy.

Obedience is the key. If we will obey God's commands and act out the salvation that He has provided us, we will live, live well, and prolong our days. 1 Samuel 15:22, "...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed better than the fat of rams."

Putting the Word to Work

What do you feel God is saying to you from the Scriptures? Whenever you feel that God is speaking something to you, obey immediately.

March 2

What God Really Asks of Us

Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 8-10

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

There was a point in my walk with the Lord when I no longer considered myself a “baby Christian”, yet I knew I had so much more to learn. I wanted to please the Lord and do everything possible to grow spiritually. But over time, my faith began to feel heavier than it should have.

When we are unclear about what God truly expects, faith can easily turn into pressure. I found myself becoming spiritually busy with tasks, disciplines, and to-dos. I felt like the harder I pushed myself, the more mature I would become. The opposite was true; I became inwardly tired, and my relationship with the Lord began to suffer.

In this passage from Deuteronomy, Moses is speaking to the Israelites on God's behalf. They are coming from continued failure and years of survival in the wilderness, preparing to transition into a settled life in the Promised Land, and then God asks, “What does the Lord your God ask of you?” This question is asked in a moment where performance could easily replace relationship. But God directs their focus to their heart posture.

In a time where life could get chaotic with transitions and endless to-dos, God reminds them to focus on Him from the heart. He guides them with this simple structure:

- Fear the Lord - have a right understanding of who He is.
- Walk in obedience - obedience flows out of relationship. Love Him, and serve Him -When you love, you naturally desire to serve wholeheartedly.
- Keep His commandments - this naturally follows when the first four are in place.

All of these commands are rooted in love. God delights in what we do for Him, but ultimately, He wants our hearts. I learned that no amount of busyness could grow my faith like fearing, loving, walking with, and serving Him from the heart.

Putting the Word to Work

I challenge you to stop the spiritual busyness for a moment. Ask yourself: ‘What is the Lord asking of me?’ Remember these five commands, take them one at a time, and keep in mind that God wants your heart above all.

March 3**Hiding the Word in our Hearts****Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 11-13**

Deuteronomy 11:18,19 - "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul (mind, will, emotions) and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets (headbands) between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Joyce was teaching my granddaughter, Jennifer's, first grade Sunday School class, and I had gone in with her to help one Sunday. The memory verses Joyce had given the class to learn that day were the Ten Commandments in Exodus chapter 20. That was a lot for a first grader to get a hold of! The best way we knew how to get those very important words inside us was to sing them. So we asked the Lord for a tune and here is what He gave us. We sang those Ten Commandments to the tune of "Jingle Bells."

Thou shall have no other gods before Me,
 Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image,
 Thou shall not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain,
 Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
 Honor your father and your mother,
 Thou shall not kill,
 Thou shall not commit adultery,
 Thou shall not steal,
 Thou shall not bear false witness against your neighbor,
 Thou shall not covet.....Exodus 20!

Putting the Word to Work

Perhaps you would like to hide these words in your heart or teach them to your children.....try the suggested melody and see what happens!

March 4

Obey the voice of the Lord your God

Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 14-16

Deuteronomy 15:4-5 "...for the Lord will greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance— 5 only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today.

In verse 4, it sounds pretty wonderful. We like to receive good things and especially when it comes from a higher authority. Like when your boss comes in and says he is going to promote you and give you a higher wage. But with a promotion and more money, there is a price: and it's you, your heart, your soul, your physical and your mental.

You may ask yourself, what is the land God is speaking of? Can I really possess it as is my right? The land is everything you have: your physical body, your mind, and your spiritual life. For example, your body (fruit of your loins) which is your children and your descendants, your prosperity (what you put your hand to), your storehouse shall be full, your physical body, your mental acuity, your spiritual man shall glorify God in all things you do. This is a promise of God and His promises never fail.

There is an apparent correlation to the example of "your boss" versus the "Lord, your God." Your boss can come in today and say the company is closing, come pick up your final pay. Just like that all those great promises are gone and you are left desolate. But with an eternal God, our benefits go on and on. No closing down, just eternity with our Lord God who loves, provides, protects and heals us.

I did say there was a price and that's where verse 5 comes in. There are some key words here that bring this home: Only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God. The price is obedience to the voice of God and you can put the word 'sacrifice' right next to it. God went further in His promises: He says in His word when we get weary, He is going to give us rest; He said when we are weak, He would be our strength; He said if we failed, He would cover us with His grace; and when we begin our days, His mercy would greet us at the beginning of every day. Then He said, in our walk with Him, when we make mistakes, His incredible love would cover us and He would put His righteousness on us so we could be wholly acceptable before Him. What a God! What a boss!

Putting the Word to Work

1. Are you feeling the pressure of serving?

2. Where is the pressure coming from, the world? Or God?

3. Take your situation to God and lean into His promises. They never fail.

March 5**Active Alignment****Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 17-20**

Deuteronomy 17:13 So you shall purge the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear and no longer act presumptuously."

I love the book of Proverbs, especially chapter 8. Wisdom cries out to the people at the path, beckoning them to turn toward her and find life. As you read through that chapter, you begin to notice clear parallels with Deuteronomy 17–20: wickedness is an abomination, turning from evil reflects the fear of the Lord, and kings reign rightly through wisdom.

Why does this matter? Simply put, following wisdom puts us into alignment with God. That is exactly what God is calling Israel to in these chapters of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 17–20 is not primarily about rules or religious performance. Its language is simple, direct, and intensely practical. The repeated calls—put away the evil, do not turn aside to the right or the left, do not return that way, do not imitate the nations, and listen to the prophet God raises—are all about staying aligned with God. Alignment is the point, and it requires deliberate, careful effort to stay in step with Him.

Israel was set apart to be different. They were to walk intentionally, removing what would pull them off course and avoiding the ways of the surrounding nations. Evil, idolatry, deception, and ungodly violence were incompatible with God's presence. These instructions weren't about perfection or performance; they were about living in step with God's will, so that every step, every choice, and every action reflected His direction.

Alignment requires focus, intentionality, and discernment. It is about examining one's own path, refusing influences that would misdirect, and consistently turning toward the way God sets before His people. God's call to Israel was never simply to obey rules, but to walk in harmony with His purposes, to purge what disrupts that alignment, and to live as a people defined by their steady devotion to Him.

Putting the Word to Work

Alignment with God is not automatic; it is deliberate. Every day, your choices either bring you closer to His direction or pull you away. The call to "put away the evil" is as much about what you allow in as what you reject. Is there anything subtly pulling you off the path God has set before you—habits, attitudes, relationships, or influences—and what concrete step will you take this week to realign your steps with Him?

March 6

God protects us from curses

Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 21-23

Deuteronomy 23:3-5, KJV "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee."

Deuteronomy chapters 21-23 are a collection of civil laws and instructions for how the people of Israel were to interact with one another. This was to set Israel apart from other societies, and to aid the adults in their personal relationship with one another. As Moses is explaining these laws, he goes into the matter of who is and is not allowed in the congregation of the Lord.

I am currently going through a physical battle of my own today, so I chose to focus on verses that would inspire others, as it has myself. In the above verses, Moses revisited the curse that was sent upon Israel in Numbers 22. Balaam was a sorcerer and seer hired by the Moabite king Balak, to curse Israel. Only, because Israel was a highly favored people, whom God loves dearly, He caused the potential curse to be reversed, by the sender himself.

When the king sent messengers to Balaam, Balaam sought out the Lord first before anything, hearing of the great power the God of Israel had. Eventually, Balaam went with the king's servants, but not to necessarily curse Israel though, because he was instructed by the Lord to do and say only what He required.

After meeting the king, Balaam warned him that he was only allowed to do what the Lord instructed. Even still, King Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-Baal. Wherefrom, he could see people of Israel spread out below him. The king wanted Balaam to perform sacrifices intended on harming the people of Israel.

Balaam was not allowed to hurt or curse them, but was told to bless them instead by God. Ultimately, the king was left infuriated as well as frustrated, telling Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies. Instead, you have blessed them!" (Deuteronomy 23:11)

Please appreciate today, that if you worship the Lord as your God, you are protected by Him, and you quite literally cannot be cursed; Since every curse will be reversed into a blessing. It's just one more benefit of following such a loving Father!

Putting the Word to Work

Think back and recognize a time in life that you did not even know the Lord was protecting you, until after the event happened. He will do this again!

March 7

Miscellaneous Laws

Today's Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 24-27

Deuteronomy 24:17-18 "You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge. But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this thing."

Today's reading in Deuteronomy gives the law and punishments for a myriad of situations (big and small) that confront the people. These 'miscellaneous' laws are to be fulfilled with compassion. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus said, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

Before entering the Promised Land, God leaves no stone unturned in teaching His people to obey His principles. In Leviticus and Deuteronomy, He addresses all aspects of daily attitudes and behavior. He said it then, and He says it today. Remember, Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Chapters 24 and 25 deal with topics from marriage and divorce, to household "balance," to their "blotting out remembrance" of the Amalekites who had attacked them as they came out of Egypt.

Chapter 26 begins with teaching the procedures for tithes based on their Jewish history. "First Fruits" has significant meaning in the Promised Land, and for us today. Whatever the source of our tithes, they should come FIRST. The people are admonished to keep all these laws. Verses 16-19: "The Lord has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the Lord your God, just as He has spoken." Rejoice!

Chapter 27 gives instructions to write these laws on whitewashed stones and take them across the Jordan, then set them up on Mt. Ebal and build an altar. Moses commanded six tribes to stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people and six tribes to stand on Mount Ebal to curse. "14 And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 15Cursed is the one who... (they called out each law) "And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!' (after each one)

We are greatly blessed to be living in a time of Salvation and Redemption through the Blood of Jesus that has fulfilled the law on our behalf. We only need to exercise our gift of "choice" and choose to receive it. We, too, are a special people! Rejoice!

Putting the Word to Work

Obedience is a Choice. How would you score yourself on your success in paying attention to His instructions? Is another level of obedience available to you? If so, what would that look like for you?

Week One Sermon Notes

Week One Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week One Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Two

Week Two Prayer Notes

<p>Specific things I am praying about for my family.</p>	<p>Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.</p>
<p>Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.</p>	<p>People I am praying for their salvation.</p>

March 8

Blessings and Cursings

Today's Bible Reading Deuteronomy 28, 29

The book of Deuteronomy is really about choices which result in blessings or curses. This theme is very well presented in the "if and then" language presented in chapter 28. This chapter is 68 verses long. In the first 14 God tells them that "if" you obey and "if" you follow me all these blessings will overtake you. Then the next 54 verses tell the children of the curses that will over take them if they don't. Curses vs blessings are kind of lop sided, but I will take those 14 verses over the other 54 anyway.

The blessings include: being set above all nations. Being blessed in the city, the fields, in your livestock, your children, in coming and going. It speaks of your enemies defeated before you. Of your kneading bowl will be blessed (abundance of food), your store houses will be blessed (always full), you will be set apart holy and above all nations, the head and not the tail, above and not below, all the nations will know that you are blessed. Here is the caveat to these blessings. In verse 13 God says this is yours "if you listen and pay attention to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today, to observe them carefully"

In The next verse 15 God says 15 "But it shall come about, if you do not listen to and obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, then all these curses will come upon you and overtake you." The result of the curse is basically the exact opposite of the blessings in verse 1-14. The blessings are great but I don't want the curses.

There are two words I want to focus on that are riddled throughout this chapter. The first is a small one "if" and it is a pretty important word for being so small. It carries so much to it. It could mean life or death, peace or war, success or failure. All of those possibilities are evident in this chapter of Deuteronomy. The second word I have put in bold because of its importance. That is over-take. Over-take means to catch up with and pass while going in the same direction. So if we believe, trust, obey and follow Him and His commandments (go in the right direction) we will be blessed. The blessing will in fact not just catch up to us, but will pass us.

Unfortunately the opposite is also true. The curses will do the same.

The Amplified bible tells us in Proverbs that "if" we totally and confidently rely on the Lord He will make our paths straight and remove all obstacles in our path. Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in and rely confidently on the LORD with all your heart And do not rely on your own insight or understanding.6 In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize Him, And He will make your paths straight and smooth [removing obstacles that block your way]."

When the world says "there are many ways to God" don't believe them. I have first hand knowledge of the effects of NOT being obedient. Honestly I spent a very long time thinking "why can't I just get a break" things piled up, troubles on all fronts. Financial, personal, physical, spiritual, and mental. Since turning over my life to Christ I have experienced nothing but blessings and peace. Oh I can't say things are perfect and that I don't struggle, but my life is no longer my own and I don't have to be concerned about the outcome.

Putting the Word to Work

- 1) Next time you feel led by God to do something that isn't something you would normally do "do it" being lead by the spirit is indeed being obedient.
- 2) Keep the commandments. Not under the law but under love for Him who gave them.
- 3) Be a blessing to others whenever possible. For if we love our neighbors as ourselves we will elevate and honor them.

March 9

The Blessing of Circumcision of The Heart

Today's reading Deuteronomy 30-31

Deut. 30:6 " And the Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with all your being, that you may live."

My heart is full as I read these chapters and realize the depth of the Father's love. We get to know the Father's will for our lives. It is expressed in His Word. We can walk in agreement with Him, nothing I'd rather do. I have an eager readiness to do so. Later in vs. 19, it's telling us to choose life that you and your descendants may live. I found this to be true. Not only did my mother love the Lord, but I am realizing it in my own children and grandchildren.

In Hebrews 4:12, it says that what God speaks is alive and full of power. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life. In Jeremiah 4:4a, God tells us to circumcise ourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of our heart.

Although sometimes we can't see the sin that so easily besets us, Hebrews 12:1 says we get to go to Jesus (12:2) who is the leader (author) and source of our faith. Psalm 107:20, "He sends forth His word and heals them from the pit and destruction." Hebrews 6:18,19 says it is impossible for God to lie. So be encouraged, take hold of this hope for it is an anchor for the soul.

We get to go to God's word and examine our heart's condition! So we can get instruction, never knowing what He will speak. He might tell us to amend our ways and doings. (Jeremiah 7:3a) In John 8:11b Jesus told the woman, caught in adultery, that He did not condemn her. That she was to go and sin no more. James 2:13 says, His mercy triumphs over judgement. I Corinthians 1:9, " God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise; and He can be depended on); by Him you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

This morning I was reminded to be still and listen daily, enjoy His presence. In His presence is fullness of joy. Psalm 16:11 " You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Love is obedience in action. Remember what He is saying. Don't lose sight of it. Are you ready to receive all that He has for you and your descendants for He longs to bless you

Putting the Word to Work

Where is your place where you often find yourself most connected with God?

March 10

The Conclusion of the Torah

Today's Bible Reading - Deuteronomy 32-34

Deut. 34:5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.

We see the conclusion of the first chapter of the life and ministry of Moses. Fittingly, Moses wrapped up this chapter of his earthly ministry in a great pattern. Chapter 32 he writes a song telling of the greatness and faithfulness of God that becomes an anthem throughout Israel's history. Chapter 33 He blesses the tribes and the people of God. In Chapter 34 he has enough strength at the end of his days to climb to the top of a mountain and encounter God from this earthly place one last time, looking over the land He has labored to bring God's people into. These verse describe his physical state at the time of his death. He was 120 years old, great vision and had all his natural vitality.

He left a legacy, there was no prophet like him before, nor after. He established a mold that the nation would look for for centuries ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, a "prophet like Moses" God would raise up to deliver His people. The question before us today is to ask is this the end of Moses? Moses would transition from his earthly body and ministry into his heavenly ministry. We see in the gospels that he shows up alongside Elijah to speak with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration (see Mark 9) Approximately 1,400 to 1,500 years later. Do not misunderstand that moment to mean that it is okay to seek out interaction with the dead for man to initiate that kind of spiritual experience is still an abomination unto the Lord.

I bring it up to say this. In everything Moses accomplished during his time on the earth, isn't it amazing that it was only the first chapter of his living experience. Moses' physical body died and was buried by the Lord, but that does not mean Moses ceased to exist. Moses, like all of us, will walk in everlasting life. His earthly experience of 120 years did not conclude his existence but merely the first part of this experience.

May I encourage you my brother or sister, this life is short compared to eternity. Approximately 1,500 years later, Moses was having another God encounter another mountain.

Putting the Word to Work

Are you looking forward to eternity, or are you nervous even perhaps a little anxious about your eternal experience? There is a peace of God that comes with surrender and a deep relationship with Him that you can experience.

March 11

Cross this Jordan

Today's Bible Reading Joshua 1-4

Joshua 1:2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people to the land which I am giving to them - the children of Israel.

It was Sunday, November 13th we were in the little town of Myrtle Point, OR. I taught the Adult Sunday School before the main service, led worship that Sunday, then sat down as Pastor Jim O'Connor preached a message out of Joshua 1:2. 15 years later, I do not remember a lot of what was said, but I do remember the heart of the message, "God has more in store for you, it's time to rise up, cross the Jordan and possess all that God has in store for you.

I do not often remember my dreams, but that Thursday, November 17th, I awoke with a vivid recall of a dream. In the dream, I had been leading a group of teens from our youth group on a hike up an old gravel logging road in the woods. We came to a fork the road and decided to take the lower fork. We went around a corner and realized the upper road went to a rock pit and we wanted to go up and see it, but we didn't want to backtrack. I saw a deer trail and started up the deer trail as the teens all followed along. About halfway up the trail, came to an impasse. Suddenly, Jim was standing right behind me and (if you knew him this was a classic Jim line) asked, "well, what are you gonna do?" Looked again, figured a way around it, and kept going. This happened Three times in a row. Impass. Jim asks the question. Look again and figured a way to keep going. After the third time, I instantly was wide awake. I did not think much of the dream until that night, as we were setting up for the midweek youth service, I received a text message from JoAnne, Jim's wife. Jim was unconscious in the ICU. Jim had been found in his boat and they concluded he had had a severe stroke. About 4 weeks later, Jim moved to heaven having faithfully served the Lord with his life.

Everytime I read this story in Joshua 1, I remember this as a pivotal part of my personal story. 15 years later, countless times, I have encountered moments of conflict. Moments of seemingly impasses. And now, at least on 3 different occasions, men who have been the 3 most influential spiritual fathers in my life to this point in my journey moving on (Jim to glory) two others to retirement and now out of state. Each of them fought, shaped and molded my life in significant ways, built a legacy, handed it to us and have now in essence said get up, cross the Jordan you and all these people with you.

Putting the Word to Work

Recognize there are generations who have gone before us, who have fought for and built a legacy and have now handed it to us with the charge, "Get up, cross the Jordan, you and all these people unto the land I have called you unto."

March 12

Read the Word

Today's Bible Reading:

Joshua 8:34-35 "And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them."

Tucked within the narrative regarding Joshua and the children of Israel's conquest of the promised land, is an event that should speak volumes to us. After the walls of Jericho had fallen, after the Lord's chastening of the tribes at Ai, and the subsequent victory at Ai, Joshua built an altar between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, gathered the people there where they presented offerings unto the Lord as Joshua read aloud the Word so that all the people could hear it. Oh, how we love to hear pastors, fathers, mothers, and others reading aloud the Word!

From cover to cover, the Bible continually reminds us how essential the reading of the holy scriptures is to each one of us. God's word is designed to guide us, to guard us, and to grow us! King David wrote, "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). In other words, the bible illuminates how well I am walking and reveals where I am headed. The bible also insulates. In that same Psalm, King David wrote: "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11). The Bible also incubates. Peter the apostle wrote: "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

Sadly, recent studies show that only 31% of people who attend church regularly in America read the Bible daily. The study also revealed the biggest predictor of whether a child becomes a faithful believer as a young adult is whether they regularly read the Bible growing up (<https://www.christiantoday.com/news/fewer-than-1-in-3-churchgoers-read-the-bible-daily>).

Much later in Israel's history, the Lord spoke through His prophet, Amos: "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord God, 'That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it'" (Amos 8:11-12). May we take heed to that warning and commit ourselves to a daily reading of God's Word, the Bible!

Please remember, seven days without reading the Word makes one weak!

Putting the Word to Work

Q: Do you read a portion of the Bible every day? If not, why not?

Q: Describe your appetite for the Word:

March 13

Called to Finish, Not Just Start

Today's Bible Reading: Joshua 9-11

Joshua 10:42 " because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel."

I love the idea of victory, but can I be honest and say that sometimes the process to get there is exhausting. I want a breakthrough, but the battle that comes with it? Not so much. Joshua 9-11 reminds me that God doesn't just call us to start strong, He calls us to finish. In Joshua 10-11, Israel is fighting multiple enemies at once. The kings they're battling run and hide in a cave. Joshua could have been satisfied with that. But instead, he orders the cave sealed and the continued fighting. Then after the victory, he comes back, pulls the kings out, and deals with them completely.

Sometimes we may think if the enemy is quiet, the threat is gone. But Joshua teaches us here that just because something is contained doesn't mean it's conquered. And the danger is when we settle for a partial victory. We stop praying once we feel a little better. We stop fighting once the temptation fades. We stop pursuing healing once the pain becomes manageable. We stop seeking God once we've gotten what we wanted.

Joshua didn't fight for comfort, he fought for freedom. And he didn't win because of his own strength, he won because God was faithful. The call to finish the fight isn't a call to strive harder in our own strength, it's a call to stay obedient long enough to see God complete what He started. In Joshua 11 we see battle after battle. Enemy after enemy. And verse 15 says Joshua didn't leave anything undone that the Lord commanded. Because unfinished battles tend to come back. God didn't bring you this far to leave you stuck in the middle of the fight. The same God who gave you the first victory will give you the final one, if you don't quit.

Putting the Word to Work

Have I allowed any spiritual enemies to stay hidden in a cave instead of dead and buried?

March 14

Fight for the Promise

Today's Bible Reading; Joshua 12-15

Joshua 12:1 Now these are the kings of the land whom the sons of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the valley of the Arnon as far as Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah to the east... 6 Moses the servant of the Lord and the sons of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the Lord gave it to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh as a possession. 7 Now these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the sons of Israel defeated beyond the Jordan toward the west...

God's word is full of promises. Full of examples of a faithful God who, when His children step out in faith, meets them in the moment and walks with them through the fight. God gave Moses, Joshua, and the sons of Israel a promise, He said in Deuteronomy 1:8, "I am giving you the land, now go and possess it." After years (40 to be exact) of walking in the consequences of fear, they finally moved forward. They took the land, they took down kings and armies that were most of the time larger and more battle ready than they were, but for God.

They had a promise from the one who sustained them the last forty years, they had faith in the one who covered them, guided their steps, and cared for them. They trusted the Lord MORE than any fear that would creep in. Fear speaks and tells you every reason why this won't work, you're not equipped for this, or he won't show up this time, or you didn't hear him right. These are the words of Fear. Moses, Joshua, and all of the sons of Israel saw what fear produced, death in the wilderness. Joshua 12-15 shares with us the beauty of fighting for a promise and how that will affect generations.

God has given us promises. His word is full of wonderful and lovely promises from a Father to his children. Sometimes we have to fight for the promise. Sometimes we have to take down the kings and armies that are standing in the way of us occupying our promise. A promise from the Lord I fight for is His peace. He says in His Word that peace is a gift, it surpasses all understanding, and it is not peace like the world gives, it is perfect and lasting. If I am going to fight for peace then I cannot partner with fear. The promise of peace is mine, but it does not mean that I don't have to fight for it. I look to the gift giver, peace himself, and am equipped to take on the fight and walk in the promise.

Putting the Word to Work

What promise has the Lord revealed to you that you need to fight for? This is not striving, it is trusting, seeking, and relying on the One who gave it to you in the first place.

Week Two Sermon Notes

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Three

Week Three Prayer Notes

<p>Specific things I am praying about for my family.</p>	<p>Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.</p>
<p>Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.</p>	<p>People I am praying for their salvation.</p>

March 15

The Tension between the Promise and the Possession

Today's Bible Reading: Joshua 16-18

Joshua 18:2 But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. 3 Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: "How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?"

I do not know any believer who would not know the tension of living between the promise and the possession of the promise. Great God encounters where we as His followers receive a powerful prophetic word about that which God wants to do in and through our lives. Coming out of that moment and seeing that it has not yet come to pass, but is not yet fully manifested but is potentially available. Here we find in Chapter 18 a moment in time, when 7 of the tribes have seen God do great things for their cousins and have participated in miraculous military conquest of the Canaanite kings and yet they have not received their promised land yet. Standing closer than ever before, Joshua gives them 3 things to do, which I think are great lessons for those caught in between where we are, and where we want to be.

First he tells them to go "Survey the Land." Can I encourage you, don't just read a promise of God in the Word and then quote it and move on, take time to "meditate" on the word, the promise of God. In your mind begin to explore that promise, walk around in it. Ask the Lord, and ask yourself questions like: what will change in my situation when I see this promise manifested in my life? What will look different? How will it feel? How would my life look different there than it does right now?

Secondly, he told them to "divide the land," or we might use the phrase in today's world sub-divide the property. After you survey the promise and begin to see what it will look like, begin to see it more as a journey and a process than simply a destination to arrive at. What steps will be necessary in order to fully possess it?

Thirdly, He gave them instructions to cut down the forest or to settle the land. What can you begin doing right now in the process to move in the direction of settlement?

Putting the Word to Work

Do you tend to look at the promised land more as a process or a destination?

What land are you "settling?"

What would be one step you could take in the direction of settling into the promises of God this week?

March 16**Preventing the Battle****Today's Bible Reading: Joshua 19-21**

(Special note, we had a mix up and two article from tomorrow's reading, they were both too good, so I kept them both in)

Joshua 22:12-13 So the whole community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and prepared to go to war against them. First, however, they sent a delegation led by Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to talk with the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

In this passage, we read about the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh building an altar. This came directly after Joshua had blessed them for their faithfulness, sent them home, and warned them to be careful to continue to follow all of God's commands. When the rest of the Israelites heard about the altar, they believed it was a rival altar built for sacrifices, and that these tribes were directly rebelling against the Lord. Deuteronomy 12:5 says, "Rather, you must seek the Lord your God at the place of worship as he himself will choose from among all the tribes— the place where his name will be honored". From the perspective of the Israelites, this appeared to be clear disobedience.

The Israelites' serious concern about this sin is admirable, but it was fueled by assumption. They assumed rebellion, and they were ready to go to war because of it. However, the Israelites paused long enough to ask questions. This is the most important part of this passage. How often are we quick to assume without just asking a few questions? A simple misunderstanding can escalate conflict with fellow believers. Matthew 5:24 tells us when we have a conflict with a brother to "First go and be reconciled to them." Reconciliation begins with a willingness to listen.

It turns out the altar was not built for sacrifice, but as a memorial, a witness for future generations. Because Israel gathered their leaders and sent them to confront the situation, instead of attacking them, they were able to avoid division, judgment, and even civil war.

So why does giving space for an explanation matter spiritually? It matters because when we assume the worst and don't give others the opportunity to explain their motives, division is often the result. Assumptions can harden our hearts, and suspicion can creep in and distort the truth. We need to protect our witness and our unity, and we cannot do that by reacting quickly or drawing conclusions prematurely. We protect them by humbly pursuing the truth. Making space for explanations shows patience, self-control, and a desire to preserve unity, rather than prove ourselves right.

Because the Israelites listened, the battle was prevented and unity was preserved.

Putting the Word to Work

When situations arise, go straight to the source. Do not give assumptions and division room to take root. Confront the situation with love and humility. Seek the truth in the name of unity and Reconciliation.

March 17

It's all in your choice.

Today's Bible Reading: Joshua 22-24

The Eastern tribes have headed home, and the Western tribes have settled into the land God had given them as their inheritance. Finally, the nation of Israel has claimed the promise land that God gave to Abraham centuries earlier. Joshua is one hundred and ten years old and has come all the way from Egypt to the land of promise. He has had quite a journey. He has given a charge to the people of Israel. "...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve." (Joshua 24:15) Our choices will make the difference in where we are, and how much God can bless us. Joshua continues in verse 15, "...But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

Quite often you will find that your lifestyle and the way that you treat others will be the strongest witness that you have. If we could save people by telling them how bad they are, the whole world would be saved by now. We need to show them, by the way that we live and act, that there is a difference between the world and the Christian walk. The old adage goes, "Actions speak louder than words." Pastor Bill Sanders used to say, "People don't want to know how much you know, until they know how much you care." You will find that the world is watching how you act and interact with people and your surroundings. Joshua had lived his life serving the Lord, and the people had seen his way of life. His simple statement about serving the Lord swayed the people towards doing the same. His witness was the way he lived.

I have often pondered the idea that those around me are watching me and making decisions about the Kingdom of God by what they see. Sometimes the simplest of gestures, opening a door for someone, paying for someone's coffee in the drive through, or taking a meal to someone in need can affect the world around you. How do you act around a homeless person? Is there a difference in the way that you interact with those you come in contact with on a daily basis? An act of kindness can work miracles in the life of the person you interact with, as well as those that are observing what you are doing. I once paid for the order of a mom and her two kids that were behind me in the line at McDonalds. I was told later that it worked like a chain reaction. She in turn paid for the one behind her and so on for about six cars in a row. It's amazing what small things can do. What would happen if we awoke every morning and asked the Lord, "Let me be kind to someone today."

Putting the Word to Work

As you go through your daily routine today, keep an eye out for the possibility of serving the Lord through an extra act of kindness

March 18

Defeat the Enemy

Today's Bible Reading: Judges 1 - 2

"And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizites. Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes." Judges 1:5,6

Adoni-Bezek was the Lord of a Canaanite city, and the tribes of Judah and Simeon had been commissioned by God to overtake the inhabitants and claim the land surrounding the city. Why did the leaders of these tribes use a sword and cut off his thumbs and toes? So he could not hold a weapon or run well.

How do we defeat the enemies that come against us---our enemies being spirits of fear, anxiety, rejection, shame, etc.? The Word of God comes to rescue and equips us; Ephesians 6 clearly lays out the battle plan! We are to put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth and the boots of peace. And then we are to take up the shield of faith.

So what is our offensive weapon with which to sever Satan's thumbs and toes? It is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God!

The word "Word" in this chapter, verse 17, is the Greek word "Rhema" which means a specific Word that applies to our situation. So if our enemy is a spirit of fear and anxiety, a Word like John 14:27 AMP would fight it! Yahoo!

"Peace I leave with you; My own peace I now give and bequeath to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid---stop allowing yourself to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled."

Putting the Word to Work

Look for that "Rhema" Word when you find yourself in a battle and watch what happens! Those harassing spirits will drop their weapons and slowly limp away in defeat!!

March 19

The Battle is the Lord's

Today's Bible Reading: Judges 3-5

Judges 3:4. "And they [Philistines] were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses."

There is a central theme in these three chapters and the key is found in Judges 3:4. Was God going to hand the keys of His kingdom over to just anybody? Would you hand your Mercedes keys over to your child who had never driven before? I think not! In James 1:12, it says, it is a blessed man who remains steadfast in trials. Just like God knowing His children would need to learn to obey and keep His words. In these chapters there are instances where they came up against the enemy and were subdued by them until they cried out and God would send them a deliverer. It says they went out and lived among their enemies and made them family. Right at the get-go, they went into the enemy's camp. God's voice couldn't be heard, much less obeyed.

The minute we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, a target has been placed on us and the enemy's voice tries to drown out our Savior's voice. Every battle we go into as weaklings, God brings us out stronger. Every situation the children of Israel were delivered out of, gave them one more story of the greatness of God: one, more victory, one more warrior, one more testament of God's faithfulness. Our trials and tribulations only reflect back to us our greater need for a Savior.

Ever since the garden and the choices that were made there, mankind has had an enemy and there has always been a need for an army. My grandsons are both Marines today, but when they went in at the beginning, they were just young men who knew nothing of being a warrior. Now, with years of experience and training, they know how to fight to win and that's exactly what God wants for us His children. He wants us trained and ready to fight to win. God has set provisions out for our battle to win and through our trials. He is training us to be prepared and equipped to win and overcome our enemies. We will have victory, but not just victory—triumphant victory like was described in 2 Chronicles 3. We will take back all the enemy has stolen, plus more.

Putting the Word to Work

1. What is your battle?

2. How are you going to win?

3. Are you willing to obey your 'Commander-in-Chief' no matter the cost?

March 20

Gideon's obedience

Today's Bible Reading: Judges 6-7

Judges 6:1 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel.

ONCE AGAIN... This time when Israel disobeyed God, He placed them under the Midianites for seven years, who overran their livestock and land to destroy even the crops. Thus, Israel was greatly impoverished. They made dens, caves, etc. to hide in the mountains. Israel cried out to the Lord, and God sent a prophet to remind them that He had delivered them from Egypt, from other oppressors, and gave them the land. He said, "don't fear the gods of the Amorites." "But you have not obeyed My voice."

The Angel of the Lord appeared to His servant Gideon, and said, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" Gideon had questions. Wouldn't you have questions, too? Gideon asked Him, "Lord, how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest... and I am the least ..." "The Lord answered, "Surely I will be with you..."

Gideon's first assignment was to tear down and destroy his father's altar to Baal (it was the evidence of disobedience). Gideon obeyed the instructions and built an altar to the Lord, and called it "The-Lord-Is-Peace." And he sacrificed his father's 2nd bull there as directed.

The Midianites, Amalekites, and the people of the East, gathered at the Valley of Jezreel. When Gideon blew the trumpet, the local people gathered behind him. He summoned his 'brother tribes' to join him in the fight. There were 32,000 tribesmen who came to fight, but God knew that if Israel was victorious, they would be prideful and say, 'My own hand has saved me.' When offered to them, 22,000 men chose to return home. God tested the remainder and identified 300 to go with Gideon.

God's directions for Gideon's actions caused the Midianites to attack each other. Gideon and his 300 men pursued them to overtake and eliminate them. He then summoned his people to come from the mountains to retake the land and watering places.

Because of Gideon's character of humility and obedience, God dramatically delivered the children of Israel. These character traits, when developed, provide strength in understanding your faith that is based on knowing the God who loves and cares for you. As the Holy Spirit teaches and guides us, the more our character is refined. Seek the God of your Salvation; He will do it!

Putting the Word to Work

Knowing God comes from spending time with Him in conversation, prayer, and reading His Word. Start reading in the Book of John. Seek humility and obedience.

John 16:13-15 When you read the Word, ask the Holy Spirit to give your understanding. He will! What are you learning?

March 21

The Snare

Today's Bible Reading - Judges 8-9

Judges 8:27 And Gideon made an ephod [a sacred, high priest's garment] of it, and put it in his city of Ophrah, and all Israel paid homage to it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family.

The good, the bad, and the ugly! We all want to remember the good. We tend to bypass the bad and ugly parts of our lives. In these chapters we will see the dangers of running around in our own understanding and how it leads to spiritual unfaithfulness.

This was a moral trap that ensnared the people, leading them away from God, by sinning and worshipping Baal. Idolatry entraps people instead of having a relationship with the true God, which God requires submission and the highest place in our hearts. They chose to commit spiritual adultery which allowed them to remain lord of their own lives. It's one thing to sing the song, "we place You in the highest place above all else", and another to actually do it.

Psalms 124:7 reads, We've flown free from their fangs, free of their traps, free as a bird. Their grip is broken; we're free as a bird in flight. That's good news! God makes a way of escape; it's found in His word". Psalms 119:10 reads, With my have I sought You, inquiring for and of You and yearning for You; Oh, let me not wander or step aside [either in ignorance or willfully] from Your commandments. Proverbs 13:14 reads, The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death.

We all face snares. In my poem, Snares, we get to examine how the enemy works against us.

Lord, I see all the snares of the enemy.
 All the cares to keep my eyes off Thee.
 I see, yes, I see, Lord, His plot to destroy me;
 To keep me ineffective,
 To have no objective
 To keep me from walking
 Hand in hand with Thee.

Yes, Lord, I thank You so much For allowing me to see
 I need to work, Oh Lord, Give my best to Thee.
 Stay in Thy Word, Stay on my knees,
 Stay in communion, For Thee I long to please.

Joy in Thy presence, Bathe in Thy love,
 Rejoice in Thy goodness All Your gifts from above.
 Cherish these moments that we live
 To help others, our privilege to give.
 Lead us, Lord, these last days
 To all in need, we pray.

Putting the Word to Work

What Truth has helped you in overcoming a snare from the enemy?

Week Three Sermon Notes

Week Three Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Week Three Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (*if applicable*): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Final 10 Days of May

Final 10 Days of March Prayer Notes

<p>Specific things I am praying about for my family.</p>	<p>Specific things I am praying about for people in my church.</p>
<p>Things I sense from the Holy Spirit while I pray.</p>	<p>People I am praying for their salvation.</p>

March 22

Don't despise people because of things outside their control

Today's Bible Reading: Judges 10-12

Judges 11:1-2, 6 - 1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah. 2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."... 6 Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon."

There is a powerful life lesson on display in this section of Judges. In the midst of the ups and downs of serving God, falling away, good choices and bad choice, we come to this man named Jephthah the Gileadite. Who was despised by his brethren because he was the son of a harlot. Now, I ask you a question. What did Jephthah do wrong to be birthed by a harlot? The answer, absolutely nothing.

There are things in life that God knit together regarding you and I that we have absolutely no control over. Everything He "calls" into being in our lives our decision God made without bothering to get your or my input. He has that right, He is God. The truths we know about His decision making is that 1, He only does good things. 2, His decisions about you are never wrong, and never for your hurt. He is the God who draws good things out of bad situations. The God who turns beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, "turns bones into armies" as the song says.

The children of Israel drove away the man that they later needed to solve their Ammonite problem. Here's the lesson, don't despise the way people come to you. Learn to recognize who they can be with you more than the mess that brought them to you.

Putting the Word to Work

Do you have an example of a person in your life, who at first glance you did not like, and later they ended up being a major blessing to you?

March 23

The Word + The teaching = Powerful Manifestation

Today's Bible Reading: Judges 13-15

Judges 13:8 Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

Don't be too quick to jump and run at the first uncton or "word" you feel you hear from the Lord. I love the response Manoah has regarding the Word they have heard. He cries out to the Lord, to send back the man to teach them what they shall do.

How many times do we hear a promise from the Lord, whether that is in our time reading, our time in prayer, at a prayer meeting, a sermon, etc., and something goes off inside and we know that is for us, but the reality we don't know fully what to do with that word. First let me tell you, that is a normal experience and honestly should be expected. God often gives a "word" to someone to draw them into a process not just a place. Manoah showed great wisdom we can glean from the three things he did in this verse.

1. He prayed again, God this is a big promise and I need your help. I don't understand how to succeed in this, so I'm going to need further instruction on how to manage this promise.
2. He humbled himself and refused arrogance, asking the Lord to come and to teach Him what He should do.
3. He committed himself not just to understand but to build a plan of action, what are the steps we should take to succeed in this promise.

Putting the Word to Work

Take these three steps and apply them to a promise you have from the Lord.

March 24

Title: The Curse of Compromise

Scripture Study – Judges 16-18

In these three chapters in the book of Judges any student of the Bible will find two examples of the curse of compromise. One is personal and the other is corporate. The personal example is found in the last days in the life of Samson. The corporate example is found in the idolatry of Micah and the tribe of Dan.

Samson was one of only a handful of men in the Old Testament who the bible tells us were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the source of his extraordinary physical strength, sealed by the Nazarite vow he had taken as a youth. But late in his life, he was drawn away by his own lust and enticed by Delilah and finally compromised his vow and revealed the secret of his strength. Instead of rejecting her efforts outright, he toyed with her attempts until her persistence won. The result was devastating. The Philistines put out his eyes, bound him with bronze fetters, and enslaved him as a grinder in their prison. That is what compromise with sin does; it blinds us, binds us, and grinds us. May Samson's experience serve as a warning to us personally!

Our text also provides an example of corporate compromise. Chapters 17 and 18 provide the narrative of how idolatry was introduced to the ten northern tribes of Israel, a compromise that ultimately led to them being taken captive by the Assyrians (2 Kings 7:6-8; 22-23). It began with one man, Micah, and his personal idolatry and perversion of the priesthood: "The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest." The text continues and explains the lack of leadership and the result: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Micah continued his compromise with the commandments of God and hired a wandering Levite as his personal priest (Judges 17:7-13). Micah's compromise quickly spread, first to the tribe of Dan, and then beyond as the ten northern tribes abandoned the worship of God at Shiloh and set up their own system of idolatrous worship elsewhere.

Sadly, church history is filled with corporate compromise. It begins with the abandonment of the authority of the Scriptures, a lack of true leadership, and the introduction of what the bible calls leaven. The apostle Paul warned believers: "You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leaven's the whole lump. I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is" (Galatians 5:7-10).

Putting the Word to Work

Q: Describe a situation in which you were tempted to compromise your faith.

Q: Has anyone ever hindered you from obeying the truth? If so, please describe how you overcame.

March 25

**Intercession is more important than stone throwing
Today's Bible Reading Judges 19-21**

Judges 21:15 "And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the Lord had made a void in the tribes of Israel."

Judges 19-21 is one of the darkest sections in all of Scripture. The sin is shocking, the violence is horrifying, and the aftermath is devastating. It's the kind of story that makes us want to look away. But tucked inside the rubble of Israel's civil war is a verse that reveals something important about the heart of God's people, the grieved.

Benjamin's downfall was not a small matter. Their refusal to confront evil and their unwillingness to repent led to judgement that was both necessary and righteous. Yet Israel did not celebrate their brother's destruction. They did not rejoice in being "right." They did not treat judgement like entertainment or proof of superiority. Instead they mourned. They felt the weight of what the sin cost.

This is the lesson the Church still needs. It can be easy to feel satisfaction when consequences finally catch up to someone who has done wrong, especially when that someone hurts others. But Judges 21:15 reminds us that even when justice is required, the loss is still tragic.

When a brother or sister falls, our response should not be gossip, coldness, or quiet celebration. It should be sorrow. It should be prayer. It should be intercession until repentance is real and restoration becomes possible. Justice matters, but so does mercy. And godly hearts don't rejoice over ruin. They grieve, and they plead for redemption.

Putting the Word to Work

Is there someone in my life right now who needs intercession instead of criticism, and am I willing to step into that role?

- A. Write down the name of the person.
- B. Commit to praying for them daily this week.
- C. Ask God to soften your heart towards them.
- D. Replace criticism with intercession.
- E. Pray specifically for repentance, healing, and restoration.

March 26
In Due Time
1 Samuel 1:20

1 Samuel 1:20 - "So, it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son and called his name Samuel, saying "Because I have asked for him from the Lord."

This passage of scripture tells us the story of the birth of Samuel the prophet. His mother was barren and was very sorrowful. She was praying in the temple when Eli the high priest saw her and because of the manner in which she prayed, thought that she was drunk. She responded to him by saying I have poured out my soul before the Lord." She did not care who saw her or what they might think of her for she was there for only one purpose, to seek the Lord.

This is the manner that we should adopt when we go before the Lord with a petition. We should not care what others might think but should concentrate solely on the Lord. We should "pour out our souls" before the Lord.

In the verse we are looking at today, it says Hannah received the answer to her prayer "in the process of time." Two thoughts come to mind when I see this statement. First, God answers prayer in His time. We often come to the Lord expecting instant results and become frustrated when things don't happen when we think they should. God is not on our timetable. The Word tells us, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways says the Lord." (Isaiah 55:8)

The second reason for our lack of patience in waiting on the Lord's answer to prayer is this, we often wait until the very last minute to bring something before the Lord. Our prayer life is often crisis oriented. We don't bring things up to the Lord in prayer until they have reached a critical level. Then we want our prayers answered immediately because the situation has reached a point where we can no longer tolerate it. Paul tells us to pray without ceasing. If we will cultivate a prayer life that is constant and continual, we can forgo the crisis mode, and we will have time to wait for the Lord's answer. Healing is a good example. We will often wait until a medical problem has reached a critical mode before we take it to the Lord. If instead, we pray for our health on a regular basis, we can begin to live in divine health.

God always answers prayer. He just does it in His time not in ours. A quick side note, sometimes God's answer is not "yes," but "lift up your eyes, I have something even better."

Putting the Word to Work

What would happen if we began to pray before a situation becomes critical. How do we do that? We spend a good deal of our prayer time praying in the Spirit. Then, the Holy Spirit can pray the perfect will of God for that situation each time we bring it before the Lord.

March 27

Don't be distracted from worship

Today's Bible Reading: I Samuel 4-8

9 And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. 10 Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

This is one of my favorite fight scenes in the Bible. Here the children of Israel are nervous because of the coming fight with the Philistine army. Samuel is interceding at the altar on behalf of the children of Israel and it describes the Philistine army drawing near to battle. Samuel is not distracted by the noise of the enemy army and keeps his focus vertical towards the God of heaven who thunders confusion into the camp of the enemy.

We see in today's reading a stark contrast, in the approach to spiritual warfare. In chapter 4, they face the same enemy, and responded to the enemy by attempting to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the camp but forgot to make sure they were right with God. In chapter 8, we are likely seeing many of the same Philistine soldiers from chapter 4, it's the same enemy, likely the same army who is drawing near, but this time, the focus is on God and remaining in right standing with Him and God shows up powerfully.

How often does the enemy draw near and make a lot of noise attempting to get the people of God distracted and losing focus on what really matters is right relationship with God Almighty.

Putting the Word to Work

What loud voices are out there trying to distract you from the essentials of right relationship with God?

March 28

The visibility of the Invisible Spirit

Today's Bible Reading: I Samuel 9-12

I Samuel 10:9 So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God [c]gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

When the invisible Holy Spirit came upon Saul, it produced a visible impossible to not see transformation in his life. Saul first had a new heart, produced signs and was prophesying. People began to say of Saul, what is this that has come upon Saul, they knew it.

When I was baptised in the Holy Spirit there was a noticeable change and transformation that happened in my life. I had played music and sang in front of 2,500 people at one time, no problem. Played baseball in front of several thousand people, no problem. Ask me to speak in front of 20 people and it was all I could do to get intelligible language out of my mouth. At about 22 years old, after getting baptized in the Holy Spirit I was empowered to do something I never could on my own - speak publicly about the glories of God Almighty.

Isn't it interesting, so many get enamored with the ability to speak and to pray with "unknown tongues," which by the way is a real spiritual gift and happens today. But the power of the Holy Spirit was not to make it harder for us to communicate but to actually empower us to become effective witnesses for Christ. Yes, I got a prayer language, but even more importantly, I received an empowerment, a grace of God to proclaim and speak of Him. I wonder what the Holy Spirit can do in and through you?

Putting the Word to Work

Ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you in such a way, that it produces a visible marked change in your life that people look at you and say "wow, what happened to you?"

March 29

Fear of God always wins over fear of man

Today's Bible Reading: I Samuel 13-14

I Samuel 13:11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12 then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering." 13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

At some point in life, a person will have to choose the fear of God or the fear of man. It usually comes in a tumultuous moment in time when the pressure seems to be mounting. It usually comes at a time when it feels like a person can justify an action outside of God's will in the name of advancing the kingdom of God often masking what it really is the fear of man.

King Saul is nervous, the Philistines are coming, Samuel seems to be no-showing, the people are trembling and leaving so Saul takes it upon himself to step into a priestly role he is not anointed for. As soon as he crosses that line, of course Samuel arrives and confronts him. As often happens when a person is operating under the fear of man, Saul begins to excuse his behavior rather than take responsibility for his poor choices and actions. The result, the pronouncement is made that he will not reign forever over Israel, but his family line will lose out to another.

Putting the Word to Work

The fear of man is a snare. A great prayer we can all pray, "God grant me an increase in the spirit of the fear of the Lord. If there is any fear of man in me, let it be removed so I can be pleasing You always."

Are there any "fears" that work in you to push you to compromise relationship with God?

March 30

To obey is better than sacrifice.

Today's Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 15-17

We open chapter 15 with a man named Saul, much revered by his fellow man. When it came time, the prophet of God was to anoint a King for the Children of Israel, they all cried out for Saul. God hearing their cries told Samuel the prophet to anoint Saul as King.

God gave King Saul a command through Samuel the prophet. He was to kill all the Amalekites, their king and everything that breathed. Everything was to be destroyed, not one trace of them to remain. The true character of Saul comes out. The battle rages, but instead of taking out the king and destroying all the livestock, Saul spares the king and weeds out only the choicest of livestock. When confronted by Samuel, he names God and his glory as to why. He kept the best to sacrifice to God. In the end the "man of God," Samuel, did what Saul didn't do.

Today, when you read this as a lay person, you think, "that was harsh." Indeed, it was, but behind this is the shadow of Jesus, His love, grace and mercy. This was only one of many examples God used to illustrate the need of mankind to have a more intimate relationship with Him. Because of disobedience Adam and Eve lost Paradise; because of disobedience Moses never got to go into the promised land; the elders never got to cross the Jordan because of disobedience. See the pattern of mankind.

Also see that what man failed to do, Jesus accomplished at the cross. Chapter 15:22 says, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." You can sacrifice your time, your money and all your earthly goods to God, yet fall into disobedience by not keeping the original commandment Jesus gave: love God above all else. It sounds easy, but it's even easier to get side-tracked by doing good works first, neglecting the love of God. "If you love me, you will obey me." (John 14:15 paraphrased)

There seemed a way right to Saul, but it wound up destroying him. As an example: When I was a teenager, I went to a party and my mother made it clear that she or my dad would pick me up at an appointed time. Back then we didn't have cell phones, so if you said you would do things, you did them, no changing of plans. Anyway, it was sort of boring so when the boy that lived up the street offered to take me home early, that sounded good to me. It seemed the right thing to do. We were about a block from my home at a four-way stop. Someone chose that time to blow through the intersection and T-boned our car. Naturally, my parents came upon that accident moments later to learn their daughter was injured in that accident. If only I had obeyed them. What a lesson to be learned. If God speaks to your heart and you know without a doubt He is speaking, you do it. Saves us all a lot of heartache, disappointment and disillusion. Obeying increases our faith, our strength to stand, and our resolve to accomplish the true work that God has set before us.

Putting the Word to Work

1. In what ways can you know the will of God for you?

2. Seek God in His will for yourself and family.

3. Prove God: "by the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses let His word be established." Only then act on it.

March 31

David behaved wisely, and the Lord was with him.

Today's Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 18-20

1 Samuel 18:7 So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." 8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" 9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward.

This Scripture sets the stage for the relationship between David and Saul. Today we pick up the events after David killed Goliath and subdued the Philistines. These chapters reveal many different traits of key people during the reign of King Saul.

Saul took David to the palace for a while, then placed him over the army for battle, expecting the Philistines to kill him. But David was triumphant, and Saul saw that God favored David. Saul was jealous, angry and vindictive. Saul 'gave' his 1st daughter to David for marriage. Then quickly 'gave' her to someone else.

David was a strong confident teenager who was not allowed to return to his father, but played soothing music for Saul during his attacks of depression. Saul attempted to kill David with his spear several times, but he escaped. In all his dealings, it is said that "David acted wisely" and stood by and supported "God's anointed" and remained faithful to Saul.

Jonathan's soul was "knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." They created a covenant [like 'Blood Brothers'] that was deep and lasting. He helped David evade the attacks of Saul many times and remained loyal to him in every way.

Michal, Saul's 2nd daughter was given to David as a wife. Saul gave David an "impossible" task, which he accomplished. Thus, Saul knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal loved him. Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." But "Saul was still more afraid of David. So, Saul became David's enemy continually."

The world has many depths of relationships. When we reach out to others, sometimes we need to press in carefully... or boldly. Sometimes we need to shake the dust off our feet and 'move on.' As we represent Jesus in our daily activities with others, we need to remain vigilant, act wisely, and be obedient to the Holy Spirit. Then, trust God for the results. Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

Putting the Word to Work

Look at your many friends and acquaintances. Can you recognize those who are reliable and trustworthy? Do you value their integrity? What is your measuring stick?

How do you evaluate this saying? "To have a friend, you must BE a friend."

Week Four Sermon Notes

Final 10 Days of March Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

Final 10 Days of March Sermon Notes

Date: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Series (if applicable): _____

Scripture(s)	Things I want to remember	Things I want to study further

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For more information about The Father's House, you can check out our website:

thefathershouseint.org or on Facebook or our YouTube channel. Weekly we gather:

Sunday	9 am & 11 am - Sunday Worship Experience
Tuesday	9 am - Prayer meeting
Wednesday	9 am - Prayer meeting 5:30 pm - Family dinner at 5:30 6:30 pm - Wednesday Worship Experience
Thursday	9 am - Prayer meeting
Friday	7 pm - Prayer meeting
Saturday	6 pm - Prayer Meeting

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