

A

Man's Study About "Men" of the Bible

Written By Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

* * * * *

- Becoming a man God can use
- Understanding how to become a leader of men
- Growing up, maturing in the Lord Jesus
- Becoming a "man's man" for God

This series of lessons could be mightily used of God to build men for God's purpose and honor.

Pastors, you would find this study to give you direction in building men who are mighty in spirit, who are mighty in ministry.

**Men why not become mighty for God?
Use these lessons to help it to make it so!**

Table of Contents

Lesson No.	Title	Pg.
1.	“The Prophet - A Pot of Oil, A Widow and God”	3
2.	“An Unnamed Prophet - and the Tragedy of Turning Back”	6
3.	“Jacob - and the Return of a Wayward Family”	9
4.	“The Man Who Gave a Devoted Love”	1 2
5.	“Joseph - The Man Who Is a Pattern for All Men”	1 5
6.	“Jabez - The Man Who Know What He Needed From God”	1 8
7.	“Ananias - The Man Who Led Saul to Christ”	2 1
8.	“Paul - The Man Who Bore The Brands”	2 4
9.	“Nehemiah - The Man Who Got Involved”	2 7
10.	“Nehemiah - The Man Who Showed Courage”	3 0
11.	“Nehemiah - The Man Who Prepared For the Task”	3 3
12.	“Nehemiah - And An Impossible Mission”	3 6
13.	“Men, Their Lives, and Ministry to Others”	3 9
14.	“Men Facing the Opposition That Comes in Life”	4 2
15.	“Men - Working to Remove Every Hindrance”	4 5
16.	“Nehemiah - and the Conquest of Internal Dissension”	4 8
17.	“Nehemiah - And the Final Stand of Opposition”	5 1
18.	“Elijah - What Are You Doing Here?”	5 4
19.	“Lazarus - the Man Who Came Back From Beyond”	5 7
20.	“King Saul - The Man Who Played the Fool!”	6 0
21.	“David - A Man Who Understood God’s Cause”	6 3
22.	“Daniel - A Man Who Walked By Faith”	6 6
23.	“Caleb - The Man Who Stood Alone Sweetly”	6 9

Men of the Bible

“The PROPHET. . . a Pot of Oil, A Widow, and GOD!”

What a marvelous picture of the grace of God; what a wonderful picture of *asking and receiving*; what a glorious picture of faith in action.

God used Elisha as a mighty prophet. We could spend months just studying his life story. This story takes place among the *sons of the prophets*. Bible school students (we would say today). One young man dies, a widow is left with debts, creditors are pressing, she may well have to sell her sons into slavery.

I. God OPENS the Way for His Own When in TROUBLE!

1. The widow was grief stricken.
2. God has a way, a remedy; only God can meet the need.

II. God USES What We HAVE!

1. What do you already have? What is in your hand?
2. Our God is a master of circumstances; a God of miracles.
He gave Elisha wisdom to know and do!
3. God wants us to **trust** Him to do the unlikely, the unexpected, the improbable.

III. God Wants EMPTY VESSELS. . . not a Few!

1. This all seemed so illogical.
2. How important was trust, faith, and obedience.
3. We must be vessels -- emptied of self, yielded, usable.
4. Another **test**: would she **believe** the man of God? Would she borrow the vessels. . . get many of them while not having any idea of God's plan as given through the prophet.
5. Do we believe God and follow His leadership when it seems illogical, or contrary to human thinking?

Extra Notes:

Text: II Kings 4:1-7

- What a glorious picture of trusting God. . . trusting His care, provisions, and love.
- Many times God will test us, try us to see if we truly trust Him.
- Do we trust His will and His sovereign plan for our lives?
- Many a preacher, missionary, or servant has had to go through an apprenticeship of poverty. *This is good.*
- Preachers need to be tested by God, as well as each one of us.

The widow was:

- grieved over the loss of a good husband, now possibly over losing her own children.
- She was frantic, about to lose her sons to a pitiless creditor who would sell her sons into slavery.
- God knew all about her need; no money, about to face total disaster.
Psa. 55:22; Psa. 50:15; I Pet. 5:7; Jer. 33:3; Jer. 32:17, 27

What do you have that God can use?

- What you have is enough for God.
- God can multiply the very thing you have. (I Cor. 1:27)
- Consider Elijah - I Kgs. 17:1-7
- What did God do to feed the 5,000?
- Moses what is in your hand?

God uses empty vessels:

- Here is a New Testament lesson: God only blesses and uses vessels that are clean, yielded-- fit for His use. (II Tim. 2:19-22)
- We so often are full of self; full of our wills, desires, goals, plans, and determinations and God cannot use us.

IV. God Answers In SECRET!

“And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door, shalt pour out.... thou shalt set aside that which is full.” (II Kgs. 4:1-7)

1. Often God does business in our hearts when we are alone -- humble before Him.
(Matt. 6:6)
 - a. This was true in Joshua's life. (Josh 1:1-9)
 - b. This was true in Nehemiah's life. (Neh. 1:1-10)
2. Take courage, if you are alone! Take courage if things seem dark or hard. . . take courage if things don't seem fitting or right. God is on the throne.
3. Often Abraham was alone, humanly he had no support. . . but he knew God's power and ability. (Gen. 15:1; Gen. 17:1-9)

V. God ANSWERS Fully and Faithfully!

1. There was *“oil enough,”* to pay the debts and to *“live on the rest,”* oil to pay the bills, to meet the need.
2. God was providing totally -- fully, *“for the oil stayed.”*
3. Now she was to *go, sell, and live of the rest.* (Phil. 4:19)
4. The destiny of that home depended upon the work of God (Psa. 127:1). Elisha and the woman had to trust. God's great faithfulness is how great and wonderful.
5. She had to make room for God to work. . . as she trusted the *“man of God,”* whom God had given.
 - a. Do we make plans based on His Word and leadership?

- b. Do we pray big prayers? Do we “*open our mouths wide that He might fill them?*” (Read Psalm 81:10.)
- c. What are we doing about the lessons God is seeking to teach us?

Memorize: II Corinthians 1:20

Personal lessons:

Faith takes God at His Word!

“Faith borrows the vessels, gets them ready, and a faithful God fills them.”

Mk 9:23; Heb.11:1, 6; Lk 5:4

- She firmly believed God’s divine goodness.
- Elisha so walked with God he could direct this needy woman.
- It took simple obedience as she borrowed many vessels by faith.
- God was only limited by Elisha’s and the woman’s faith.
- Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38-39;
- It is so often our faith that fails, not God’s promises. (See II Tim. 2:13)
- God wants to give to us... that we might give to His work. (Luke 6:38)

God often gives above what we ask, had there been more vessels there would have been oil to fill all of them.

Write in phrases from the following verses that speak to your heart and life!

Heb. 6:12 _____

Heb. 6:15 _____

Heb. 8:6 _____

Heb. 10:36 _____

As a dad, be an Elisha, walk with God, know how in simple faith to guide your home!

Men of the Bible

“An UNNAMED Prophet - and the Tragedy of Turning Back!”

Introduction:

Christ asks us this question: “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46)

The Unusual Setting!

- Today we want to look at an unusual story of a young anonymous prophet into whose heart God’s light had shined. He manifested loyalty to God, yet he failed miserably.
- It was in the days of Jeroboam. The kingdom of Israel was divided. He had built two altars to heathen gods at Dan and Bethel.
- The young prophet came with unswerving obedience, denounced the king for his sin, and declares the judgment that God would bring upon the kingdom.
- As the King denounced the young unnamed prophet, the altar is rent, ashes are poured out as predicted.
- The king stretched forth his hand in wrath but God’s judgment brought quick paralysis of his arm.
- Now the king is in horrible fear and beseeches prayer and restoration.
- The King’s tone changes from anger and hatred to flattery and bribery toward the young prophet.

The Young Prophet’s Horrible Failure

- The young prophet was seemingly a wonderful spiritual man, surrendered to do God’s will. He declines the king’s invitation and starts his God-directed journey homeward.
- Alas, an old backslidden prophet is now a tool of satan. As a degenerate agent of the devil, as an unblushing liar he sent his sons to give the message that God told him to tell the young prophet to come to his house to eat.
- At this point the young prophet does not obey God’s word which was spoken to him in this place.

The Urgent Lesson

I. *Once We KNOW the WILL of GOD -- We Must DO IT!*

(Psa. 37:23; Eph. 5:17, 6:6; Col. 4:12)

1. Even though the whole world is set against us.
2. The young prophet knew God’s will.. “*by the word of the Lord. . .*”
(See I Kings 13:1, vs. 2, vs 5, vs. 9, vs. 17)

Extra Notes:
Text: I Kings 13

Among the tragedies in the lives of men, none are more arresting than the records of men who turned back, as they ***turned aside*** from the path of obedience and faith.

Lot turned aside to terrible involvement in sin;
Aaron turned aside to unthinkable idolatries;
Samson turned aside to his own destruction;
Solomon's bright day ended in gloom & despair;
King Saul turned aside to envy, jealousy and self will.

Jeroboam, the King:

- In anger, he hates prophets.
- In political expediency he built altars to false gods to keep his people away from Judah.
- Now he tries to buy off the unnamed prophet.

The Young Prophet:

- Had been warned by God.
- He experienced another prophet lying and he accepted that message above God's.
- We are urged to *test the spirits whether the message is from God.* (I Jh 4:1)
- Disobedience opened his life to failure and horrible loss.
- God had spoken to his inner-most heart -- but he did not heed!

The Horrible Results!

- His life became the blazing story of a shipwrecked life;
- the lamp of life had gone out;
- he ended in shame because of disloyalty to God and His word;
- his life warns us of the dangers and disasters of disobedience to the known will of God.
- Consider: I Timothy 1:18-20 and 1:5 and 4:15-16.

When once we know God's will and it's claim on our lives we must obey. Lying prophets (or any backslidden Christian) can easily become tools of satan. Even saved parents can turn youth away from the will of God. ***When you know the will of God cultivate nothing else.***

II. Temptations Once OVERCOME . . Have a Way of Coming BACK AGAIN!

1. Most temptations are not strange to us, we have faced them before.
2. They may come disguised, in new clothing, but they are truly the same lusts, same invitations to sin.
3. Maybe he would not have been seduced if he had not relaxed as he stopped his homeward journey. Maybe he was self-satisfied, proud of the past events.

III. Life's GREATEST BATTLES Are Often FOUGHT Over LITTLE Things.

1. It was not a big thing to go to the old prophet's house to eat. . . not as though he had broken some prophet's law.
2. There is no suggestion that he should not partake of the kind of food served, (it was not sacrificed to demons).
 - a. The young prophet manifested a divided loyalty. (He still walked in self willed living.)
 - b. He lived an inconsistent life, easily persuaded.

- c. He was careless and indifferent to truth.
- 3. It is in small things that the Christian's loyalty to God is usually tested and ordinarily proved.
- 4. Obedience is an expression of our attitude toward truth, God's right in our lives, and our submission.
- 5. Around little sins, little failures in our lives may rage the greatest conflicts and testings of our life.
- 6. Your entire future may depend upon unquestioning obedience right now.
- 7. Self-discipline to the will of God, and obedience to the Word of God may be our greatest battle ground.
- 8. It may not be some gross sin that is destructive in life: *but failure over some or many so-called little things!*

Memorize: Luke 6:46

Consider:

- 1. A person's soul can be saved, but the purpose of his life can be lost.
(See Matt. 16:24)
- 2. A backslidden saint of God can actually become a great snare and hurt to a young Christian who trusts him.
- 3. The young prophet *aimed to do right. . . did not plan to fail or fall. . . but he was deflected from his goal.*
- 4. Christ's story of the different soils or conditions of the heart includes those in whose lives:
the cares of the world; the deceitfulness of riches; the lust of things. . .
chokes the Word of God and it does not bring forth fruit.
(Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:4-15)

Also Consider:

- 1. To KNOW the Will of God and not do it is a very serious thing.
- 2. Psalm 37:23 tells us that the *"steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord and he delighteth in his (God's) way."*
- 3. Ephesians 6:6 tells us that we must *"do the will of God from the heart."*
- 4. The narrow road of God's will is the only safe road. . . to be diverted from that road is disastrous to most saints.
- 5. ***Temptations must be faced : resolutely, decisively, obediently, fully.***
- 6. Satan will never take your first **"no"** for an answer, he will continue to **try** you.
- 7. Christ taught us to ***"watch and pray... the flesh is weak.."***

The Highest Calling Is To Keep On Going On for God. . . In His Will for His glory!

Men of the Bible

“Jacob - and the Return of a Wayward Family!”

Introduction:

- Only God knows the number of families who become wayward, who take their own way, who lose God's way.
- There is much to learn from a man, a family with many staggering problems, such as Jacob's life.
- To be wayward: *“is to take one's own way, disobedient, unsteady, contrary toward God and right, self-willed, and stubborn.”*
- *In the setting of this story -- God had told Jacob to return to Bethel. . . meaning the house of God!*

I. A Wayward Family and It's RUIN: (Gen. chapters 27-34)

1. Personal **contention** between Jacob and Laban: 31:1-9

Jacob was a scheming, cunning, crafty man. He had stolen the birthright, had gotten his way, but had to flee! (Gen. 29:1-)
He arrived safe and sound at Laban's home, but he had to face the fact: *“The way of the transgressors is hard.”*

2. Rachel **stole** her father's images: (Gen. 31:17-19)

She had stolen the family (false) gods. Idolatry of Babylon clung to Laban's family. He gave heed to seducing spirits and deceptions of satan.

3. Esau was **coming** -- Jacob was in much **fearfulness**: (32:1-31)

It was one crisis after another, one trial after another. Jacob brought most of his heart-ache upon his own life and that of his family.
The threat and hatred was real, anger and hostility reigned in both lives. (Gen.32: 6-18) But God was with him (Gen. 31:3).

4. Much **sin reigned** in the family. (Gen. 34)

It is a horrible picture of what sin brings!

Additional Notes:

Key Text: Gen. 35:1-15

- Jacob was to **return** to Bethel, to **dwell** there, to make an altar there -- the place where God had appeared to him.
- God gave instructions so they would **prepare their lives** to come back to Him.

Principles:

- Jacob had to face the principle of retribution... *that “they who plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same.”*
- Whatsoever a man sows... he will also reap. (Gal. 6:7-9)
- Haman prepares the gallows for Mordecai -- but is hung himself.

- Jacob deceived his father, then is deceived by his father-in-law.
- Jacob is mercenary and then has his wages changed ten times.
- Jacob uses the *skin of a goat to deceive and is later deceived the same way by his sons.*

How Sad:

- What a sight, what a shame for false gods were worshipped.
- Her father would have inquired of these for his guidance.

God Was There!

- God was dealing with Jacob; God was encouraging him.
- Jacob was in a battle for his very life as he was Divinely dealt with. (Gen. 32:21-31)
- A guilty conscience needs no accusing. What a terrible plight he brought to his family -- the cost of his waywardness.

Sin Abounded:

- What a fearful amount of moral, sensual living in evil practice and action by Jacob's family.
 - There was much unjudged sin and wrong.
 - Jacob allowed himself to be in an atmosphere of evil.
-

II. The Wayward Family and It's RETURN: (Gen. 35:1-5)

God was calling them back to the place of fellowship, obedience, and blessing.

1. God gave **orders** to Jacob: (Gen. 35:1)

God had called Jacob back to Bethel where he had met God. God desired to bring them to Himself in restoration, renewal and covenant relationship. Jacob needed to "*remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen and repent, do the first works...*" (Rev. 2:5)

2. Jacob, as father **gives orders** to his family:

Put away strange gods. (35: 2) Jacob was aware of corrupt practices of his family. Too long he had tolerated sin. Shechem failures were due to Jacob's failures. He could have gone immediately to Bethel, but did not.

Be clean, (35:2) God demands our confession of sin, to be upright, godly, holy. (See Psa. 51:1-10; 32:1-5) They needed cleansing from guilt and defilement.

Change your garments (35:2) (Rom. 13:14) They needed to put away things tainted with sin; to put away those things that bring sin in the life.

Let us arise, go up to Bethel (35:3) Bethel means "*the house of God.*" God's house -- the place of blessing. He was to go back to the place where God had met his heart and had made covenant with Jacob.

III. A Wayward Family and It's RESTORATION:

How could you restore your family?

Set your goals high: (Phil. 3:14; I Cor. 9:24)

1. to be different, Titus 2:14 -- to be wholehearted, Josh. 14:6-15

2. to be a vessel unto honor, II Tim. 2:2
3. to be to the praise of His glory, I Pet. 2:9-10
4. to be godly, separated, Titus 2:11-14

Strengthen the spiritual life of your family:

1. by a strong prayer life, I Tim. 2:1-8 (vs, 8) *“lifting up _____ hands, without wrath and _____.”*
2. by molding the lives of those in your home, Eph. 6:4 *“bring them up, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*
3. by teaching the Word of God, Prov. 2:1-11
4. by a faithful attendance at church, Heb. 10:25
5. by dealing with sin, disharmony, criticalness, or a bitter spirit, Eph. 4:31-32; Col. 3:12-14
6. by standing for what is right, Eph. 6:10-13 *“having done all to stand, stand therefore....”*

Memory Verse: I Tim. 2:8

Additional Notes

Jacob stayed at Shechem for seven years.

- He purchased ground there, dwelt there outside God’s will.
- There his daughter, Dinah was raped, dishonored in sin, and his sons were violent.

God’s Plan for Jacob.

- God desired Jacob to build an altar again. . . to restore worship, faith, surrender and obedience.
- God had appeared to Jacob at Pada-Aram and not again He appears unto Jacob.
- The years at Haran were largely lost years. . . as were those in Succoth and Shechem.
- 20 years he served his father-in-law. . . those were largely lost years, (Heb. 11:29-30)

God Desires That We Walk In Revival!

The four “R’s” of Revival!

1. **Return**: Jere. 3:11-14, (vs 12); Jere. 3:20-22, (vs. 22); Jere. 4:1-3, (vs 1)
2. **Renewal**: II Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2; Psa. 51:10; Lam. 5:21
3. **Repentance**: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20

Repentance is:

- a deep humiliation before God;
 - abiding brokenness before God;
 - a change of **mind** or view about sin;
 - a change of **will** seen in an inward turning from sin;
 - a change of **emotions** -- new feelings about the seriousness of sin.
 - open frankness with God;
 - turning from sin -- to God;
-

Men of the Bible

“The Man Who Gave A Devoted Love!”

- What kind of story will your life tell?
- Most people enjoy love stories - good, clean, moving stories of the love of one person for another.
- Before us is a love story between two people.

I. *There Was An AWAKENING of Love:*

1. As David *fought* Goliath.

- a. In King Saul we see jealousy, envy, an evil spirit that entered and spoiled his whole life.
- b. In the heart of another, Jonathan, was born something wonderful, hard to explain... he had an awakening of love for David.
- c. Love was born in the heart of Jonathan for this shepherd boy.

2. Jesus Christ *Fought/Won* Over Sin/Hell. (I Pet. 1:8)

Psa. 18:1 _____
 Psa 97:10 _____
 122:6 _____
 Eph. 6:24 _____
 I Jh. 4:19 _____

II. *There Was A COVENANT of Love:* (I Sam. 18:3)

1. They *looked* into the faces of one another and *made a covenant*.

- a. It takes two to make a covenant. Have we made that covenant of love to Christ?
- b. Do we not desire to obey, please those we love?

2. Henceforth, they *could not* live selfishly... for a covenant of love had been made. Can we live selfishly... if we have made a covenant of love with Christ? (Jh 15:9; 14:21-23)

Additional Notes:

Text:

I Samuel 18-20

Year by year our lives tell a story! (Psa. 90:9) One day that story will be told...then every word, every action, every deed, every thought which went to make up the story will be told. Therefore we should pray Psalm 90:12.

Story background...

- David fighting the giant.
- He was fighting a battle that belonged to King Saul & his son, Jonathan as they watched from their tent. It was their fight, their responsibility.
- David was criticized by his brother.

This love was born of God. It was a deep friendship manifested in many ways. **Remember David is a type of, a picture of Christ Jesus. This truth makes this the more significant.** Christ will set on David's throne in a day to come! (Psa. 89) Christ is the **Good** Shepherd, **Great** Shepherd, and our **Chief** Shepherd. **Have we fallen in love with David's greater Son, Jesus?**

When you got married. . .

1. Did you from then on DO what you wanted?
 2. GO as you pleased, as before?
 3. BE what you wanted, as if you were not married?
 4. We are married to Christ Jesus (Rom. 7:4) so how do we treat Him to whom we are spiritually married?
-

III. There Was The SACRIFICE of Love! (I Sam. 18:4)

1. Jonathan laid his **resources** at David's feet.

Has our *love story toward Christ Jesus reached this stage?* Have we laid our resources at His feet? Have we willingly yielded our total lives?

2. Jonathan **sacrificially gave** to David.

He laid down his **robe** -- this was a representation of his royalty, rights, and position. Have we given our *rights to Christ?*

3. Jonathan **laid down** his princely garments.

These spoke of possessions, right of kingly position, it was a surrender of his person.

4. Jonathan **laid down** his sword, goods, girdle.

IV. Then We See The Evidences of the DELIGHT of Love. (I Sam. 19:2)

1. This kind of love witnesses to others. (I Sam. 19:4)
2. This kind of love talked about David's person, walk, and worth. **Do we speak of Jesus the same way?**

V. Then, There Were the ACTS of the WILLINGNESS of Love: (I Sam. 20:4)

Here was a prince, willing to minister to a shepherd boy. Are we willing to be God's errand boy? Do anything that needs be done? Do whatever God desires?

VI. Lastly, We See the DEPTH of Love: (20:41)

Here is something strange. A bond of friendship, of good, godly, manly love between two whom the Lord knit together.

When the story of your life is told or retold on the hills of glory -- will it be an **ending love story** about your giving a sacrificial love toward the Lord Jesus? *Have we responded to Christ with a surrendered will, a loving heart, and mind?*

Additional Notes:

What do we know about sacrifice? Consider these verses:

1. II Cor. 5:14-15
2. Acts 26:19
3. Rom. 14:9
4. Rom. 12:1 - 2

Do we surrender position, power, place, things, time, yea, our wills and life itself? ... consider >>>>

1. Phil. 2:5-11
2. Jh 5:30
3. Jh. 6:38
4. Jh. 8:29-31
5. Phil. 3:1-8

Love that had its awakening, entered into covenant, that had laid everything at the feet of the one loved... now delights in that one.

This was all Based on a godly friendship!

1. We see the cause of friendship. (I Sam. 18:1-3)
2. We see a friendship in a time of adversity. (I Sam.19:1-17)
3. Sorrows came from this friendship. (I Sam. 20:1-42)
4. Our greatest Friend. (Lk 7:33-34; Prov. 18:24)

How Can We Improve Our Friendships?

1. Good friendships are based on being right, and doing right.
2. Friendship implies *loving*, which demands ministering.
3. Good friendship ought to be made with those who have Biblical convictions.
4. Great friendships will bring a growing Christ-likeness.
5. Jonathan showed his true love and friendship by: Presenting David's case before his father and risking his life for David.

Jesus is our greatest friend!

(Memorize -- I Pet. 1:8)

Men of the Bible

“JOSEPH - The Man Who Is A PATTERN For All Men !”

Joseph is one of the brightest characters in all the Word of God. He is one of few about whom there is not one statement of wrong, errors, sin, of failure or unfaithfulness.

All the following had some dark spot on the history of their lives: Gideon, Samson, Elijah, Peter, Noah, David, Abraham, and Jacob. (Of course Joseph was not sinless.)

We will see some very vital truths about this man's life that we would do well to emulate in our lives.

I. Joseph Did Not Have a BITTER Spirit:

1. He faced almost constant adversity.

First, hated by his brothers, sold into slavery not knowing what would happen to him, or where he would be going. Just a slave, an alien. (Gen. 37:4, 8, 11)

2. He faced misunderstandings and great hurt from others' dealings. (Gen. 37:18, 20; 39:7-20)

- a. He finds himself in the midst of great temptation and potential for ruin.
- b. Then he finds himself in jail.
- c. What a dark, dangerous, evil, and extremely difficult situation to be in.
- d. God has a purpose. (Gen. 50:20) (See Acts 20:23-24)

II. Joseph EMBRACED the Truth That All SIN Is Against GOD!

1. He recognized the *sinfulness of sin!* (Gen. 39:9)
2. He knew such sin was against society, self, mankind, but especially against God.
3. If he had been entertaining sinful thoughts, desires, he also would have fallen.
4. What about sins of *disposition?* *Are they against God and not just against those around us?*
5. Sensual living, catering to the appetite of the senses has saturated our culture today.

Additional Notes:

Text:
Genesis 41:34-44 (chapters 37, 39 and 41)

Do You See?

- If anyone had a right to be bitter it was Joseph.
- If any could have found excuses for a bitter, and a complaining spirit, it would have been Joseph.

- A *sweet spirit* was seen in the life of Joseph.
- He was controlled by an **attitude** of acceptance toward God's will for his life.
- He easily could have been bitter toward family, God, and all around him.
- He could have blamed God, others, and been hostile to everyone around him for life's circumstances.

What Do You Read In -- ?

> in Heb. 3:12 > in Heb. 12-12-15 > in Eph. 4:30-31 > in II Tim. 2:22

Just How Serious Is Sin to You?

Consider:

1. Psa. 51 >> David
2. Acts 5 >> Ananias, etc.
3. Eph. 4:17-20 >> walk not!
4. Num. 32:23 >> found out?

In Genesis See God's Hand Was On Joseph!

Look at 39:2-4; 39:5; 39:6; 39:21; 39:22-23

III. Joseph Did What He Did In the ABILITY God Gives:

What drives our lives? What motivates us? What are our priorities? What is at the *center core* of our lives?

1. He trusted God. (Gen. 41:16)

His interpretation of the Pharaoh's dreams, the wisdom for ministry and God's place for his life -- was left in God's hands.

2. He had no desire for personal glory.

God could never, never have used Joseph if he had been resentful, self-willed, wanting self-exaltation or had taken glory unto himself.

IV. Joseph Lived to MINISTER To Others. (Gen. 41:54-57)

Joseph gave *bread... he was on the giving end*. He made decisions that made it possible for many to be spared from sure death. People needed the *staff of life -- bread*.

1. Christ is the *Spiritual Bread of Life* -- (Jh 6:25-51)

- a. We are called of God to hand out spiritual bread.
- b. We must make people aware of the source of the answer to their needs.... Christ only.

2. He gives *spiritual bread to us... for us to pass on*.

- a. Consider the disciples, apostles fed the multitude with the bread Christ made available.
- b. They just passed out what Christ gave them.... and we must pass out the bread of life. (Matt. 4:4)
- c. There are many needy people around us, we must "*get the bread of heaven,*" and pass it on to them. In ourselves we have nothing to set before them. (Luke 11:5-10)

V. Joseph Lived a CONSISTENT Life... Standing Against Evil!

Gen. 42:1-24 (vss. 9, 12, 14, 16-17, 23-24); 34, 43:18, 44:11-16

1. It would not have been easy to bring the testings and trials to his brothers as he did.
2. Joseph could have been considered a ***legalist and a critical man*** because he faced his brothers with their wrong.
3. How do we respond when others around us (or in our home or loved ones) fall into sin and wrong? Do we graciously, lovingly, but firmly face them with it?

Character Traits We See In Joseph!

faithfulness consistent hard worker bearing others' burdens
held to his convictions implicit faith keeping a good conscience

Giving Glory To God Alone!

Our lives must be lived to glorify God! Therefore we must analyze our lives--our motivations, reactions and purposes!

The following verses ought to speak to us about this matter!

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. I Cor. 1:31 | 2. Eph. 1:12 | 3. Gal. 6:14 | 4. Isa. 42:8 |
| 5. I Cor. 10:31 | 6. Jh. 17:4 | 7. II Thess. 1:12 | |

What is the spirit of our age?

(See in II Tim. 3:5)

... just a form of godliness, ...just play-acting Christianity, ...just outward doings with a heart far from God!

Do You Have a Good Conscience?

The message of the conscience is directed to the will; if the will obeys then conscience will grow and develop. Obedience is what God wants from us.

If we resist the knowledge of what we must do-- then, indeed our conscience will be weakened. We need a good conscience. (I Tim. 1:5; 1:19; I Pet. 3:16)

Memorize: James 4:17

Men of the Bible

“JABEZ - The Man Knew What He NEEDED From GOD!”

Do you recognize any of these names: Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbit, or Geuel? NO? They are a pretty unimpressive bunch, aren't they?

How about the names Joshua and Caleb? These you probably know well. The other ten names listed above were the other ten spies who brought back the majority report that Israel could not go into the promised land. These ten we never read about, nor do we recognize their names.

The books of I and 2 Chronicles are written to record or *chronicle* the history of Israel. The early chapters of I Chronicles are dry and seemingly endless lists of names. In fact, by the time you reach chapter 4:9, more than 425 people have been mentioned by name.

Then suddenly, without explanation, there is change. For here God gives us a brief biographical sketch of Jabez in I Chronicles 4:9-10.

I. Considering the Character of Jabez:

1. We know that Jabez was a man of sorrow and a man of prayer.
2. His mother called his name Jabez, saying, *“Because I bore him with sorrow.”* His name means sorrow or pain.
3. Names were very significant in Bible times.

There is no mention of a father, or a family name. The word **begot** does not occur in verses 9 or 10 either. Jabez was possibly a Jewish lad without a father, or ancestry or an inheritance, and therefore he may have been a source of shame.

4. Jabez was also a man of prayer.

What is inside man will come out. What Jabez was inside came out in his desire in life. What he spoke was a recorded prayer outstanding in both its brevity and beauty.

II. Considering His Prayer:

What was in his heart came out in his petition. The big difference between Jabez and his brethren was he knew how to talk to God. His prayer is short but remarkably comprehensive. It is short, sweet, and to the point.

1. He prayed, ***“bless me” ... “Oh, that You would bless me indeed.”***
(Prov. 10:22)
2. He prayed, ***“enlarge me”... or give me greater opportunity***
 - a. He must have known the promises of God in Exod. 34:24; and Deut. 12:20.
 - b. He was praying in the center of God's will for his life.

- c. We need the Lord to strength us, and to enlarge our borders of opportunity and service.
- d. This was a prayer of faith -- of discontent with repeated failure -- not a prayer to get rich. He knew they were to inherit God's covenanted land promised in the Abrahamic covenant.
3. He prayed, "***for God's good hand upon him.***"
- a. How like Nehemiah who could speak of the ***good hand of God*** upon his life and ministry.
- b. The hand of God is a symbol of His strength and power.
- c. To have ***God's good hand*** on your life is to have answers to prayer.... His power.... His leadership. It is to enjoy His precious presence as well.
- d. We can't expect to be insulated from problems... but we can claim His faithful power and presence.
4. He prayed, "***keep me from evil....***" ***was his desire.***
- a. He wanted to be free from evil.
- b. This reveals his character. He knew that sins also bring pain, grief, sorrows, defeat, and destruction.
- c. Jabez desired God would preserve his honor, his purity, and thus his usability.
- d. He asked God to guide his steps from the source of evil, and to harness the evil one who intrudes upon his path of life. (I Pet. 5:8-9)
- e. Jabez desired to be kept from hurting others through his own sin and wrong.

Additional Notes:

Here is a message for all us for a New Year.

May we heed and treasure the lesson seen in the life of Jabez!

Text:

I Chronicles 4:9-10

Jabez is Remembered:

- Not because he was **famous**
- Not because of some **feat**
- Not because he was a **priest**, or a prophet, or a Levite
- Not because he was a **great** ruler, or known athlete, or some military ruler.
- Not because of what he did, **But because of what he was.**

Jabez. . . > was more honorable than his brethren. > was a man of honor, > was born in sorrow and great pain. > was a person of prayer and his request shows his integrity and passion. > is not known except for these two verses.

Character Is So Important!

What is character? What makes or builds our character or that of our child?

1. Character is built by what we think upon. (Prov. 23:7)
2. Character is built by the meditations of our hearts. (Psa. 19:12-14; Rom. 12:2)
3. Character is built by what we put into our hearts. (Matt 12:33-35)
4. Character is built by the habits we practice in daily life -- be they thoughts, deeds or reactions.

5. He desired blessing on his efforts. How important it is that we estimate rightly the value of God's blessing on our lives. (James 1:17)
6. He was not praying selfishly, but knew the value of *asking and receiving*. (Matt. 7:7-8; James 4:2)
7. We ought to be hungry, eager for God's very best! (Psa. 5:12)

God Wants Us to Have Blessings!

Psa. 3:8 -- Thy blessing is upon thy people.
 Psa. 5:12 -- Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous;
 Psa. 129:8 -- The blessing of the Lord is upon you...
 Isa 44:3 -- God promises blessing.
 Mal. 3:10-- Blessing through giving.
 Lk. 24:53 -- They blessed God and worshipped.
 Gal. 3:14 -- Blessing is ours through Abraham.
 Heb. 6:7 -- The earth receives God's blessing.
 Heb. 6:14 -- God's blessing to be received.
 I Pet. 3:9 -- That we might be a blessing and receive a blessing.
 Rev. 5:12 -- Christ is worthy of all blessing and praise.

What About US?

1. Are we weary in the work, discouraged, disillusioned and discontent?
2. Are we accomplishing what He **willed** for us to do?
3. Have we been **diverted** from God's will?

OUR PRECIOUS RIGHTS!

God before us -- Isa. 48:17 **God behind us** -- Isa. 30:21
God on our right -- Psa. 16:8 **God on our left** -- Job. 23:9
God above us -- Psa. 36:7
God's arms underneath us -- Deut 33:27
God's Holy Spirit within us -- I Cor. 6:19-20

Verses to memorize about being kept from evil!

*Rom. 6:13,14; Gal. 1:4; Phil. 4:13; Eph. 6:10
 I Jh. 5:4; Rom. 8:37; II Cor. 2:14a*

Memory Verse: Psa. 5:12

Men of the Bible

“ANANIAS - The Man Who Led Saul To CHRIST!”

There was a task to be done. Someone was needed to do it. The Master looked for someone and He found his man-- ready, willing, and faithful. That man was Ananias. He was the right man in the right place, at the right time; and God used him. The outcome was great blessing.

Ananias is a most inspiring pattern of Christian dedication, who lived an ordinary life in the work-a-day world for he was not a prophet or some special person.

I. His Readiness to Do God's Will:

1. He is simply called a “*certain disciple*,” (Acts 9:10)

He was neither an apostle, or leader, or great preacher, nor an official in the church. Though obscure, he was mightily used. He was a humble, willing person, who lived a consecrated life.

2. He was “*a devout man according to the law*.” (Acts 22:12)
He was devoted to principle, honesty, trustworthy.

3. Ananias had “*a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there*.” (Acts 22:10-16)

This would tell us that he was discreet. He was thoroughly known by those in Damascus.

II. His Willingness to Fulfill God's Plan!

“Arise, go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus.”

1. This was no easy thing to trust Saul of Tarsus.
2. Saul had just come to Damascus on a blood-curdling excursion of anti-Christian persecution.
3. How could Ananias dare to fling himself into the eager clutches of this infuriated ringleader of the Savior's adversaries?
Could it be easy to proclaim Christ to this hot-blooded, hard-hearted, killer at heart?
3. Ananias obediently went on his way.
4. Time, place, and results were left to the Lord.

III. His Faithfulness In Ministry To the Newly Saved!

1. In obedience there shines from his life; Christian love, loyalty, and humility.

2. His **love** is seen in his attitude towards Saul as he goes to the arch-persecutor with the affectionate greeting, "*brother Saul.*"

He puts his hands on Saul -- a very gracious act, for Saul had come to lay his hands of violence on Ananias among others. Ananias manifested brotherly love to Saul.

3. Then we see his **loyalty** to the Lord, carrying out His bidding. "*The Lord, even Jesus... hath sent me.*" He emphasized the LORDSHIP of Christ, which Saul would earlier have hated to hear.
4. Also we see his **humility** as he does not even mention his name but puts the emphasis upon the Lord, as Lord. He was content to be an anonymous messenger of his Master.

Some practical applications:

1. Do we **complain** that our circumstances render a victorious, robust Christian life and witness impossible?
 2. Do your **difficulties** and **discouragements** seem like immovable mountains?
 3. Do we need to be *under the circumstances of life*?
 4. Do we need to be in the **limelight** in order to do true service for our heavenly Father?
 5. Do we feel our lives are very **ordinary**, humdrum, just a constant routine of the same thing. . . and obscured?
 6. Do you see that Christian service is not what you **do** for the Lord, but **what** you **allow Him to do through you**?
 7. Do you see that you are a **transmitter**. . . not a creator?
 8. Is your life primarily the action of a **thermometer**, or that of a **thermostat**?
-

Additional Notes

Text:

Acts 9:10-19; 22:10-16

The Ordinary Life. . .

1. is often the most difficult,
2. has the fewest outward stimulants, and therefore requires a deeper and steadier faith within the heart,
3. can be living in an extra ordinary way, for God's glory,
4. can be lived as faithful servants unto whom the Lord will say... "*they were faithful over a few things...*;"
5. should not be unappreciated or undervalued as so-called commonplace.

What Should True Discipleship Produce In Our Lives?

1. readiness --
2. willingness --
3. faithfulness --
4. loyalty --
5. lowliness --

What Do Open Doors Mean To You?

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

- Instead of seeing a difficulty in every opportunity, we should see an opportunity in every difficulty.
- Instead of seeing thorns with every rose, we should see a rose with every thorn.

The Propagation of the Gospel Depends Upon the Ananias' of Today!

1. It is only the rank and file of Christian believers who can bridge the widening gulf between the pulpit and the public.
2. In a factory were posted the large letters...**IADOM**. A visitor could not understand what it stood for, or meant. Then someone said... it means **It All Depends On ME!**
3. How important is the individual to you? So how important are YOU to God's plan and purposes?

Seek After These:

- Seek righteousness
- Seek purity of heart
- Seek surrender
- Seek humility of spirit
- Seek preparedness
- Seek to share the loveliness of Christ to those around you.

IF !

If this bit of earth may be
Stronger for the strength I bring,
Sweeter for the songs I sing,
Happier for the path I tread,
Lighter for the light I shed,
Richer for the gifts I give,
Purer for the life I live,
Nobler for the death I die,
Then, not in vain have I been I.

Memory Verse:

I Thess. 5:24

Men of the Bible

“PAUL - The Man Who BORE The BRANDS!”

“*The marks of the Lord Jesus*” -- what were they? The Greek word which is here translated as “marks” is *stigmata*, from which we get our English words “*stigma*” and “*stigmatize*.”

What Was Paul Referring To?

- Literally the Scripture here is stating these words, “*I bear **branded** on my body the **marks** of the Lord Jesus.*”
- It is quite clear the apostle Paul is here referring to actual **marks** which he bore in his body.
- Paul’s use of the word **stigmata** to describe what he went through for the Lord is used figuratively, or with much symbolic meaning.
- They were not merely marks: they were as **brands**; and in using this term Paul was referring to some practice in that day that was well known to his readers.

I. What Was The Branding?

There were **five** classes of people who were **branded**.

1. It was a common thing to brand **slaves**.
 - a. The brand was a mark of ownership, or
 - b. a means of precaution against running away, or
 - c. a mode of punishment. (Cf Exod 21:5-6)
2. Branding was common among **soldiers**.
 - a. They wore tattoos on their arm or hand or the initials of favorite generals.
 - b. It was a sign of **allegiance**.
3. Then, **religious devotees** were often branded.
 - a. It was a sign of **devotion**.
 - b. It was done out of an act of **consecration**.
4. Often **criminals** were branded, as a mark of affliction.
5. Lastly, **the abhorred** were often branded as a mark of insult, or judgment.

II. What Were the Marks or Brands?

They were **actual marks** on Paul’s body. They were the scars, sears, and maybe long-continued sores which had come upon him during this costly and heroic service for the sake of the Lord’s will. (Acts 9:15-16; II Cor. 11:23-28; I Cor. 4:9-13)

Paul had been battered and bruised in ways that left many permanent *memorials on his body*. **Paul Knew:**

1. Jewish whippings,	2. three floggings,
3. barbarous violence,	4. ambush of enemies,
6. bodily hardships,	5. assaults of robbers,
	7. mental sufferings.

III. Why Did Paul Refer to These Marks or Brands (wounds)?

1. Because there were Judaizing teachers who were subverting the Galatian believers and seeking to turn them against Paul. (Paul was defending himself.)
2. These were self-important men who mouthed great pretensions; but did they bear any brand-marks of the Lord Jesus on their person? (Did they truly care?)
3. These false teachers were shouters, but also shirkers; they spoke boldly, but were poor sufferers.

For Paul To Be Branded Was Very Significant!

1. This reminds us of Cain upon whom God put a mark.
2. Persons who were vile or dangerous of character were sometimes branded for identity and for detection.
3. The Jews have often been abhorred and so marked for extinction.
4. There were five meanings for these brandings.. the mark of a:
 - > slave - mark of ownership,
 - > devotee-mark of consecration
 - > soldier - mark of allegiance,
 - > criminal - mark of exposure,
 - > abhorred - mark of reproach.
5. **Paul bore on his person** the meaning of all of these marks! They proved Christ's ownership of his person. . . they were the brand-marks of a soldier. . . they proclaimed his allegiance to his heavenly Captain. . . they were the brand marks of a devotee, for they declared his consecration to the Lord. . . the brands were received as one who was hated and hounded!

IV. What Do The Brands Mean to US ! What is the lesson?

1. We should never be ashamed of **bearing suffering or reproach for Jesus' sake!** (Acts 5:41; 15:26; Gal. 6:14)
 - a. Paul considered himself a **branded slave for Jesus' sake**. . . *what about us?*
 - b. He gloried in the Cross and what it meant to him.
 - c. There is no higher honor than to suffer for Christ.
2. We should not be afraid of **bearing such marks in our own bodies.** (Heb. 12:1-4)
 - a. Far better to be scarred than to be scared.
 - b. Far better to suffer because of loyalty to Christ than to be a coward.
 - c. Let us never fear persecution or ridicule or trial.
3. Paul's brand-marks suggest that we should **bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in our character.**
 - a. What characteristics of Christ should we bear in our lives?
 - b. What characteristics of Paul's example in service should challenge us men?
 - c. Do we bear the marks of --- **ownership, allegiance, consecration**, and even of **exposure**, and the mark of **reproach** for our testimony for Jesus sake?

Additional Notes: Does the World Brand Us?

1. Don't people carry upon their lives the influence of the world system?

2. Don't we witness people who are so **branded** by the world's value system that they will do almost anything to be like those around them?
3. Don't we see Christians whose lives are **no different** than the lost because they have been **marked** by the world system?

**What Do We Know
About Suffering? . . . Study What God Says In These Verses!**

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Rom. 8:17 | 2. Phil. 1:29 | 3. Phil. 4:12 |
| 4. I Thess. 3:4 | 5. I Tim. 4:10 | 6. II Tim. 1:12 |
| 7. II Tim. 2:9 | 8. II Tim. 2:12 | 9. II Tim. 2:13 |
| 10. Heb. 11:25 | 11. James 5:10 | 12. I Pet. 3:14 |
| 13. I Pet. 3:17 | 14. I Pet. 4:19 | |

**Memory Verse:
Phil. 1:29**

Men of the Bible

“Nehemiah - The Man Who Got INVOLVED!”

Why are people so prone to be uninvolved? Why is the policy of *noninvolvement* increasing as a pattern of our culture in recent decades?

A Christian woman was overhead to say, “*I prefer to get lost in a big church.*” She wanted to sit on the sidelines and avoid any involvement or responsibility.

Nehemiah was different! He recognized the seriousness of a situation and accepted the responsibility of dealing with it.

How do we respond to needs, situations, opportunities, and problems that are a natural part of the Christian life, the home, and the ministry of a local church?

I. Nehemiah's Inquiry! (Neh. 1:1-3)

We do not have much history of Nehemiah's life. He was the son of Hacaliah and a child of the captivity living in Shushan (the Greeks called it “Susa”). His residence at this time was the royal palace because he was the king's cupbearer (vs. 1, 11b).

1. Something took place that changed Nehemiah's life and brought an involvement that he could not have anticipated.
2. He had eagerly inquired about the plight of his fellow countrymen who had escaped exile and about Jerusalem itself.
3. The answer received was disheartening: (vs 3)
Nehemiah was burdened over the condition of the city, Jerusalem (about 536 B.C.), as a result of the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. It was now 150 years later, some had returned under Zerubbabel about 70 years earlier.
(Ezra 4:7-24)

II. Nehemiah's Reaction: (1:4)

Four verbs tell us the story:

1. He ***wept***, 2. he ***mourned***, 3. he ***fasted***, and he ***prayed***.
4. He did not just sit down and wring his hands; he did more, much more, he identified himself with the needs of the people, the remnant in Judah.

Additional Notes:

Text: Nehemiah 1:1-11

Catherine Genovese, coming home from her night job early one April morning in 1964, was attacked and repeatedly stabbed. Her cries for help went unheeded, though 38 residents of that New York neighborhood witnessed the attack. The sense of outrage was nationwide and Senator Russell of Georgia even read the *New York Times* account of the crime into the *Congressional Record*.

Conditions At Jerusalem!

*“An ancient city without locked gates, and lofty walls was no city at all!”
The holy city, Jerusalem, was without walls and at the mercy of hostile neighbors and marauding bands of robbers.*

What About Our Concern? Do We Truly Care?

- Sadly, few Christians really care about whether God's work prospers or not.
- *"The believer who wants his ministry to make a permanent difference must be **arrested** by a desperate sense of need!"*
- A burdened GOD is at WORK in the WORLD, and HE searches for burdened believers through whom He may work.
- What do we see **locally**, in our **homes**, in our **work**, in our **church**. . . things that need our attention, our concern, our compassion, our willing sacrifice? (list them)

III. *Nehemiah's Prayer:* (1:5-11)

1. No less than 11 times in 13 chapters the Scriptures tell us of Nehemiah's prayer life.
2. **We can't do more than pray -- until we have prayed.**
3. In some respects his prayer is a model prayer for it follows the pattern of **worship, confession, and petition.**

Worship: (vs. 5)

- a. Nehemiah had a clear understanding of the character of God.
- b. He worshipped God as the **One** who is great, awe-inspiring and faithful.
- c. Our walk with God is dependent upon our understanding of God.

Confession: (vss. 6-7)

- a. He thought upon God, and in humility he saw his sins and those of his countrymen. (Psa. 66:18)
- b. He openly confessed the people's sins as his own sins. (See Ezra 9: 3-10.)
- c. He acknowledged that all sin is an offense against God, *"We have dealt very **corruptly** against Thee."*
- d. He specifically confessed that their sins were against God's commandments, statutes, and the judgments of the Law of Moses. (Psa. 19:12-14)

Petition: (vss. 8-11)

- a. Nehemiah then appealed to God, imploring God to honor His covenant promises made to Moses. *"Remember. . . the word that Thou commandest Thy servant Moses. . . if ye transgress, I will scatter you. . . but if ye turn unto Me. . . yet will I gather (thee)."* (Deut. 4:25-31)
- b. He knew that effective praying is based on claiming the promises of God.
- c. Nehemiah was comforted and strengthened as he thought upon how a loving Father had dealt with Israel in the past.
- d. He plead very specifically, *"Prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."*

Conclusive Thoughts:

1. The man who bathed the broken walls of Jerusalem with prayer would now employ his dedicated skills in rebuilding the walls.
2. Nehemiah was totally willing to place his own ambitions and abilities at God's disposal.

3. Nehemiah was willing to leave the luxury in Persia for one of hardship in Palestine that he might do God's bidding.
4. How do you see God's compassion and love in his life?
5. What major godly character trait do you see in his life?

How Can We Worship?

We worship best when we meditate on, and thank Him for His attributes, such as His:

<p><i>omniscience, holiness, truth, and justice, faithfulness and mercy, his immutability and</i></p>	<p><i>omnipotence,</i></p>	<p><i>omnipresence, love and goodness, eternity, and infinity, incomprehensibility.</i></p>
--	-----------------------------------	--

Nehemiah had insight into the **greatness** of His God, how about us?

How did he view sin?

1. He penetrated directly to the root of the matter. The Jews were suffering as a result of their sins.
2. Sin is to be confessed by the individual. (I Jh 1:7-9)
3. Sin necessitates personal judgment. (I Cor. 11:31)
4. Sin is a willful offense against a Holy God.

Nehemiah Trusted God to Keep His Covenants!

He had in mind such passages as:

Lev. 26:27-45; Deut. 4:25-31 and II Chron. 6:36-39.

He not only reminded God of what He had said, (vvs. 8-9), but also of what He had done. (vs. 10).

He reminded God that these afflicted people in Jerusalem, were, *"Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed."* ***The redemption of Israel out of Egypt made them uniquely the people of God.***

What do you recognize as wonderful leadership traits in Nehemiah's life?

**Memory Verse:
Prov. 3:5-6**

Men of the Bible

“NEHEMIAH - The Man Who Showed COURAGE!” (A Hero In The Making!)

It has been said that we are living in an age without heroes, and one observer declared, *“It is questionable whether any society can avoid stagnation, without good leaders.”*

*Nehemiah was a **hero** of his day!* Not because of **who** he was, but because of **what** he was and especially his willingness to be used by God. How did this happen? How did this take place and why? Did he plan it that way?

Chapter two shows us how Nehemiah came to occupy the role of a hero, a leader in ancient Israel. It is a chapter of **transition**, for Nehemiah moves from Persia (and the palace) to Jerusalem, from the position of a servant to a heathen king, to be a recognized leader of his own people.

I. Nehemiah Petitions the King! (2:1-8)

1. Four long months (from Chisleu (1:1) to Nisan (2:1), Nehemiah prayed. He doubtless was rehearsing and repeating the prayer recorded in chapter one.
2. He was waiting for God to lead and give him the right opportunity to speak to the king about his burden.
3. Nehemiah's opportunity came unexpectedly. His self-control had broken down, his face betrayed his broken heart.

The king was quick to notice this, he made a correct diagnosis, concluding Nehemiah's sufferings were of the heart and mind. (The king could have condemned him to death for sadness in his presence.) (vs. 2)

4. Nehemiah was *“sore afraid,”* and for good reason.

He was about to request permission to leave, that too was unheard-of and dangerous to do. Then he wanted permission to repair the destruction Artaxerxes had recently authorized (1:3 and Ezra 4:7-23).

5. Nehemiah responded to the king's penetrating question with a direct and truthful answer. (vs. 3)
6. Artaxerxes sensed there was more and asked for a full report from Nehemiah. *Nehemiah prayed!* (vs. 4-5)
7. Having prayed to God (vs 4) ***he makes three requests!***
 - a. He asked the king to ***send him to repair*** the ruins of Jerusalem. (vs 5) (*This was a gigantic task. . . could he succeed? . . . what if he failed?*)
 - b. He asked for letters for ***safe conduct*** (vs 7) to his destination.
 - c. And that Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, would ***give him timber*** for construction. (vs 8)

Additional Notes:

Text: Nehemiah 2:1-11

Heroes!

This hero did not set out to be one! He was there when the crisis occurred, and he responded as he always had in any situation. He was simply doing what had to be done! He was faithful where he was in his present duty! He was ready when the crisis arose, being where he was supposed to be. . . doing what he was supposed to do!

He was responding to need as was his custom. . . to circumstances as they developed. . . *devoted to duty -- he did the heroic!*

Potential Developments!

1. Hanani and other Jewish travelers possibly thought that Nehemiah did not care.
2. Why the delay? There were other cup bearers. . . why didn't Nehemiah act now?
3. In fact the king of Persia may have even been gone, maybe wintering elsewhere.

The Right Timing!

1. God's saints will testify that our timetable and God's often do not coincide.
2. While we may want instant answers, God's timing is perfect -- and His delays are not denials.
3. By faith, we must trust God to intervene and bring about His will.

The Right Response and Attitude!

1. His heart was burdened for God's will and purposes!
2. He knew the destiny of his people lay in the balance.
3. He knew God must intervene and so **he prayed!** (1:11b)

II. Nehemiah Arrives At the City! (2:9-11)

1. Fourteen years after Ezra and others had journeyed from Babylon to Jerusalem, (458 B.C.) Nehemiah made the trip with a military presence. (vs. 9)
2. The King had planned for Nehemiah to be his appointed governor, hence an escort to enhance Nehemiah's trip and position. (vs. 9)
3. Doubtless he was welcomed by Ezra, but the Scriptures tell us of a group of men who did not want Judah's good. (vs. 10)
 - a. A small group of desperate men collected in the old Israelite capital. . . and they had bitter hatred toward the Jewish community. (vs. 10)
 - b. They did not want the Jew's welfare advanced.
4. Nehemiah did not immediately plunge into the work. He stated, "*So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.*" (vs. 11) (Considering what we know of Nehemiah we also know quite well how he would use this time because of his burden.)
 - a. What did he do for three days?
 - b. Probably rest, as the journey would have been rigorous, and required at least two months.
 - c. Probably he spent much of that time: > in prayer, > in planning, > in reflection on God's will, > on needs, and on strategy.

5. Now Nehemiah was on the scene -- the very place for which he had prayed and asked for what probably seemed an impossible dream.
6. Doubtless there were those who said, *"It can't be done, forget it. . . it won't happen!"* But with God's help he purposed to accomplish the impossible.!

He Had Courage! (Consider a list of verses on courage and to be courageous. . . read and reread them!)

Nehemiah's Ready Response

"The brief and sudden prayer reaches heaven as an arrow shot from the bow, but it goes right home, because he who lets it go in his surprise is a good workman, well practiced. This ready prayer only springs to the lips of a man who lives in a daily habit of praying." -- W. F. Adeney

1. God's good hand was on Nehemiah!
2. God gave him the words to say. He had prayed much and had sought God's will and direction.
3. Nehemiah gives God the glory, not attributing the results to his wisdom or cleverness, or ability!

Why Is Courage So Important? What Makes for Courage In a Person's Life?

1. We can have **Courage** -- because of the **promises!**
2. We can have **Courage** -- because God's **desire** and **will** is that we succeed!
3. We can have **Courage** -- because God's **presence** is there to strengthen us!
4. We can have **Courage** -- because God **commands** us to be courageous, therefore, He is promising to enable us to succeed.
5. We can have **Courage** -- when we know we are in the center of His will.
6. We can have **Courage** -- when we know we are doing His bidding, under His control in the midst of duty.
7. We can have **Courage** -- when we walk by faith. . .trusting in His providence and care.

How Does Your Life Exhibit Courage?

**Memory Verse:
Joshua 1:9**

Men of the Bible

“NEHEMIAH - The Man Who PREPARED For The Task!”

After three quiet days in Jerusalem, Nehemiah manifested his heart as he began to carry out purposes for which he came. His depth of spirituality is seen in the very way he began to prepare.

You can imagine his grief as he stumbled among those ruins of what was once a great and mighty fortress! When- ever a real work of God is to be done. . . some faithful burdened servant has to take a journey such as Nehemiah took. . . to **weep** in the night over the ruins, to **wrestle** in some dark Gethsemane in prayer.

I. Inspecting the Ruins: (2:12-16)

1. Nehemiah's first move was to go out under the cover of darkness to inspect the condition of the city walls.
2. Possibly under bright moonlight, the cautious leader took his famous midnight ride.
3. He may have already noted the northern walls, and observed other parts as he resided in some part of the city.
4. He rides counter-clockwise over the city, from gate to gate, viewing the broken down walls, the ruins, the rubbish, and the gates burned with fire.

At some places the heaps of rubble and piles of stone obstructed his passage. He had to dismount and continue on foot up the Kidron Valley along the Brook Kidron in order to view the eastern walls. *The conditions were deplorable!*

II. Rallying The People: (2:17-20)

It was a former president of Columbia University who said, *“There are three kinds of people in the world -- those who don't know what's happening, those who watch what's happening, and those who make things happen.”* (In which group are YOU?)

1. It was time to act, and Nehemiah was one who God *trusted would make things happen!*
2. There is a time when weeping, lamenting must end.
3. He **assembled** the nobles and others and laid before them the **plans** he had formulated on the basis of his night ride (God-given burden) around the walls.
4. Nehemiah **identified** himself with the people and called upon them to recognize and acknowledge the serious condition in which they lived. (vs. 17)
5. They must **freely admit** their problem, their plight must be **faced** or they would never seek for an answer and no remedy would be adopted.

6. Nehemiah urged them to **act**, for they were held in **contempt** and scorn by their neighbors. (vs 17b).
 7. Then he **encouraged** them by sharing two facts and why he had confident faith. (vs 18a)
 - a. God's good hand was on him,
 - b. He affirmed that he was acting on the authority of the king. (vs. 18)
 8. The people were **ecstatic, thrilled, enthused**, "Let us rise up and build." was their response. (vs 18c)
 - a. They were ready to overcome obstacles.
 - b. They responded to a God-sent, God-inspired leader.
 - c. To strengthen their hands meant to physically prepare for the task at hand -- **get ready -- do it!**
-

Additional Notes:

Text: Neh. 2:12-20

Why Did He View The Walls At Night?

1. I think, largely, because he wanted the time to **commune** with God **alone** as he looked at the needs.
2. He knew that no one had his burden, his broken heart, and others with him may well have even **laughed** at his desire to see things changed.
3. He was **not content** with mere hearsay about the needs. He had to **see** for himself. He needed the cooperation of many people; **he needed to speak from fact.**
4. He used this night-time circuit of the walls to assemble the necessary information.

There had to be:

Observation -- of need.

Interpretation -- of reality.

Correlation -- of facts.

Application -- of the truth.

A Heart Deeply Stirred!

- Have you ever had a broken heart over needs you saw around you?
 - Have you ever lost one hour of sleep over the tragic spiritual dearth of your church or your family or your community?
 - Have the needs of missionaries ever brought you to a sleepless night?
 - Have you ever cried out to God... "Oh God, what can I do about this thing, this need?"
 - Have you prayed over what you should do, how to act, how God wants to use YOU?
 - Every church has needs, what are ours?
-

III. Reaction Of The Enemy: (2:19)

1. The enemies were keeping a close and a jealous watch on Jerusalem. They were **quick to challenge** the newly adopted plan of action.
2. They openly **mocked** the Jews, ridiculing their efforts to rebuild the walls.

3. They endeavored to stop the Jews by declaring this was a **plot to rebel** against the king of Persia.

IV. Response Of Nehemiah: (2:20)

1. This is **God's work**; He will **prosper** us; *"therefore we His servants will rise and build:"*
2. He told them **firmly** -- *"but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."*
 - a. The enemy had no rights before God.
 - b. They could not expect tribute, or have authority.
One writer well said, *"Effective Christian service demands a Spirit-filled leader whose vision and self-sacrifice inflame those who are sharing in the work of God."*

Why Was Nehemiah Concerned?

1. Because the condition of the city and the people was intolerable.
2. Their condition also constituted a reproach on God Himself.
3. God's testimony as a caring, powerful, loving God was at stake. Would He care for His Old Testament people?

Principles of Leadership Are Seen In This Study!

1. He had a sense of mission.
2. He was willing to be involved.
3. He patiently waited for God's timing.
4. He prayed at crucial times.
5. He made his request with tact and graciousness.
6. He was well prepared.
7. He went through proper channels.
8. He assured them God was at work; He cared.
9. He showed respect to his superiors.
10. He established a reasonable and attainable goal.

Courageous Pioneers Have Often Faced Ridicule!

- The first U.S. steamboat took 32 hours to go from New York to Albany. People laughed.
- The horse and buggy passed the early motorcar as if it were standing still (it usually was) and the people laughed.
- The first electric light bulb was so dim people had to use a gas lamp to see it. They laughed.
- The first airplane came down 59 seconds after it left the ground and people laughed.

Memory Verse:

Men of the Bible

“NEHEMIAH - And An IMPOSSIBLE MISSION!” (And How Will We Do It?)

Humanly, to rebuild the walls was an impossible task!

You will find the words “*wall or walls,*” about 36 times in the book of Nehemiah. Then you will find the word “*build or builded or built*” about 20 times in this book. The major theme was the **building** of the wall. This seemed to be a herculean task!

How would they accomplish it? How could they unless almost everyone was involved? Nehemiah experienced a wonderful response -- the people of Jerusalem joined him in this **mission impossible** -- they stepped forward from every sector, every walk of life, to follow his leadership.

Nehemiah cut the job down to size: He divided the wall into sections, and then assigned individuals or groups to the different portions. Each had a specific task and knew that what he was doing was part of an overall plan. No one person could do the whole job, not even Nehemiah, but when everyone worked together, the most difficult task could be successfully completed.

I. Building On the North Wall: (3:1-5)

1. The Sheep Gate: (vv. 1,2)

- a. The work of repair and rebuilding began near the northeast corner of the wall at the sheep gate.
- b. It was located near the temple and the sheep market, it was commonly believed that animals for sacrifice passed through this gate.
- c. It is interesting that the priests sanctified their task -- that is, they dedicated the repaired gate, wall, and defense towers to God.

2. The Fish Gate: (vv. 3-5)

- a. Moving westward we are told of the work here and the adjoining walls.
- b. Near here was the Damascus gate, probably merchants brought their wares through this gate.

The harmony of the scene is marred by the sad exception of the nobles of Tekoa...”But their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.” (vs. 5b) This was a village 10 miles south.

II. Building at The West Wall: (3:6-12) Located on the northwest wall *the Old Gate* was probably the entrance into the old city. It is also at times called the *Corner Gate* (II Kgs. 14:13; II Chron. 26:9) and it stood between the *Fish Gate* and the *Ephraim Gate*. (Neh. 12:39)

1. Many worked at this gate -- goldsmiths, perfumers, (vs 8)-- men who normally did light work.
2. These men probably had blistered hands, aching muscles. (Some of this wall was 22 ft. thick.)
3. The nobles of Jerusalem gave themselves (vs 9, 12) as well as young women who left comfort and their security. (vs 12).

III. Building at the South Wall: (3:13-14)

1. The Valley Gate: (vs 13)

- a. This was located at the southwest corner and was the opening into the Valley of Hinnom.
- b. This was repaired by people from Zanoah, a village 13 miles west of Jerusalem.
- c. They repaired a distance of about 1,500 ft from the *Valley Gate* to the *Dung Gate*.

2. The Dung Gate: (vs. 14) From this gate the refuse of the city was carried out to be burned in the Hinnom Valley. Would anyone volunteer to work at such a lowly site?

IV. Working at the East Wall: (vv. 15-31)

1. The Fountain Gate: (vs. 15-25) This area was in almost complete ruin, (2:14) Jerusalem's water supply had been safeguarded by a tunnel dug in Hezekiah's time. This was now in ruins.

2. The Water Gate: (vv. 26-27) This was close to the Spring of Gihon.

3. The Horse Gate: (vs. 28) A third group of priests worked at this region. This was the entrance gate for the palace traffic.

4. The East Gate: (vv. 29-30) This was the entrance into the temple area from the Mount of Olives.

5. The Miphkad Gate: (vs. 31) This was also called the *Muster Gate*, the place for mustering troops and guards.

Additional Notes:

Text: Nehemiah 3:1-31

“During the defense of the Philipians Bataan Peninsula in World War II, one of the commanding officers line up a company of his men and asked for a volunteer to go on a dangerous mission. Anyone willing to serve in this capacity was to step forward two paces. Glancing at his memorandum for a moment, he look up, and exclaimed in dismay, “What, not a single man?” Quickly his aide explained, “You do not under- stand, sir. The entire line stepped forward two paces.”

President Eisenhower said, “Leadership is the ability to get a person to do what you want him to do, when you want it done, in a way you want it done, because he wants to do it.” Nehemiah's effective leadership made the difference! In this chapter we find 38 people named!

Dr. H. A. Ironside shares the following about the gates:

1. Sheep gate reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ for the sheep as He the Shepherd died.
2. The Fish gate reminds us we are to be *fishers of men!*
3. The Old gate suggests our subjection to the revealed will of God. (Jer. 6:16)
4. The Valley gate reminds us of the need of humility.

4. The *Valley gate* reminds us of the need of humility.
5. The *Dung gate* speaks of the need of cleansing from all sin and defilement.
6. The *Fountain gate* brings to mind the fountain of life, the washing of the Word.
7. The *East gate* points to when Christ will come on a "white horse." (Rev. 19:11)

Would we give ourselves as these people did? Are we willing to do whatever is at our hand to do for God's glory!

Some Principles to be Gleaned From This Chapter:

1. The work of God should be carried on in an orderly and organized fashion.
2. There must be a division of labor in the Lord's work.
3. The Lord's work requires the involvement of all kinds of people from many different walks of life.
4. The Lord remembers and honors those who service Him. *(This chapter is filled with the names of the faithful and the willing.)*
5. God's work requires dedicated, faithful, and even sacrificial service. Leaders are most important.

All Labor Was Important!

At the *Fountain Gate* two crews of workmen worked. One, starting at the Spring of Gihon outside the walls, the other starting at what is now the Pool of Siloam, and they performed this amazing feat. The water flowed from the spring to the pool again. Along this section many labored -- Nehemiah knew them and listed them by name. (*Baruch* -- earnestly, zealously repaired.)

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

"He repaired over against his house. . . (3:23,28) This is where any real work for God must begin -- at home. A church is no stronger than the homes that make up a church. We read that ***"they repaired over against their house."*** Do the walls of your family prayer life need to be repaired? Is your home a ministry of blessing? Is your home an idol? Is God honored in your home? What is the status of the ***walls there?***

Memory Verse: James 2:26

Men of the Bible

“MEN, Their Lives, and Their MINISTRY To Others!”

Chapter three is very important. In it we see some tremendous lessons for our own lives. Here we look at chapter three again.

I. Why People Repairing Was So Significant.

1. Here we see the people at work building and repairing as the need presented itself.
2. Here God gives the record of names, and where and how they labored.
 - a. God keeps such a **record** of all His own and their labors. (I Cor. 3:9-15; Rom. 14:12; Rev. 22:12)
 - b. We must all **appear** before the “*Judgment seat of Christ,*” that “*everyone may receive the things done in his body, whether good or bad.*” (II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:8)
3. Rebuilding the wall, pictures the **guarding** of the place of privilege and blessing. *A wall of separation was needed to keep out that which was undesirable and which would hinder and mar the true worship, and service of God.* (Prov. 25:28; Eccl. 3:3)
4. Today, we also must be protected from the world, and all that is contrary to sound doctrine, and from every aspect of sin. (I Tim. 4:13, 16; 6:11-12)
5. It is a thrill to see how they labored to rebuild the wall. It was done at great sacrifice.
6. Our attention is drawn to a phrase that you will find four times... “*he repaired . . . over against his house.*”

II. Repairing the Walls of Prayer: (Neh. 3:10)

1. Jedaiah “*worked over against his house.*”
2. His name meant “*invoker of God!*” One whose life was founded on **prayer**. He had a testimony of being a praying person. (Luke 11:1; Rom. 9:1; Rom. 10:1-3)
3. We must repair the walls of our prayer life.

III. Repairing The Walls of Protection: (Neh. 3:23)

Another wall that we must begin to repair, or build, or rebuild is the wall of protection.

1. Benjamin and Bashub repaired near home.
 - a. Bashub’s name meant “**associate,**” he was a helper in the labors.

b. Benjamin's name means "*the son of my right hand.*" Literally... "*The one who is there to protect me.*"

2. Our homes, our lives need **walls** of protection.

Do we do our part in building up our home? Do we give protection from worry, from fretting, from friction, resentments, bitterness, irritations, anger, etc.? Each home is precious where all dwell in love, in peace, unity, and in joy. Dads are accountable for the physical and spiritual protection of the home. Dad, what are you doing? (Eph. 6:1-4; Proverbs chapters 1-7)

IV. Repairing the Walls of Integrity: (Neh. 3:29)

1. Zakok built up the walls beside his house.

- a. His name means "**justice**," as he doubtless was a father who practiced being just, right, honest, walking in integrity.
- b. He was the son of Immer whose name meant *talkative*.
- c. What destroys the home more than the weapon of the tongue?
(See James 1:1-18)

2. We **must** also build the walls of integrity.

V. Repairing the Walls of Dedication: (Neh. 3:30)

Now we read of Meshullum building over against his chamber. It may have been a very small home, maybe only one room. but God gives account of his work.

1. He was **devoted**, for his very name meant "*one who was devoted*," and his father's name meant "*the Lord blessed him.*"
2. His life speaks of complete **dedication**; of full surrender. He probably lived a sacrificial life in service for the Lord.
 - a. Reason for dedication -- Rom. 12:1; 14:9
 - b. The nature of dedication -- Rom. 6:13; 16-17
 - c. Walking in surrender -- II Cor. 5:14-15; Col. 2:6-7;
 - d. Product of dedication -- Jh 15:16; Matt. 6:33

Additional Notes:

Text: Nehemiah 3

It is Up To Us!

If these amateurs could complete the wall of Jerusalem in fifty-two days, we also, despite our lack of expertise, should be able to build the walls of our lives, the walls that protect our own families and have an impact on the lives of others.

Nehemiah Is Not Mentioned in Chapter Three!

The focus is not so much on leadership as on the people who had a **mind to work**. Nehemiah doubtless was there,

- > laboring, leading, behind the scene,
- > probably he was pausing at one place to encourage,
- > stopping at another to lend a hand,
- > making daily trips, with the burden of his heart seen in it all.

And how does this apply to a dad, to us as leaders, as men?

To what extent do you encourage, support, give yourself for the success of others?

When children obey, husbands and wives fulfill their roles, when the Word of God is lived -- **then** we can build the walls of protection.

Protection Needed:

Our families desperately need protection from the world, the ideals, philosophies, and doctrines of this world system. Satan is God of this world who seeks to defeat every child of God.

***Living FOR the Lord is one of greatest privileges of life!
Building a life, home, family, others for God's glory counts!***

Looking At The Walls of Your Prayer Life!

- a. Is your prayer life in ruins?
- b. Do you have family devotions? (Deut 6:6-9)
- c. Is your home known as a house of prayer? (See Acts 12:11-12)
- d. Does the wall of your family prayer life lie in ruins?
(Cf Eli, I Sam. 2:12, 17; 3:11-14)

What Does It Mean to Walk in Integrity?

- It means to live honestly and in faithfulness.
- Dishonesty is one of the worst blights in America today.
- Do we honor our marriage vows -- to cherish, to keep to one another until death do us part?
- Often the walls of integrity are broken down because of gossip; because of slander, cursing, hatred, anger, and a contentious spirit.
- Do we criticize others, the pastor, deacons, workers?
- Do we carelessly talk about God's work with a flippant, critical, and gossips use of the tongue?

These things destroy any integrity we might have.

God's Call For Our Dedication!

1. It is a call to all His own.
2. It is a fundamental fact of the faith for all who accept Christ as Savior.
3. Dedication begins with a specific decision and act.
4. It is a glorious privilege.
5. It flows out of what Christ did for us. (Rom. 14:9; Rom. 12:1-2; 6:13)

Memory Verse: Romans 14:12

Men of the Bible

“MEN Facing The OPPOSITION That Comes In Life!”

Opposition will abound in life. Being an “*overcomer for God*” is God’s will for every saved person. The book of Nehemiah is an account of godly men **overcoming** the obstacles of life.

The New Testament has a lot to say about overcoming, note the study in the right hand column.

It was Nehemiah’s **courage** and determination, his faith and **passion** to serve the Lord that made the difference.

The work was going forward and the victory being won because he dared to believe God in the midst of tremendous opposition. We need to learn well and apply the lessons which we see in this section of Scripture.

I. The Ridicule of the Enemy: (Neh. 4:1-3)

1. The enemy did all they could to heap scorn and contempt upon Nehemiah and the Israelites of the Jerusalem area.
2. Their comments were dogmatic, severe, and crushing.
 - a. You are “*nothing*,” is what they were saying.
 - b. “Your personnel is weak, your task impossible.” “God isn’t going to take any notice of you.”
 - c. “You are a feeble lot. God does not care!”
3. It is what we face today!

Husbands and wives sometimes heap such comments on their spouses who are trying to serve the Lord, or because they love Christ. Parents scorn their children because of their desire to go to Bible College, or their desire to make Christ the center of their lives.

Satan often employs professing, backslidden saints to discourage with words of scorn, contempt, and ridicule. **How sad!** (Psa. 1:1)

II. Their Recourse Was Prayer and Doing the Work: (4:4-6)

The word, “*recourse*,” means to “*run back, to resort to, source of aid, or access.*” **Nehemiah knew the source of aid!** He knew the way to overcome every opposition of the enemy. If we would be victorious we must know “*how to walk with God!*”

1. **First:** He prayed and sought God. 4:4-5)
 - a. He did not meet scorn with counter-scorn.
 - b. He did not answer back, get anxious or worry.
 - c. He **thanked God and took courage!** (Phil. 4:4-7)
 - d. Prayer is the great encourager; it serves to clear the air, to drive off the fog of discouragement, and brings joy and inner peace to endure.

2. **Secondly:** They worked, “*so built...*” 4:6

- a. They concentrated on the task before them.
- b. They were like Christ... “*among you; as one that serveth.*” “*He came not to be ministered unto but to minister....*” (Eph. 2:10; Matt. 20:28; Gal. 6:10; I Cor. 15:58)
- c. They had a mind to labor, to work, to strive for God’s glory.

III. The Reaction of the Enemy: (Neh. 4:7-8)

You can mark it down, when God is blessing, Satan is also at work. Now Satan was leading the enemies (as he stirred them up) to forcibly withstand.

1. The **enemies** made an alliance!

- a. This was between the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites who were normally warring among themselves.
- b. They were in unity against the will of God, the work of God and those doing it.
- c. Mutual enemies were now mutual friends in their determination to stop the work of God.

2. They also sought to infiltrate!

- a. Their intent was to divide the Israelites.
- b. They sought to bring confusion.

IV. Now Their Recourse Was Prayer and Watching: (4:9)

As there will always be opposition, so there is constant, perfect access to God and victory in Him. (Psa. 27:1, 14; I Jh 5:1-5)

1. They make their prayer unto God.

- a. Prayer is a blessed privilege -- Mk 11:22-24
- b. Prayer is a personal blessing -- Jh 14:13-14; 16:24

2. They made their watch toward the enemy.

3. We are also in a battle! (I Pet. 5:8-9; I Cor. 16:13) Satan is our arch-enemy. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with Satan’s hosts. (Eph. 6:10-18)

Additional NOTES:

Text: Nehemiah 4:1-9

HOW DO WE OVERCOME?

1. By being *strong in the Lord and the power of His might.* (Eph. 6:10)
2. By being “*more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*” (Rom. 8:37)
3. This is the victory... “*even our faith.*” (I Jh 5:1-4)
4. They overcame... “*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.*” (Rev. 12:10)

What did Christ Face?

The religious world derided Jesus, mocked Him, smote Him, and opposed Him in every way they could. (Heb. 12:1-4, 12-15)

The servant is not greater than His Lord. We can rest assured Satan will attack those who seek to be *“all out for Christ.”* He never bothers the half-hearted, the indifferent, or the backslidden. (II Cor. 2:11; I Pet. 5:8-9; Eph. 4:27; Rom. 8:37)

Oh, How Terrible!

In I Kings chapter thirteen, Satan was able to use an old backslidden prophet to bring a “lying message” to the young unnamed prophet and thus bring him to his death.

We can easily allow Satan to use us and bring others to a place of spiritual loss, failure, and great hurt. How we need to watch our lives!

How did Nehemiah Act?

- He heard the criticism,
- evaluated it as unjust, and then committed it to the Lord.
- He did not carry on an argument nor become defensive to the enemy.

When Trials Come!

The goal of the enemy of our souls is:

1. to cause us to cease laboring for Christ;
2. to spend time in answering back, in finding fault, and in gossip,
3. but especially to be discouraged and disheartened.
4. If we have no heart to pray, we will have no heart to work for His glory.

Satanic Opposition:

Satan always opposes the work of God. Jerusalem was in the center of God’s purposes and to build its walls was an unpardonable offense to the enemy. God’s work today is done through His church. This is His plan, His will and His program for this age. **Satan will always oppose us, and we must be alert and heed the warning, of:**

1. *“the wiles of the devil.”* (Eph. 6:11)
2. *“his devices.”* (II Cor. 2:11)
3. *“his open opposition,”* (I Pet. 5:8-10)
4. *“his coming as an angel of light.”* (II Cor. 11:14)

Various Methods of Opposition!

Mockery:

Mockery and ridicule is not an innocent weapon, but is subtle, effective, and always serious. These enemies exhibited raucous laughter at God’s people.

Conspiracy:

Now the enemies planned to fight against them. They were engaged in terrorist activity.

Apparently the prayerful, victorious spirit of the leader, Nehemiah, was infectious and they all drew strength, resolve, and guidance from the Lord.

Men, how are we leading our families? Do they see us walking in personal victory?

Memory Verse: I Cor. 16:13

Men of the Bible

“MEN. . . Working to REMOVE Every Hindrance!”

“And Judah said, *“The strength of the bearer of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.”* (A new problem had to be faced!)

Everything seemingly was going well for Nehemiah and the workers. The king had gladly equipped, the people had gone forth to the **work**, they had met the opposition with a mind to work, a heart to pray and an eye to watch.

I. Facing the Problem of RUBBISH! (4:10)

1. Now something very serious comes to light. Judah, had complained, given in, threatened to revolt, and were filled with discouragement. **They could say:**
2. *“We are getting weak, feeble, too much rubbish, too big a job to face ... we can't go on. **The r u b b i s h must go!**”*
3. They needed to stop, get rid of the rubbish which hindered any ongoing progress. Before they could build further they needed to dispose of the trash that had accumulated!

II. Facing the Timely ONSLAUGHT of the Enemy: (4:11-12)

1. **When?**
 - a. When the walls were half up; when the people were weary of bearing burdens.
 - b. When they had been troubled with rubbish and now were disheartened.
 - c. When interest was at a low ebb - the enemy brought about a new attack.
2. **How?**
 - a. It came in the form of ruthless speech. It came as a threat to press battle. . . **they would slay them.**
 - b. Nehemiah and others were told of the plan of the enemy. (Maybe some were looking for a reason to quit?)

III. Typical REACTION To Such Opposition! (4:14)

1. The immediate normal reaction is usually **fear**; Nehemiah had to urge all to *“be not **afraid** of them.”*
2. **Fear** is a great enemy of the Christian! (Josh. 1:7-9)
3. The pessimists there there (v. 12). The Israelites felt “hemmed in,” and in a hopeless situation.

IV. The REASON for the Enemies Opposition: (4:7)

1. **Why?**
 - a. Why all the fury, hate, anger from the enemies?
 - b. Had Nehemiah wronged them? **NO!**

- c. Where ever Satan sees a work of God, then he will concentrate his power against it.
- d. Satan will not oppose those who teach error. (Eph. 6:10-14)

- 2. Purpose?** (*Satan's goals around us today.*)
- a. To bring ridicule upon God, and His children.
 - b. To keep people bound in sin, enslaved to wrong.

V. Three-Fold BATTLE CRY Of Victory: (4:14-23)

- 1. Look to the Lord:** "*Remember the Lord.*" (v. 14)
 - a. This is God's cause, He will prosper us.
 - b. Our God will defeat the enemies.
 - c. Think upon what God can do. (Isa. 40:28-31)
- 2. Reflect upon the issue:** "*Fight for your brethren. . . your sons, your daughters.*" (v. 14)
 - a. Everything was at stake, it all depended upon the outcome.
 - b. Nehemiah had to set them in array for battle.

(*There are times for battle.* I Cor. 16:9, 13)
- 3. Resist the enemy:** They were armed now in readiness.
 - a. First they must fully resist the enemy.
 - b. Then the enemy heard they could not be caught off-guard, and they were brought to naught. (v. 15)

VII. Nehemiah Set Forth the Way to Victory. (vs. 16-23)

- Half were to be building.
- Half were to watch for the enemy.
- Builders and burden-bearers carried weapons.
- They worked with a weapon at hand, and with the tools of labor as well. (vs. 17-19)
- An alarm system was instituted. (vs. 18-20)
- Night time security was strengthened. (v. 22)
- Nehemiah exercised constant vigilance. (v. 23)
- They labored heartily, *as to the Lord, and not unto man.* (See Col. 3:23)
- They expected God to give victory. (Eph. 6:10)

Additional NOTES:

TEXT: Nehemiah 4:10-23

What About Rubbish?

- > **Rubbish** is that which hinders, is of no value, it was the junk around them.
- > **Churches** face the rubbish of false doctrine, spurious religions, paganism, false theories, wrong interpretations, demonic work.
- > **Personally** we often face the rubbish of sin - - pride, carnality, evil desires, a barren life, unbelief, self-pity, self-will.

We all have seen yards full of trash, a *foul heap of junk*, an unsightly mess of garbage. We must be careful that our heart home is not like that!

Satan Is Involved!

1. Satan will always do all he can to bring God's work to a halt.
2. He will stir up demands, negative comments, anger, threats, drudgeries, etc.
3. And some are born in the "*negative case and the kickative mood.*"

The Problem of Fear!

- > We will fear when we are prayerless.
- > We will fear when we walk close to the enemy - Satan.
- > We will fear when we lose our fellowship with the Lord.
- > We will fear when sin rules and reigns in our lives.
- > We will fear when we are out of step with our spouse and family.
- > There are over 300 promises that we "*Fear Not.*" Isa. 41:10
- > "*God has not given us the spirit of fear... but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.*" (II Tim. 1:7)

Nehemiah was a tremendous leader. One who had vision, determination, practicality, a sacrificial spirit, and complete trust in God's power, provision, and protection.

Satan's Strategy!

1. to stop us from praying,
2. to stop us from working,
3. to waste time trying to defend ourselves,
4. to be worried, fearful,
5. to doubt God's love - care,
6. to decide it just isn't worth it all; why bother.

This was a fight for national survival. . . would they win?

What About Us?

1. We must be armed for warfare. (Eph. 6:10-18)
2. We must know how to:
 - wield the Sword of the Spirit, *the Word of God*,
 - use the shield of faith, *in a walk by faith*,
 - be strong in prayer life, and yet at the same time labor for the Lord. (Eph. 6:18)
3. There is both **offensive** and **defensive** warfare. . .and we must know how to walk in both.
4. ***We are to triumph in Christ!***

We Too Have Walls To Build

- There is the **Wall of Protection** of a dynamic prayer life.
- There is the **Wall of Testimony** among friends, relatives, and working companions.
- There is the **Wall of Righteousness** -- *just doing what is right.*
- There is the **Wall of Separation** from worldliness and compromise!

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:23

Men of the Bible

“Nehemiah -- And the Conquest of Internal Dissension!”

So far they had faced external foes (scorn, ridicule, pressure, threats, and outward readiness to war against them), and the internal foes of rubbish and fear. These had been faced victoriously, courageously and wonderfully as they ***prayed, worked, and watched.***

Now possibly the worst problem came upon them. This was doubtless the most difficult of all the problems that Nehemiah faced. This was the thing that nearly wrecked the work and will of God in that hour. ***It was internal dissension among his people.***

And today -- the lack of unity, the disruption caused by divisions and a party spirit, the misunderstanding and wrong in many churches brings God's work to dishonor and ruin in our day. *(Now let's see the problem and the lessons in the midst of great trial and heart-ache in Nehemiah's day.)*

I. The FACTOR'S Involved: (Neh. 5:1-5)

A. Material lack

1. There was a food crisis, a famine; this was caused from attention being given to the work on the wall, increased population and a recent famine.
2. They were in the midst of an unsettled state, with heavy taxation by the Persian government, and the hazards of roving enemies.
3. The work on the wall, and the defense of their lives from the enemies had brought about an acute lack of food.
4. Some in poverty had been forced to sell all they owned, and even their children were sold into slavery in order to stay alive. (v. 5)

B. Desire for personal gain:

1. Some took advantage of this situation.
2. The rich were making more wealth; they were granting loans, charging high interest rates. . . (mortgages, these took sons into slavery and asked redemptive prices, etc.)

II. The FORTHRIGHT ACTION: (Neh. 5:6-19)

A. Nehemiah challenged the offenders: (vs. 7-9)

1. He carried out prompt, drastic action.
2. There was questioning with a great assembly together (nobles, priests, etc.).
3. There was exhorting about their sins. (v. 7, see II Tim. 4:2; I Tim. 5:20,24)

B. Nehemiah appealed to them by personal example:

(vs. 8, 11, 15) For he exacted no usury, no taxes as governor, but gave and served sacrificially.

1. He had a right to exact fees, but took none. (vs. 14-19)
2. He even redeemed some of the brethren who had been sold into the hand of the enemy. (v. 8)

C. Wrong was admitted by the leaders: (vs. 11-13)

1. Restitution was demanded. (vs. 12-13)
2. They admitted blame, and wrong.
3. They took an oath to give back lands, vineyards, etc.

D. Nehemiah appealed to them by personal testimony:

(vs. 14-18) *"So did I, because of the fear of God..."* (v. 15c)

1. Attitude: *"So did I . . ."* For Nehemiah --
 - a. refused to comply with custom,
 - b. refused to follow the crowd, (See II Cor. 10:12.)
 - c. refused to say *"I'm as good as . . ."* thus making comparisons.
2. Motive: *"the fear of the Lord."* (vs. 14-19)
 - a. He fed many, cared for the work, ministered.
 - b. He had a *"reverential trust"* in the Lord.
 - c. He knew God could move in hearts and convict them about their deeds. (I Jh 3:16-18; I Pet. 4:17)

III. The Further NEED. . . in conclusion:

*The great need was **unity** of purpose & a sacrificial spirit.*

- A. They needed to get back to their **original goals**.
- B. They needed to get back to their **first love, vision, and purpose**.
(See Rev. 2:4-5; 3:15.)
- C. They needed to get their **focus on God's honor** in their midst. (What would the unsaved say?)
- D. They **needed to face** personal sin. (Psa. 19:12-14)

**Do We Need a Cleansing
Of Heart?**

1. These men Nehemiah faced, needed clean hearts and a renewal of right spirits.
(Psa. 51:10)
2. When our spirit, purpose, goals, etc., and our inner attitudes are wrong -- God cannot bless. (Psa. 139:23-24)
3. We are stewards of what God has given us, and we need to be faithful. (I Cor. 4:2)
4. **One of the great needs today is renewed faithfulness.** Nehemiah had been faithful in every way and he was calling them to return to the same.
(I Cor. 15:58)

Additional NOTES:

TEXT: Nehemiah 5:1-19

Consider the Problem!

They had been united in objective, but were now divided in concern and purpose.

The thing that harms God's work the most is dissension among His people.

If we are divided in what we love, in our goals, and as Christians are "***at outs***" with one another there can be no blessing, no revival, and no victory.

We must do what is right! Some of them were not doing what was right!

What does God say in:

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| > I Cor. 10:31-32 | > James 4:17 | > Judges 21:25 |
| > Deut 6:18 | > I Kgs. 15:5 | > Prov. 16:25 |

Do right though the stars fall... do right... just do right!

What Was the Need?

1. An attitude of determination to ***maintain the cause*** of God's will and purposes. (Col. 4:12; Eph. 6:6)
2. The motive to do and to inspire others to do one basic thing: To BRING ***glory to God*** in all things. (I Cor. 10:31,32; Col. 3:17)
3. The power by which to "***do right,***" that power being the Holy Spirit in us. (Eph. 5:18; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:14)

Every internal problem between God's own can be put away, and God can have the victory - - - IF we are jealous for the honor and glory of God, and that alone.

IS THIS NOT TRUE?

So often the world places a higher standard upon our Christianity than many Christians do.

Too many Christians are very concerned that every body recognizes they are as different as ***chalk*** and ***cheese*** in matter of doctrine or beliefs . . . ***but they are not a bit different in matters of practice.*** But Nehemiah could say, "***so did not I.***" Today far too many saved follow the crowd, as they seek the acceptance of the lost.

Memory Verse: Prov. 13:13

Men of the Bible

“Nehemiah -- And the Final Stand of Opposition!”

A most important statement is given in verse 15: *“So the wall was finished. . .”* This was a real note of victory that in 52 days, the wall was finished. They had endured conflict unto the end. They had met all the opposition in the Name of the Lord, *“with a heart to pray, a mind to work, and a will to watch.”* Some of this conflict we see in chapter six.

There is a twofold reason why they were successful: *“The work was wrought by our God”. . . which was the divine side, and “they worked unitedly”. . . which was the human side. Success for God always includes these two aspects: Divine and human. (In salvation, in dedication, in the Spirit-filled life, etc., there is always the Divine part, and the human part. The human being our action of will to surrender totally to the Lord.)*

I. Facing the SNARE of the WORLD'S FRIENDSHIP: 6:1-4

The final opposition was yet to come. We will look at this in detail. There are four more obvious forms of attack to defeat God's work.

When the work was in the earliest stages the enemy used ridicule, score, abuse, and threat. Then they were going to attack and fight. Now all this was abandoned and they adopted a more subtle form of attack. Satan comes as a roaring lion (like the earlier confrontations), but also He comes as an *“angel of light.”* This is actually the more dangerous. (Cf I Pet 5:7-9; and II Cor. 11:13-18; II Cor. 2:11)

A. Repeated Requests: “Come, let us meet together in the plain.”

1. This was an enticement of a feigned interest. (I Pet. 1:22; I Tim. 1:5)
2. They wanted an alliance. (Cf. II Cor. 6:14-18)
3. This was a pretense of friendliness, desiring to fool him. Probably they planned an assassination.

B. Real Truth:

1. Their real purpose was to remove him from leadership so the work would end.
2. Nehemiah had an answer:
 - a. If I do, the work will cease.
 - b. God has given me a great work to do.
 - c. Why should I leave this work to come to you?

II. Facing the WORLD'S SLANDER: Neh. 6:5-9

While this came from the heathen, sometimes slander comes from God's own people, who do not walk in love, are not yielded to the Holy Spirit, but still profess to be saved. (Cf I John 3:7-16)

A. Their Gossiped Story:

1. Now they try rumors and misrepresentation of motives.
2. They try to discredit him by creating a scandal.

B. Slander is serious: Their open letter gave 3 charges:

1. The Jews were plotting treason.
2. Nehemiah led as a pretense to gain the throne.
3. He was bribing others for support for kingship.
(Sanballat threatened to forward this to the king of Persia.)

III. Facing TREACHERY In the NAME of Religion: 6:10-16

The other two means had failed, so now they go to him as a wolf in sheep's clothing. Here the enemy was manifest as an **angel of light** as never before.

A. The Wrong Invitation: 6:10-13

1. Shemaiah, a Jew, was a **tool toward treachery**. His was a scheme to get Nehemiah to act unadvisedly, to bring reproach upon his person.
2. Nehemiah was **not a prophet**, he had no right in the inner temple. **To go there was wrong.**
3. So he would listen, they sent a prophet, feeling he would flee from danger into Holy Place in the temple -- thus they could reproach him. (6:12-13)
4. They desired to claim suspicious conduct on Nehemiah's part, so they could have grounds for an evil report. *(They wanted to destroy confidence in his leadership. Thus they could cause the work to cease.)* (vs. 13)

B. Nehemiah's Positive Reaction: 6:11-14

1. *"should such a man as I flee?"* vs. 11
2. *"should I go into the temple for safety?"* (Rom. 8:28-32)
3. *What did he have to fear of man? of God?* (Psa. 27:1-11)
4. If he had feared, it would have appeared that he was guilty. (At least having a lack of faith.)
5. *". . . this work was wrought of our God."* vs. 15-16

IV. Facing COMPROMISING BRETHREN: 6:17-19

Wherever one would live, there are Christians who are willing to compromise morals and principles for the sake of others, sake of union, etc. (II Cor. 10:12) *They are willing to measure themselves among themselves, and are not wise.*

A. Sadly, some "hobnobbed" with Tobiah.

B. Some were married into the families of the enemies.

C. Some were using this contact for their wrong doings.

D. Compromise is very serious! God will bring sure judgment upon compromise in our lives!

Additional NOTES:

Text: Nehemiah 6:1-16

Why Did They Succeed?

Nehemiah triumphed because he was doing a work which God initiated and because God planned it.

1. God would empower it, and bring it to the successful end.

2. We are not to initiate things for God must work in our hearts, giving the burden and leadership, then we should act.
3. Chapter one taught this very forcibly.
4. God's great desire today is to bring about the completion of His work.
5. God took Nehemiah, a man through whom He could work, a clear channel, and brought about his purpose.

Today, Do Saints Compromise With Satan?

1. We should never leave the work of God to meet the enemy "half-way."
2. Satan's strategy of deceit will divert us from God's work, into the world's interests, beliefs, goals and desires.
3. If we become occupied with the things of the world, we will be unable to give strength to the primary task of building God's work.
4. *Moses was offered four different compromises.* What would he do? (Exod 6:1-13)
 - a. **8:25-27** go, sacrifice in the land, but they were to leave a 3 days journey.
 - b. **8:28**, go, but not very far away.
 - c. **10:8-11**, go, but only the men can go.
 - d. **10:24**, go, only let your flocks, herds stay here.

To compromise in any way is wrong.

What Can Take Place Today?

This may seem strange, but there are churches today that ***find a strange pleasure in the fall of a Christian leader.***

(This is seen in ***Shemaiah***, who was a tool of Satan, used by the enemy, to bring fear to Nehemiah.)

In Churches today. . .

- > To a preacher's face people may be kind, fuss over him, are friendly, even saintly, but. . .
- > behind his back they may be critical and back-biting.
- > Such people usually profess loyalty and concern, but. . .
- > if leadership fails in any way, they love to gossip it everywhere.
- > When one seeks to be "*out and out*," for God, often that person will become the target of others' rumors, gossip, and wicked speech.
- > *God forbid that we should ever be a tool in Satan's hands and be tempted to talk scandal about another; we must pray and God will set a watch over our lips.* (Psa. 141:3)
- > What does Gal. 5:15 say to us?
- > And what words apply as found in James 3:13-17?

***Nehemiah succeeded because
he believed that . . . "Quitters never win and winners never quit."***

Memory Verse: I Cor. 15:58

Men of the Bible

“ELIJAH. . . What Are You Doing HERE?”

Many things had taken place in Elijah's life that brought him to the place we find here in our text.

He had been cared for at the brook, at the widow's home, and he had been in the great contest on Mount Carmel. **Now** having fled from Jezebel with great fear for his life, he had traveled for 40 days and nights on the special care and food the angels had prepared for him. (19:1-8)

We pick up the story at Mt. Horeb, where God met him. Remember the love of God was manifested to Elijah in many ways along the way.

Although Elijah was not necessarily directly led of God to go to this mountain, yet it must have been either God's **perfect will**, or **permissive will**. ***There is a difference!***

God knew the heart of Elijah as He knows your heart.

I. GOD SPEAKS TO ELIJAH... "the word of the Lord came unto him." 19:9

A. He had arrived in some dark cave.

1. He came to a dark cave and lodged there. Why here?
2. He was lonely, probably wondering the **why's** of life! ***Probably confounded, frustrated, bewildered.***

B. God asks a very important question. . . *What doest thou here, Elijah?*" v. 19

1. Why did you leave your post? Do you not realize that if Israel ever needed you . . . it is now?
2. Why did you come here? Was it by my bidding or direction?
3. Elijah shrank from the direct question and does not answer the question -- he would have had to confess his wrong.

C. Elijah endeavored to protect himself in his answer! 19:10

1. He did not answer directly, but instead evaded and choose rather to dwell on self.
2. He claimed his loyalty to the cause of God.
3. He claimed his burden, the why, what, and reason for his service.
4. He spoke of the failure of others. . . ***I am alone as one who serves you.***

II. GOD Would TEACH Him by Using a Beautiful Natural Parable: 19:11-12

A. Elijah was bidden to stand at the entrance of the cave.

1. He did not until afterward, (see v. 13)
2. He hesitated to do so; maybe felt guilt, fear?

B. God taught him through 3 unusual events.

1. *"And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord. . ."* v. 11 But God was not in the mighty wind! What were Elijah's thoughts?

2. *“And after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake.”*
The mountain probably swayed to and fro; cracking, ground heaving as if the mighty hand of God passed beneath it. . . but the Lord was not in it. v. 11
3. *“And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and . . . ”* The heavens were ablaze with light, but God was not in it. v. 12

How appropriate for these were natural symbols of Divine power and presence. But, what were the lessons?

III. HOW GOD SPEAKS “. . .and after the fire a still small voice.”

A. Elijah had desired that God would act -- how?

1. In judgment that was swift and complete.
2. That God would restore the allegiance of Israel to Himself -- by judgment if need be.
3. That God would act in some swift, irresistible way like the wind, fire, or earthquake.
4. There was a desire for God to vindicate Himself.
5. He thought God was not at work at all; he was alone as one who stood for God and Elijah was despondent over it all.

B. But how does God speak? “a still small voice.”

1. God does not necessarily work in striking ways, doing the flamboyant, in signs or wonders.
2. God most often is at work -- quietly, gently, softly, unperceived. . . *7,000 had not fallen to Baal!*
3. We often want to see some outward sign, evidence of God at work. . . ***do we trust Him?***

When we desire to see our wives or our youth change -- often we want to see the dramatic, outward, powerfully and quickly done. . . ***without our being what we must be!***

Additional NOTES:

Text: I King 19:1-21

Elijah Travels to the Distant Mountain!

Refreshed by food, and sleep, Elijah resumed his journey across the desert to Mt. Horeb. Perhaps no place on earth is more associated with the manifested presence of God than that sacred mount.

1. Here the bush burned with fire when Moses was called. (Exod 3:1-4)
2. Here the Law was given, when the mount burned, and smoked, etc. (Deut 4:15)
3. Here Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights alone with God.
4. Was he in need of a mountain top experience. . . a time alone with God?

Are YOU?

Was Elijah in God’s Will?

1. Had he been directed to go?
2. Self-will had reduced him to weakness.
3. God took pity upon him and ministered to him.

4. The journeys of life are often too much for us. . . and especially difficult when self-directed.
5. Elijah had fixed his heart on going to Mt. Horeb.
6. It was a great distance; God met the need of his rebellious servant.

God Would Ask US. . .

1. What are you doing about your **place** of leadership as a husband or father?
2. What are you doing with your life, doing here ?????
3. **Are you** --- **leading** your family? **bonding** with your family? truly **loving** your family? actually **equipping** your family?
4. What are your **mission** priorities? Do you have any?

Is God at Work In Your Life, If So, How?

Two years ago, in our men's studies, we began with a study about being *men of steel and men of velvet*.

We noted then, that men of steel have these qualities:

1. A **committed** man,
2. a man of **conviction**,
3. a man of **courage**,
4. a man of **character**,
5. a man who has great **confidence** in God,
6. a man who is in all things **constructive**.
7. a man whose life is under God's **control**.

Have we become men of steel? Are we growing in our walk with the Lord?
Elijah needed to be in all things that kind of man!

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK?

Heb. 3:7 *"today, if ye will hear his voice."*

John 10:4 *"my sheep hear my voice and they follow me."*

John 18:37 *"everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."*

Isa. 30:21 *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it..."*

God may not be at work as we want, but do we listen to His voice?

1. His voice will be heard through His Word,
2. even by the inner working of the Holy Spirit, and it
3. takes place in the heart of the saint of God.
4. Are you attuned to His still small voice?

What doest thou here?

- > Are we neglecting our post as men?
- > Are we careless about our service?
- > Are we fulfilling the greatest privilege we will ever have -- being men of character God can use!

Memory Verse: Prov. 4:13

Men of the Bible

“Lazarus. . . the Man Who Came BACK From BEYOND!”

Many of the persons and incidents which move before us in the pages of New Testament, besides having a real historical value, are representative of wonderful spiritual truths. The miracles by which our Lord Jesus healed men's bodies are so presented to us as to illustrate the way in which He heals men's souls.

Lazarus of Bethany is a wonderful pictorial picture of the mighty power of God in our salvation. We are told of seven outstanding things about him -- ***seven outstanding facts which together make him a remarkable illustration of our regeneration, of our new life in Christ.***

I. LAZARUS IS DEAD: (John 11:14) Jesus speaks plainly, “*Lazarus is dead!*” And both Martha and Mary come to Jesus with the lament, “*Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died.*”

1. As Lazarus was dead physically, so men and women outside of Christ are dead spiritually.
2. God forewarned Adam, “*In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” (Gen. 3:)
 - a. When Adam ate, he died to God and became alive to sin, self-will, and every kind of wickedness.
 - b. This was far more than death physically, but death to every good and perfect thing.

II. LAZARUS IS RAISED: (11:44) “*He that was dead came forth.*”

That sleeping clay thrilled to hear the command of Jesus as He cried with a loud voice: “*Lazarus, come forth!*” (Jh 11:25-26)

1. One day the graves will be opened... death and the grave cannot hold its prey. (I Cor. 15:12-22)
2. ***Spiritual birth brings life!*** If we are truly saved, then we are alive to God, we have His life -- “eternal life.”
3. Psalm 40:1-3 must be true in our life; we know by the witness of the Spirit, by a change life -- we are saved!

III. LAZARUS IS BOUND: “*He that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with graveclothes.*” (11:44) While we have been raised to newness of life it is ***easy for us to be bound*** by the old sins of the flesh -- by fear, pride, idols of the heart, love for the lusts of this world, bound by habits of sin.

IV. LAZARUS LOOSED: (11:44) “*Loose him, and let him go.*” Eager hands and willing hearts worked in haste to set him free from his grave clothes. Soon he would be freely moving among his loved ones again. (We have such a part today!)

1. Thus Lazarus had now received both life and liberty!

2. He was loosed from death, and now loosed from the encumbering of that which represented his state in death.
3. Do you have both liberation from condemnation of sin, and victory over sin's power? **Are you loosed?**

V. LAZARUS FEASTING: (John 12:1-2) *"Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him."*

1. Feasting spiritually with Jesus is our best joy.
(Psa. 40:1-3; 103:1-3; 32:1-5; John 15:11)
2. Lazarus had precious **communion** with the Lord.

VI. LAZARUS WITNESSING: (12:9) *"Much people of the Jews therefore. . . came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the death."*

1. Lazarus was a wonderful testimony to the power of Jesus. He witnessed by what he **was**. (Rom. 1:16)
2. He probably witnessed by what he **said**; but being alive was the great witness to those who came.
3. Lazarus was a walking, living evidence of salvation!

VII. LAZARUS CONVINCING: (John 12:11) *"By reason of him, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus."* Lazarus was an argument no one could get over.

1. Salvation should bring such transformation in our lives that our life is an presentation of God's saving grace. . . that others cannot deny.
2. We need *heralds... proclaimers... evangelists... preachers.. but above everything we need everyday -- WITNESSES!*
3. **We are to be HIS**
 - a. workmanship -- Eph. 2:10
 - b. new creation -- II Cor. 5:17
 - c. letter read by all men -- II Cor. ??
 - d. living evidence of saving power -- John 11

Additional NOTES

Text: John 11:14-17, 41-44; 12:1-11

**The Condition of the Lost Person!
(Romans 3:9-12)**

1. **under sin** -- Rom. 3:9
2. **unrighteous** -- 3:10
3. **understand not** -- 3:11
4. **unconcerned** -- 3:11
5. **unable** -- 3:12; 5:6
6. **unprofitable** -- 3:12
7. **ungodly** -- 3:12; 5:6 (See Isaiah 1:4-6; 64:6)

The Lost Are Spiritually Dead!

Like Adam and Eve . . .

- > we hide from God,
- > slink away from Him, and
- > are dead to love toward Him,
- > dead to pleasure in Him,
- > dead to any desire after Him,
- > dead to what He loves, and hates,
- > dead to what pleases Him. ***for until we are saved we are truly dead in trespasses and in sins.*** (Eph. 2:1)

IN WHAT, TO WHAT ARE YOU BOUND?

Are you bound to personal sinful habits of life? Are you bound to sins of the spirit: envy, anger, bitterness, resentments, irritableness, jealousy, wrath, malice, desire for vengeance?

Do you desire to be set free? **DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN BE SET FREE?**

- > Rom. 6:12-14
- > I John 5:1-4
- > Rom. 8:37
- > Phil. 4:13

The above promises can be yours in daily application and you can have the reality of being set free! It is truly up to you!

After Salvation, We Can So Easily Be Held By the Cords of Our Own Sins!

1. We form those ***cords*** by the choices we make.
2. We form those ***cords*** by the habits we build.
3. We form those ***cords*** by our self-willed living.
4. We form those ***cords*** by the lack of surrender, obedience and trust.
5. We form those ***cords*** by the lack of a walk by faith.

FEASTING SPIRITUALLY

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, oh, Lord God of Hosts.” (Jere. 15:16) Is this our daily experience?

EVERY SAVED PERSON IS CALLED... TO BE A WITNESS!

- ∞ What is your witness to your family, your wife, your loved ones?
- ∞ What is your witness to your neighbors, working companions, friends, etc.?
- ∞ Does your family see Christ in YOU on a daily basis?
- ∞ Lk 24:44-49; Acts 3:32; 5:32

The World Needs the Witness of Lazaruses!

When people come to Christ, they are transformed by His saving grace, and begin to live a different life -- then we will also see many others come to Christ for salvation.

We not only need modern day Lazaruses but we need to be such people ourselves. . . people who live transformed lives -- godly, set apart unto Him.

Memory Verse: II Cor. 5:20

Men of the Bible

“King Saul. . . The Man Who PLAYED the FOOL!”

Saul, the first king of Israel, is one of the most striking and tragic figures in the Old Testament. If we are at all sensitive as to the supreme value and vital issues of human life, then the story of this man is bound to challenge us.

In some ways Saul was a man whose example we would desire to follow, and in other ways his life was decidedly ugly. And we forget, possibly, that he was a father and a husband, and brought great sorrow, loss, and tragedy to his family.

I. HIS EARLY PROMISE:

Few men begin with such great promise, a kindlier personality, or great potential future than did Saul.

A. He had striking physical superiority: I Sam. 9:2

1. He is described as a *“a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: for his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.”* (Also see 10:24.)
2. He had a great advantage according to man's thinking.

B. He had highly commendable qualities of disposition:

1. We see his **modestly**: (9:21) He was not proud, but counted himself unworthy of such honor. When he was to be presented, he had hid himself among the stuff. (10:22)
2. He was **discreet**: (The sons of Belial sneered about him, they despised him, 10:27) Saul held his peace, did not retaliate although he could have commanded their death at that point.
3. He was very **generous**: (See 11:13)

II. HIS LATER DECLINE:

Saul's early promise is a quickly fading flower, a morning sky soon overcast with sullen clouds.

A. We see irreverent presumption: (I Sam. 13:5-14)

1. Saul was to wait at Gilgal for seven days, until Samuel, the prophet, came to him.
2. It was a **test** to see **if Saul was obedient**. He failed miserably as in willful impatience, he violated the priest's prerogative and foolishly presumed a right to offer the sacrifices to God. ***His impatience really was a distrust of Jehovah.***

B. Then, we note his rash willfulness: (14:24-31; 41-46)

Saul rashly imposes a curse of death if any man should eat food on the day of battle, with the result that his men were too weak to exploit the God-given victory to the full. (vs 30). And many other sad things took place. (See 14:31-41.)

C. Next there is a blend of disobedience and deceit:

(15:1-31, 35)

Saul is told to destroy utterly the vile Amalekites; but he spares the king and the best livestock. Then he lies to Samuel, places blame for the bounty on the people. He even pretends the bounty is for sacrifice to God. Samuel said, "*When thou was little in thine own sight . . .*" Humility has now been replaced by arrogance. ***God called this rebellion and stubbornness, as serious as witchcraft.***

Additional NOTES:

I SAMUEL 13, 14, 15

A Look At King Saul

All in one:

- he was a giant and a yet a dwarf, • a hero and a renegade,
 - a king and yet a slave, • a prophet but also a reprobate,
 - a man who ***was*** God-anointed and yet later he became Satan-possessed.
-
- King Saul's beginning was so promising, yet he deteriorated so dismally and ended in a downward process that brought him to witch-craft, and an untimely death.

Saul had shown so much promise:

For he was:

- > considerate of others - 9:5
- > he had courage - 11:6,11
- > he had a capacity for strong love, 16:21
- > early, he had energetic antagonism toward such evils as spiritism, 28:3

And God had given him such great gifts and abilities:

- > he was kingly,
- > God was with him, 10:7
- > God gave him another heart, 10:6, 9.
- > The Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied, 10:10, *for. . .*
- > He was inwardly renewed.
- > He was surrounded with "*a band of men whose hearts God had touched.*"

Note: *Defection, disobedience, declension, degeneration, disaster -- that is the dismal story that takes place in Saul's life, as the hero drops as a sinful and failing husband and father.*

III. HIS FINAL FAILURE AND DOOM:

The last tragic act in the mournful life of this man Saul is depicted in chapters 28 and 29. His downward course at last brings him to the witch of Endor, as an embittered, desolate-hearted fugitive from doom.

A. Look at the horrible end. (I Sam. 28:3-11, 15-20)

1. This giant wreck of a man who once enjoyed direct counsel from heaven now traffics with the underworld.
2. To choose **self in preference to God** is in its ultimate meaning and outcome, **to choose the devil.**
3. **The finale is -- witchcraft and suicide.**
4. He lies a corpse with his lovely son, Jonathan. Now the mighty are fallen.

B. He had “played the fool!” All because of his self-will.

Behind his presumption and disobedience to God was his self-assertion, instead of self-submission. Here was a life of self-centeredness that brought self-destruction.

Some Lessons We See In Saul’s Life:

1. The most important lesson is: The **one vital condition** for true fulfillment of life is **obedience to the will of God.**
2. Advantages are **not in themselves a guarantee** of success.
3. The greatest **opportunities** in life can come to us and they, in themselves, **are not enough to give life its highest fulfillment.**
4. Not even special God-given blessings assures us of ultimate achievement, for **we can destroy the good** that could come from God’s hand on our lives.
5. He was **not merely appointed by men**, but he was **anointed of God** to be the **executor of a will that was higher than his own.**
6. We are not independent proprietors of our own being and existence. **We are God’s property!** All we have, all we are, God gave us.
7. **We seem to be prepared to do almost anything in life, except hand over our own wills to God.**

To allow self to get the upper hand in our lives is to miss the best and court the worst. Our biggest enemy is not our circumstances -- our biggest peril is our own sinful self-life wherein we live out the desires of our sin nature.

Saul’s life is a perfect example of the results in a life where God’s will, right, and desires are ignored.

Men, what will your family suffer because of your failure - - your lack of surrender of all you are to God?

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:23

Men of the Bible

“David. . . A Man Who Understood God’s CAUSE!”

When David said, “*Is there not a CAUSE?*”, he was speaking the conviction of his heart. David’s concern was the glory of God in that hour.

When David spoke of a cause, indeed, he saw the cause right before him.

- The cause was that someone would go in battle against this evil Philistine giant.
- The cause was also God’s will and honor was at stake.
- Certain things took place because David was willing to enter into ***the cause*** before him, and a number of lessons come out of this event.

I. The CAUSE Removed FEAR from David’s Heart!

(I Sam. 17:23-24, 36-37, 46-47; Psa. 27:14)

1. When David made up his mind to face Goliath it was because of the ***impact of the cause*** as it gripped his soul.
2. Fear could not rule where godly conviction reigned.

II. The CAUSE HELPED David to OVERCOME Pressures From Others!

(I Sam. 17:28, 33)

1. Eliab and King Saul did not see things as David saw them.
2. They did not have a driving motivation for God’s will, honor, and glory.
3. Nor did they enter into the cause before them as (Goliath’s defiance toward the people of God), they should have. (Was it fear or concern for self?)

III. The CAUSE Helped David to ENCOURAGE Others! (17:37, 38-42, 52)

1. David was deeply moved by the desire after God’s honor. He embraced ***the cause!***
2. His decision brought a mighty reaction to the nation for in the end the Philistines were defeated decisively. (17:51-57)

IV. The CAUSE Helped David to FACE the Giant! (17:28-42)

1. David fought because he ***embraced*** the cause.
2. We will only enter into the truths of Ephesians 6:10-18 ***IF*** we embrace God’s cause for glory and honor in our life. (*How can we stand, stand therefore, having done all, to stand?*)
3. David had courage only as he embraced God’s will.

V. This CAUSE ENABLED David to BE the VICTOR!

(17: 50-52) David was victorious! WHY?

1. Because of his heart attitude (Prov. 4:23)
2. Because of his faith he took upon himself God's cause.
(His belief system -- 17: 34-37, 45-47)
3. Humanly, he should have failed.

VII. This CAUSE Brought GLORY to GOD Through David's Actions!
(17:46-47; II Thess. 1:11-12; Eph. 1:12)

1. We will become mighty in exploits, in deeds, in the doing of God's will, **when** we have God's cause (will) on our hearts and minds.
2. God will work mightily in our lives, in our midst when we want His honor and glory.

VIII. This CAUSE Brought BLESSING For All of Israel, and for David Especially! (I Sam. 18:1,5; 17:58)

1. David had favor with God and man. (18:28; 30)
2. God brought favor upon David because he had embraced God's cause -- God's will, plan, etc.
3. David put God's honor, glory, and will at the fore-front of his life and before his own interests, concerns, or even life itself.

Additional NOTES:

Text: I Samuel 17:23-52 (vs 29)

In YOUR Life Is There Not a CAUSE?

- What grips your life?
- What truly matters?
- What is worth living for, what motivates you?

Should the following things grip your life?

- Convictions based on the Word of God?
 - Biblical principles worth living for?
 - Eternal truths Christ died for?
 - Purposes God has for this age?
 - Reasons why He saved you and keeps you?
- "Causes" are the driving motivations that gives life its goals, aims, purposes, and fulfillment. If there were no "causes," life would be humdrum and empty at best. What are you living for?***

LOOK UP!

*To be distressed, look within;
To be defeated, look back,
To be distracted, look around;
To be dismayed, look before;
To be delivered, look to Christ;
To be delighted, look up!*

Conclusions:

- How does this relate to child rearing? (Eph. 6:4)
- How does this relate to Deuteronomy 11:18-22?
- How does this relate to Psalm 127:4?
- How does this relate to Ephesians 5:25-33?
- How does this relate to I Corinthians 30:31-32?
- How does this relate to Ephesians 1:12?

He is Lord of ALL, Or HE is Not Lord AT ALL!

Watch Your Can't's and Can's!

*If you would have some
worth while plans,
You've got to **watch** your
can't's and **can's**.
You **can't** aim low and then
rise high;
You **can't** succeed if you
don't try;
You **can't** go wrong and come
out right;
You **can't** love sin and walk
in light;
You **can't** throw time and
means away and live sublime from day to day.*

*You **can** be great if you'll be good
And do God's will as all men should;
You **can** ascend life's upward road,
Although you bear a heavy load; You **can** be honest, truthful, and clean,
By turning from the sinful, low and mean;
You **can** uplift the souls of men
By words and deeds or by your pen.*

*So **watch** your **can't's** and **watch** your **can's**,
And **watch** your walk and **watch** your stands,
And **watch** the way you talk and act,
And do not take the false for fact;
And **watch** indeed the way you take,
And **watch** the things that mar or make;
For life is great to every man
who lives to do what he knows by God's grace, he can!
Watch You Can't's and Can's!*

Memory Verse: Ephesians 1:12

Men of the Bible

“Daniel. . . A Man Who Walked By FAITH!”

Daniel was not much more than a boy at the date of the captivity, when Israel found itself under bondage. And he was still a lad when the Chaldeans endeavored to make a man of him and we read the events of Daniel, chapter one.

Daniel is a example of heroic determination to do right. (Dan. 1:8-21). While most would yield to the influence of the conquerors, Daniel walked with God.

It took backbone for a mere lad of maybe 15 to take such a stand. It took zeal for God, a person with much faith and a goal to please God at all costs. And this is the story of his long life as he served four kings, in four different kingdoms.

I. WE SEE THE REALITY OF HIS FAITH: (Dan. 6:23)

1. It goes without saying, that **Daniel believed God.**
2. ***It was of his heart.*** This was much more than some mental assent,
 - a. It was a sincere truth, a living in total dependency upon God for preservation, direction, and care.
 - b. He believed his God -- as we rely upon God for our salvation, forgiveness, and cleansing.
3. ***It was certain;*** for Daniel had a personal walk with God. Can we say for example, that Psalm 23 is vitally true in our daily experience?
4. ***It was a reality;*** how real is Christ to us in comparison? Daniel had spent the night in the pit with the lion, untouched. WHY? He had trusted God by faith!

II. WE WITNESS THE LOYALTY OF HIS FAITH!

(Dan. 6:1-16, (note verses 10-11))

1. Here was ***loyalty amidst unfavorable circumstances.***
 - a. Daniel determined to pray as before, even though some wanted to catch him praying.
 - b. The King's decree was, *all petitions were to be made to the king*, as if he were God. (6:4-9)
 - c. David determined to worship our GOD even though death might be the judgment.
2. Here was ***loyalty midst critics, hatred, and decrees.***
 - a. Daniel's heart was fixed. (Psa. 57:7; 112:7)
 - b. His goal, or purpose in life would not be deterred by ***critics, or enemies.***
 - c. Despite those who plotted against him, or a king who would carry out his decree, Daniel would remain fast in ***not falling to idol worship.***
 - d. There was no escape short of compromise, which he would not do.
(Note: Psa. 112:7)

III. WE SEE THE GLORIOUS RESULTS OF HIS FAITH:

(6:23) "There was found no manner of hurt upon him."

No even a button was chewed off by the lions! Glory!

1. Here was **miraculous care**. (6:18-23)
 - a. God honors those who honor Him.
 - b. If you expect God to honor you, then you must first serve Him, and honor Him.
 - c. Why didn't the lions devour Daniel? Literally the *angel of the Lord, Christ, came to care for him*.
 - d. God will allow your faith to be tested.
 - e. He does not save us from testings... but through the testings and trials of life. (James 1:2-4)
 2. Here was **instructive care**. (6:13-17; 23-28)
 - a. Faith was tested, tried, and honored, and men heard of the greatness of our God.
 - b. The heathen (unsaved) of the day heard of the greatness of Daniel's God.
 - c. Daniel knew of God's care in a new way.
 3. Here was **a testimony of God's power**.
 - a. Darius **saw, knew, and was convinced that** Daniel's God (ours as well) is the **only true God**.
 - b. Then it was published in all the realm of the Medes and Persians. (vs. 25-28)
 - c. What a horrible ordeal -- but also, what a glorious sequel. . . **God is vindicated, honored, and His servant prospered**.
-

Additional Notes:

Text: Daniel, Chapter 6

How Real Is Christ To YOU?

1. Christ can, and should be the greatest reality in all of life. (Psa. 23:1; 27:1)
2. We should be more conscious of the reality of the Lord Jesus than any other person we know. (Phil. 3:10; Col. 3:27)
3. Are some professing Christians mere Judas's to whom Christ is not a personal Savior and Lord?
4. "**He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.**" -- for He came to be your all in all! (II Cor. 1:30)
5. To Daniel, God (our God) was very real, to be worshipped, to be honored, to be trusted, to be revered with all the heart and life.

What Does It Mean to Walk by Faith. . . and Not By Sight?

Four times the Word tells us that the "*just shall live by faith.*" Hebrews sets forth the walk by faith in chapter 11!

1. **Faith sings** (Psa. 40:1-4; Exod 15:1; Rev. 5:9)
2. **Faith serves**. (Heb. 11:1- 27). . . *it is by faith* -- Noah, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, etc., did exploits for God.
3. **Faith supplies**. Heb.11:32-34 tells us what all they received by faith.
4. **Faith saves** -- Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:22-28
All we have is by faith!

- > **we are supplied access to God,** Rom. 5:2
- > **we have victory over Satan and sin,** Eph. 6:16
- > **we have edification,**
- > **we have a walk with Him,** II Cor. 5:7
- > **we are preserved by Him.** I Pet. 1:5
- > **consider:** Phil. 4:19; Isa. 41:10; Jh 15:16

Daniel had stood firm and strong for His God amidst all the unsettledness of that day, through the troubles of that nation, a king's insanity, envies, plots, persecutions, and murders of his successors. Daniel stood firm like a pillar in the midst of blowing sands of four dynasties.

***Do we stand... having done all to stand... stand therefore** in the midst of trials, testings, and difficulties? (Eph. 6:11-14)*

GOD EXPECTS US TO BE FAITHFUL!

(Read, study these!)

- **God's word speaks of faithful servants:**

Lk 19:17; Neh. 7:2; Prov. 20:6; Matt. 25:21; 24:45; Lk 12:42; II Tim. 2:2

- **God honors the faithful:** III Jh. 5; Col. 4:9; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:2

Are we among the faithful?

- **God calls for our faithfulness in Christian living:** I Cor. 4:2; I Cor. 15:58;

Col. 1:23; 2:7; 3:22-25

Did you read and study the foregoing verses, did you mark them in your Bible?

We live in a world that puts emphasis on the huge, the gigantic, the colossal, the superduper, the biggest, the best. . .

God puts emphasis upon

our just being faithful, consistent, walking with HIM, living for HIM, just being available!

Make a decision, plan to be faithful, like Daniel -- write your decision here:

Memory Verse: II Timothy 2:3

Men of the Bible

“Caleb. . . The Man Who Stood ALONE Sweetly!

It takes a lot of courage to stand alone, and it takes God's grace to stand alone sweetly!

Caleb was one of the ten spies, who spied out the land, to bring back their report to the Israelites prior to entering into the land. ***They did not spie out the land to see if they could go in -- but to have knowledge of various facts prior to moving into God's promised heritage.***

No one expected them to bring back evil reports. Moses was shocked to hear the negative report of the ten. Their attitude and accepted report resulted in 40 years in the wilderness under judgment of death. (Everyone over 20 died.) Only Joshua and Caleb, who brought back good reports, were allowed by God to enter into the land.

I. LET'S TRACE THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF CALEB:

1. Numbers 13:6 -- Caleb is chosen.
2. Numbers 13:17-18 -- Caleb is sent.
3. Numbers 13:22 -- Caleb finds giants.
4. Numbers 13:23 -- Caleb returns with figs, grapes, and pomegranates.
5. Numbers 13:30 -- Caleb says, *“Let us go. . .”* as he claimed the promises of God.
6. Numbers 14:6-7 -- Caleb speaks out -- *“the Lord is with us”*, while all the people cried.
7. Numbers 14:24 -- Caleb will go in! Is this a blessing?
(It brought struggles, trials, forty years of no home, same diet, sand, funerals, long camp outs. All because of the ten who doubted God.)
Moses intercedes for God's mercy -- Num. 14:10
8. Numbers 14:36-38 -- Others die early, God sends a plague.. the balance died more normally... but all were under judgment except for Joshua and Caleb.

II. LET'S NOTE THE ACCOUNT AFTER THEY ARRIVED!

(They did finally arrive in the land promised to Israel.)

1. Josh. 14:6-15 -- Caleb reminds Joshua of his faithfulness. *“I wholly followed the Lord. . . where are those giants?”*
2. Josh. 14:12 -- *“Give me this mountain.”* He had 40 years to develop his strategy for victory; *he still had a vision.*
3. Josh. 15:13-15 -- God gave, but *Caleb had to conquer.* He attracted others; his family fought with him, (see Numbers 13:22.).

Additional NOTES:

Here Is A Tremendous Record Of A Man Who Wholly Followed the Lord!
Joshua 14

- > What a stirring record, the story of one who was determined to do God's will no matter what happened. Does this not remind us of Daniel?
- > His very name suggests one who follows -- as his name means *to be “dog like,” always at the heels of the master.*

> **He lived a “spared” life!**

1. Spared from discouragement! (Num. 14:7-9)
2. Spared from unbelief! (read and think through what is involved in Hebrews 3:7-19, 4:6-7)
3. Spared from death! (I Cor. 10:11; nearly 600,000 men of war and their wives died in those 40 years.)

> **He lived a strong life!**

1. **Josh. 14:11-12** His special strength was a gift from God.
2. Strength for warfare; to go out and to come in; to stand or to fight.
3. He had ability to stand against the giants. He had victory, just as we today must have victory over the giants of . . .
 - lust,
 - covetousness,
 - unbelief,
 - anger, greed, etc.

> **He lived a satisfied life!**

- Does Jesus really satisfy us? Are we happy in Him?
1. vs. 13.. “Joshua blessed him!” Joshua is a type of Christ, in fact it is the Old Testament form of the name, Jesus.
 2. The Lord Jesus is the ONE who ought to totally satisfy us.
 3. Caleb was blessed of the Lord.
 4. As he received material blessings. . . so we are to receive spiritual blessings. (Josh.14:13-14)
 5. He received Hebron, and the name means *“fellowship or communion”* There is a spiritual lesson in this event. (I Cor. 2:9-10)

> **He had peace!** (Jos. 14:15) *“and the land had rest from war.”*

1. Caleb entered into his inheritance.
2. His children entered into their inheritance.
3. The saved today are to enter into their *rights of inheritance in Christ.*
4. Caleb knew the **rest** of faith. . . for there is a **rest** that belongs to the people of God. (Read Hebrews 4:1-11.)

Consider:

1. What is it that we need to have personal victory over?
2. What is in our lives we have not overcome?
3. Are we willing to seek God’s grace and power for this area of defeat?
4. Josh. 15:16-19 -- Caleb shared; he solicited help and was an encourager.

III. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS?

1. ***The masses will fail;*** don’t depend on numbers.
 - a. Believers often must be unique among believers.
 - b. The multitude may be wrong, we must stand out, be 100% for God and His will and purpose.
 - c. The opinion of the majority may be in error!
2. ***Standing alone requires God’s grace.***
 - a. Don’t assume it; but accept it and believe it.
 - b. Don’t fail of the grace of God. (Heb. 12: 12-15)
3. ***Your decision to follow the Lord can often mean hardship.*** Don’t doubt that, accept it.
 - a. For Caleb it meant suffering, watching people die for 40 years, seeing nothing but sand, and death!

- b. Decisions to obey God can mean there will be battles, struggles, trials, and heartaches.
- c. Your battle need not be with God. He will never do wrong!
- d. The dedicated life requires a high price.
(Heb. 12:1-4; Matt. 16:24-25; Lk. 9:23-24; Lk. 14:33)

4. ***Zeal and spiritual strength may both increase with age!***

- a. God can ***renew*** you day by day. (II Cor. 4:16; 12:9)
- b. Caleb was not ***bitter*** when he finally entered into the promised land.
(Heb. 12:12-14)
- c. Caleb had not withered spiritually, or become indifferent, careless, cold, or proud.
- d. See Joshua 1:6, 8, 9

5. ***Courage does not exclude the need for kindness to the faltering!***

- a. Caleb was evidently kind to those who were failed, as he ***followed*** the Lord.
- b. He was bold for 40 years; kind for all those years as well. *He wholly followed the Lord!*

Jesus stood accused, beaten, persecuted, hung on a cruel cross, but was still kind... suffering alone sweetly. (I Pet. 2:19-25)

- 6. ***Every age has its own trials/*** temptations/ testings that go along with that time of life... expect it! (James 1:2-3; Rom. 5:1-5; 8:32, 28-29)

Consider these thoughts:

1. *Dad, if you are not spiritually satisfied in Christ, your children won't be either!*
2. *Are you the bread winner, but not the dispenser of the "bread of life," by sharing the Word of God with your family?*
3. *Are you a commuter, but you are unable to be the bridge between God and your family.*
4. *Do your children see in you - a spared life, a strong life, and a satisfied life?*

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:4