

**A successful pastor
who failed in family ministry?**

[Short Word Meditation (28)]

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The most cunning Satan is using subtle deception to turn love into hatred in romantic relationships.

Amnon, David's son, was so in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom, that he was deeply infatuated with her and so passionate about her that he eventually became ill with longing for Tamar.

Especially because Tamar was a virtuous virgin,

Amnon could not easily approach her, and despite his intense love, he was powerless to act (2 Samuel 13:1-2).

At this time, the person who came to Amnon was his very cunning friend Jonadab (v. 3).

When I meditate on this Scripture,

I am reminded of the serpent approaching the woman (Eve) in Genesis 3.

This is because the Bible says,

"The serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made"

(Genesis 3:1).

The most cunning Satan approached Amnon through the very cunning Jonadab when Amnon was deeply in love with and passionately infatuated with Tamar, yet unable to approach her easily and falling ill with longing.

This led Amnon to commit the foolish act (2 Samuel 13:12) of violently raping her (v. 14).

Furthermore, Satan caused Amnon's love for Tamar to turn into hatred,

making him despise her with an intensity greater than his former love (v. 15).

In this way, the most cunning Satan uses crafty deception in romantic relationships

(2 Corinthians 12:16) to lead people into sins

such as adultery and rape, and to turn love into hatred.

However, Jesus, knowing Satan's cunningness

(Ref.: Luke 20:23),

overcame the devil's temptations by resisting him with God's Word

as recorded in the Old Testament

(Matthew 4:1-11; James 4:7).

Like Jesus, we must put on the full armor of God

so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes

(Ephesians 6:11).

A successful pastor who failed in family ministry?

The elderly priest Eli heard about everything happening around him, including the rumors that his sons were seducing the young women who were helping at the entrance to the tent of meeting and sleeping with them (1 Samuel 2:22).

How would an elderly pastor feel if he heard that his children were sinning against God? Even if he might be praised for his successful ministry (church work) in the eyes of people, what about his family ministry?

Does it make sense to do well in religious life while doing poorly in family life?

Elkanah went up to Shiloh every year to worship and sacrifice to the Almighty Lord God, which suggests that he was devout in his religious life. However, he seemed to have neglected his family life.

Despite having two wives, he gave a portion of the sacrificial meat to Peninnah and her children, but he gave a double portion to Hannah, who had no children, because he loved her especially

(1 Samuel 1:2-5).

How can one claim to live a good religious life while neglecting their family life?

How important is the role of the father as the head of the family?

Tamar, who had been raped by her half-brother Amnon, lived desolately in her brother Absalom's house.

Absalom hated Amnon for disgracing his sister Tamar and did not speak to him at all

(2 Samuel 13:20, 22).

Two years later (v. 23), Absalom killed Amnon (v. 29).

During those two years,

how much did Absalom sharpen the sword of revenge, hating Amnon for violating his sister?

Meanwhile, David, their father, heard about everything

Amnon had done to Tamar and "was very angry" (v. 21).

However, the Bible does not mention that David disciplined or rebuked his foolish son Amnon out of love.

Nor does it mention that David went to his daughter Tamar, who was living desolately in Absalom's house, to comfort her.

Perhaps David was so busy with his duties as the king of Israel that he had no time for his family responsibilities.

Let us fulfill our responsibility to take care of our families.

Boaz explained to Ruth what the one issue was and swore to her in the name of God.

The issue was that while it was true Boaz was a close relative with the responsibility to take care of Ruth, there was an even closer relative than him.

Boaz said that if this closer relative was willing to marry Ruth, that would be good.

But if he refused, Boaz swore by the living God that he would take on the responsibility himself.

He then told Ruth, "Don't worry about a thing" (Judges 3:12-13).

Meditating on this passage,

I am once again challenged to fulfill the responsibility of taking care of my family.

Despite any issues that might arise in fulfilling this responsibility,

I pray to be devoted and faithfully committed in the presence of God and my family.

A family famine?

For Naomi, the famine meant more than just leaving her homeland and moving to Moab.

She also lost her husband, Elimelech, and her two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, leaving her all alone (Ruth 1:1-5).

Thus, the famine for Naomi was a family famine.

This family famine was not just about losing money, but also about losing beloved family members.

Loving an adulterous spouse ...?

When thinking about the husband who tried to persuade his wife,
who had committed adultery and fled,
to come back and stay with him at her parents' house
(Judges 19:1-3),

I recalled the word of God to the prophet Hosea:

"Go, show your love to your wife again,
though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress.
Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites,
though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes"
(Hosea 3:1).

These two husbands loved their adulterous wives.

Trying to cover up the sin of adultery ...

King David, in his attempt to cover up his adultery,
ultimately committed the intentional sin of murder
by having Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, killed
(2 Samuel 11:14-17).

Was David trying to cover up his adultery to that extent,
or did he desire Bathsheba to that extent?

James 1:15 comes to mind:

"Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin;
and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

This is the first thought that suddenly occurred to me.

It's a sudden thought.

Why did a young lion suddenly roar and rush at Samson when he and his parents were traveling down to Timnah and reached the vineyards of Timnah?

(Judges 14:5)

Could it be that God intended to prevent Samson from marrying a Philistine woman by sending the lion?

At least, could it be that God intended to show Samson that marrying a Philistine woman was not part of His direct will?

Forced marriage?

We should not force our children to marry like King Saul (Ref.: 1 Samuel 25:44).

Rebellion and stubborn stubbornness

Disobeying God's commands is like the sin of divination, and stubborn stubbornness is no different from idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23).

We need rebuke, not encouragement!

Those who are used as instruments of crime need rebuke, not encouragement (Ref.: 2 Samuel 11:25; Proverbs 27:5).

God will never abandon us.

Because God is pleased to have us as His children,
He will never abandon us for His great name
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:22).

If we think computationally, we will think that the losses are many more and greater than the gains.

Naomi (meaning "my delight") returned to her hometown
of Bethlehem with her daughter-in-law Ruth.

There, she told the women, "Don't call me Naomi.

Call me Mara (meaning 'bitter'),

because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.

I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.

Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me;

the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me"

(Ruth 1:19-21).

The decision to leave Judah due to the famine and go to Moab
resulted in losing everything they had when they left
and returning empty-handed to their homeland.

As a result, Naomi believed that God had abandoned her and afflicted her.

However, despite losing much (even her husband and two sons),

she gained one daughter-in-law, Ruth. Calculatingly,

one might think that the losses outweighed the gains.

But through the eyes of faith, this single woman, Ruth, remarried Boaz

and bore Obed, the father of Jesse, who was the father of king David (4:17).

And through King David, Jesus the Messiah came (Matthew 1:1-16).

Are we continuing to abandon God and serve other gods?

Could it be that, after believing in Jesus through God's grace,
we continue to forsake God and serve other gods?

(Ref.: 1 Samuel 8:8)

When we see a loved one suffering ...

Have we ever cried so loudly that we had no strength to cry
when we saw a loved one suffering?

(Ref.: 1 Samuel 30:1-4)

A mother-in-law who wants her widowed daughter-in-law to have a happy family again?

Naomi, the widowed mother-in-law who desired to see her daughter-in-law Ruth
find happiness and establish a new home after the death of her son,
actively intervened for Ruth's remarriage.

We witness Naomi's proactive involvement and detailed conversation with Ruth
as she drives forward Ruth's remarriage in Ruth chapter 3.

And Ruth, while engaging in conversation with her mother-in-law Naomi about her remarriage,
demonstrates obedience to her mother-in-law's words (Ruth 3).

Would many mothers-in-law actively push for
and be involved in the remarriage of their widowed daughter-in-law,
who was the wife of their deceased son?

How can we stop our children from doing evil?

Despite God's warning to Eli the priest that his family would be judged forever because of the evil deeds his sons were committing,

Eli did not intervene to stop his sons from continuing their cursed actions (1 Samuel 3:13).

If our children were persisting in deeds that would bring them under a curse, how can we intervene to stop their wrongdoing?

The blessings of the wilderness

God drove David out of the palace into the wilderness (1 Samuel 15:23).

The God of love is the one who, when we sin, takes us to the wilderness, speaks gently to us, and comforts us (Hosea 2:14).

It is far better to hear God's voice and obey Him in the wilderness, where everything is lacking, than to sin against God in the palace where everything is abundant.

For church leaders ...

For church leaders, it is a blessing to have people whose hearts are touched by God.

However, he may also have people who look down on him

(Ref.: 1 Samuel 10:26-27).

This is the love of a precious friend!

Although Saul, the father of Jonathan, was jealous of David (1 Samuel 18:9), and fearful of him (v. 12), and even sought to kill him (vv. 10, 17-21), Jonathan, who deeply loved David and cherished him greatly (vv. 1, 3), tried to save him. Jonathan warned David, saying, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there" (v. 2). Not only that, but Jonathan also praised David to his father Saul, saying, "Do not sin against your servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?" (vv. 4-5).

When I meditate on this passage:

(1) Jonathan disobeyed his father's command (v. 1).

I am reminded of the biblical instruction to obey our parents but to do so in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1).

(2) Jonathan helped David in his time of need.

True friendship shines brightest in times of crisis.

(3) It's remarkable that Jonathan praised David to his father Saul, who was seeking to kill David out of murderous jealousy.

It would have taken immense love and courage to do so.

In this way, a true friend, motivated by genuine love, lays down their life (prepared for the consequences) to rescue their friend from danger.

It's undeniable evidence of precious friendship.

**As a result, there will be conflict, strife,
betrayal, and division in the church.**

Appointing church leaders rashly is never a righteous act,
nor is it right to do so with all church members.

As a result, there will be conflict, discord, betrayal,
and division in the church

(Ref.: Judges 9:16, 23).

What will happen to that church?

If there were an elder who bought a pastor, a servant of God,
with his own money and appointed him as his own pastor in the Lord's church,
and then said, 'Now God will bless me,' what would happen to that church?

(Ref.: Judges 17:10-13)

There will definitely be consequences for that disobedience.

If we rebel and disobey God's commands,
there will be consequences for that disobedience

(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:15).

Can you remarry that murderer?

The widow Bathsheba became David's wife
without any knowledge that King David had killed her husband Uriah
(2 Samuel 11:27).

Can we remarry our spouse's murderer,
even though we know he did so intentionally?

There may be a price to pay for that news.

Some people may think that they have given us “good news,”
but that “good news” may be “bad news” for us.
Therefore, that person may have something to pay for the news he gave us
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 4:10).

As promised, God ...

When God made a covenant with David,
He promised to be with him wherever he went, to destroy all his enemies before him,
and to make his name as famous as the greatest names in the world
(1 Samuel 7:9).

True to this promise, God granted David victory wherever he went (vv. 8:6, 14)
and made his name even more renowned (v. 13).

This aligns with Numbers 23:19 in the Modern Korean Bible, which states:

"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind.
Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"

That power is God!

Unlike others, we who believe in Jesus have power.

We want those who do not believe in Jesus to know what that power is for us.

That power is none other than God

(Ref.: Judges 16:5-6; Psalms 18:1).

However, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross.

Saul, who tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him (1 Samuel 18:11, 19:10), also threw a spear at his own son Jonathan in an attempt to kill him (20:33).

However, neither David nor Jonathan died.

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross.

It was God the Father who crucified Jesus Christ on the cross.

The reason was to give us salvation (eternal life).

There is absolutely no reason for that?

King Saul, without any justified reason, sought to kill innocent David, intending to commit a crime (1 Samuel 19:5).

However, God the Father, who is without sin and does not even know sin, took our sins upon Himself through Christ.

The purpose was to make us righteous before God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Is this proof that we are now distant from God and closer to this world?

Absalom only killed Amnon, but when David heard the rumor that Absalom had killed all the king's sons and left none alive, he immediately stood up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground (2 Samuel 13:28-31).

If our ears are more attuned to false rumors of this world or to the words of people pleasing to our ears than to the factual Word of God (2 Timothy 4:3), then it suggests that we are drifting away from God and getting closer to this world.

If we just humbly obey with faith ...

When God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the king of Israel, He didn't specify which son it would be but simply said, "I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate" (1 Samuel 16:1, 3).

After that, when Samuel was looking at Jesse's sons one by one, God said to him, "This is the one; anoint him" about David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons (1 Samuel 16:6-12).

When pondering on this, we might wonder why God doesn't reveal everything explicitly beforehand and instead chooses to reveal things specifically later on. However, rather than harboring such doubts, we should humbly trust and obey God's Word with faith. In doing so, we receive the lesson that we must believe that God will reveal His will in His time and His way, according to His purposes.

Why are prayers not answered?

We pray to God, but I think the reason God does not answer our prayers and is silent may be because we have unrepented sins
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 14:37-38).

I have a heart to pray.

Since the Lord said that He would build His church,
I was motivated to pray for the church
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:27; Matthew 16:18)

A praying woman or a bad woman?

What if the pastor makes the praying woman feel like a bad woman...?
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:13-16)

We must remember.

We must remember all the good things God has done
for our parents' generation and our generation of believers in Jesus
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:7).

We must act according to the opportunity.

God is with us, so we must act according to opportunity
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 10:7).

Even people like me are like the jawbone of a donkey.

Just as Samson killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey
(Judges 15:15-16), I pray that the Lord will also use humble people like me
to proclaim the gospel and the word of Jesus Christ to a thousand souls.

Even if I die ...

Even if I die, please raise up my children as your servants
and live for Jesus, the gospel, and the kingdom of God
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:12; Mark 8:35).

‘Bad woman’?

What if I feel like my pastor thinks I'm a bad woman ...?
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:16)

When a husband seems to not understand his wife's feelings ...

When Hannah went to the tabernacle to pray, weep, and cry out to God
because her heart was troubled, her husband Elkanah was not with her
(1 Samuel 1:9-10).

When a husband seems to not understand his wife's feelings,
she may have no choice but to approach God the Father alone,
pouring out her heart in tears, seeking comfort and solace.

‘You are not the one who will build my temple.’

When God allowed David to settle in his palace and live in peace,
David desired to build a temple for God (2 Samuel 7:1-5).
However, God spoke to David through the prophet Nathan, saying,
‘You are not the one who will build my temple’ (v. 5).
Instead, God promised to establish David's son as king and said,
‘He is the one who will build a house for my Name (vv. 12-13).
If it is not Your will to accomplish Your purpose through me but through my son,
I pray that You will not do as I wish but as You will
(Matthew 26:39).

‘Be faithful to your wife and love her alone.’

‘One day’, Samson went down to Timnah, where he saw a Philistine woman
and told his parents that he wanted to marry her (Judges 14:1-2).
Then, ‘one day’, Samson went to Gaza and saw a prostitute there,
entering her room (16:1).
‘Afterward,’ Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah,
who lived in the Valley of Sorek (v. 4).
Reflecting on these passages,
I think Samson, as a judge, had a problem with women.
I believe that among the vulnerabilities of our church leaders,
the issue of women could certainly be significant.
Proverbs 5:15-21 in the Modern Korean Bible says:
"Be faithful to your own wife, and give your love only to her.
Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress?
Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?
For your ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all your paths.
The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast.
For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly."

A mother-in-law who is too old to remarry?

Naomi, the mother-in-law who was too old to remarry,
wanted her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to remarry
and create a happy family with their husbands,
even if she herself could live without a husband
(Ruth 1:9, 12).

She must be a mother-in-law who cares for
her daughter-in-law's happiness.

Don't be too boastful.

Proud people should not boast too much.
Arrogant people should not be too conceited.
God is the One who knows everything.
He will judge our actions
(1 Samuel 2:3).

Even if we are so distressed that we are on the verge of death ...

Even if we are so distressed that we are on the verge of death,
we should not reveal everything
(Ref.: Judges 16:17).

A person who is addicted to being exalted can look with murderous jealousy at someone who is exalted more than he does.

After sinning against God, King Saul still wanted to be honored in front of Israel's leaders and all the people (1 Samuel 15:30).

When the Israelite army returned victorious after David killed the Philistine commander Goliath, women from all the towns of Israel came out to celebrate, singing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (18:6-9).

How displeased Saul must have been that from that time on, he viewed David with murderous jealousy.

People who love to be honored in front of others can easily become jealous when someone else receives more honor than they do.

We should prefer to be honored by God rather than by people.

To achieve this, we must humble ourselves like Jesus, considering others better than ourselves, abandoning all our privileges, and living a life of serving our neighbors with the heart of a servant (Matthew 20:28; Philippians 2:3-8).

When we do this, God will exalt us in His time and in His way (Ref.: Philippians 2:9-11).

Whose protection ...?

It is much better to be protected by God than by our parents living in our hometown (Ref.: Ruth 2:11-12).

When everyone refuses to help

When we ask for help from people around us,
but they all refuse to help us, that is when God helps us
and makes us victorious
(Ref.: Judges 12:2-3).

It was not God's righteous will for David to die, but Saul's will.

Saul, in a fit of rage, shouted at his son Jonathan,
"You crazy fool! Do you think I don't know that you have chosen the son of Jesse,
to your own shame and to the shame of your mother?
As long as that fellow lives, you will never be king.
Now, go and bring him to me, for he must die!"
(1 Samuel 20:30-31).

Reflecting on this passage:

- (1) Saul's anger did not accomplish God's righteous purpose (James 1:20).
Instead, Saul's anger was cruel and destructive (Proverbs 27:4).
However, Saul's anger towards Jonathan was nothing compared to his jealousy towards David
(1 Samuel 20:4; cf. 1 Samuel 18:9).
- (2) The madman was not Jonathan but his father, Saul.
- (3) The one who should have felt ashamed was not Jonathan but his father, Saul.
- (4) Jonathan's choice to side with his friend David over his father Saul was the right choice.
- (5) God had already rejected Saul (1 Samuel 15:23) and chosen David to be king
(1 Samuel 16:12), but Saul wanted his son Jonathan to be king.
- (6) David's death was Saul's will, not God's righteous will.
- (7) In the end, it was Saul who died, not David (1 Samuel 31:5).

We should not insult someone who acts as a fence for us.

Although Nabal was a very wealthy man,
he was rough, insolent, stubborn, and had a bad temper
(1 Samuel 25:2).

He insulted David's men, who had been very good to his shepherds
and protected them night and day (vv. 14-15).

In the family, a father seems to play the role of a wall for his children.
Such a father should not be scorned by his children.

He gave us another child to take his place.

God blessed Elkanah and Hannah and gave them another child to replace Samuel,
whom they dedicated to God (1 Samuel 2:20-21).

God blessed my wife and I with three children (Dillon, Yeri, and Karis)
to replace Jooyoung who passed away.

Misunderstandings must be resolved through dialogue.

We need to have an honest conversation with the pastor
who misunderstands us in order to resolve the misunderstanding
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:12-18).

Our ever-changing love vs. the Lord's unchanging love

Just as Amnon's love for Tamar suddenly turned into an even greater hatred than the love he had for her (2 Samuel 13:15), our love for our neighbors can also frequently change into hatred. However, the Lord's love for us is unchanging.

Here are the lyrics to the first verse of hymn, 'The Unchanging Love of the Lord':
'The unchanging love of the Lord and the holy merit of His blood, let us all praise together until we meet the Lord.'

Coming back?

For Naomi, the bountiful harvest meant that God had blessed her homeland, prompting her to leave Moab and return to the land of Judah (Ruth 1:6-7).

In other words, for Naomi, bountiful harvest meant returning home. May God bless us all with a bountiful harvest, bringing us back to the Lord.

We must fear ... (1)

We must fear committing the sin of murder by hating in our hearts God's anointed servants (Ref.: 2 Samuel 1:14, 16; 1 John 3:15).

We must fear ... (2)

We should be afraid to help those who go against God's will
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 10:12, 19).

Lessons from Ruth

Though the land of Judah was familiar to Naomi, for her foreign daughter-in-law Ruth, it was an unfamiliar country. Ruth asked for her mother-in-law's permission and went out to glean in the fields, hoping to find favor with someone who might be kind to her. Ruth then followed the harvesters and picked up the leftover grains, and it "happened" to be in the field of Boaz, a prominent man from the clan of her deceased father-in-law, Elimelech (Ruth 2:1-3, Modern Korean Bible). As I meditate on this passage, several thoughts come to mind:

- (1) It seems that daughter-in-law Ruth always engaged in conversation and actions with her mother-in-law Naomi.
- (2) Ruth's reason for coming to work in the foreign land seems to have been to provide for the elderly Naomi (4:15).
- (3) Although the Bible describes Ruth's chosen field as happening to be one belonging to Boaz, a relative of her deceased father-in-law Elimelech, from a human perspective it may seem like a coincidence, but in the sovereignty of God's providence, we believe that God led Ruth to Boaz's field.
- (4) Ruth went out seeking favor from someone, but ultimately she found favor with Boaz (2:10).

The lessons we learn from these four meditations are:

- (1) We need to engage in frequent conversations with our parents.
- (2) We should take good care of our elderly parents.
- (3) We should trust in God's providence.
- (4) God extends His grace to us through individuals like Boaz.

Ruth is an example as a daughter-in-law.

Despite her husband's death, Ruth continued to love her mother-in-law, abandoned her parents' hometown, came to the unfamiliar land of Judah, lived with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and took good care of her, setting an example as a daughter-in-law.

(Ruth 2:11, 4:15).

Her heart was so troubled that she was pouring out her feelings to God, but a pastor...

A female believer who could not drink came to the chapel and was so distressed that she was confiding her feelings to God. But a pastor, thinking that the female believer was drunk, asked her, "How long do you plan on being a drunkard?" What if he scolds her, "Stop drinking right now!" (Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:13-15)

A rude husband, a wise wife?

When a crisis arises due to a husband like Nabal who is so rude that he cannot even talk to her at home, a wise wife like Abigail must quickly think about how to handle this crisis and take action (Ref.: 1 Samuel 25:17).

If we are innocent like David ...

David did not sin against King Saul (1 Samuel 24:11).

He was innocent. So, David believed that God would be the judge and judge between him and King Saul.

He would look into his situation and resolve his injustice, and not only deliver him from King Saul's hand, but also take revenge on King Saul for him.

He did not harm King Saul with his own hands (vv. 12, 15).

If we are innocent, like David, we must pray to God, the Judge, to separate out the wrongdoers between us and the person who is trying to harm us, to examine our circumstances, to resolve our injustice, and to save us from the person who is trying to harm us.

If we find favor with God ...

Even if we are driven away from God's purpose by disobeying His word and sinning, if we find favor with God, He will eventually bring us back and give us a second chance to obey His word (Ref.: 1 Samuel 15:25; Jonah 2:4; 3:1-4).

If we ignore God's warning and remain stubborn ...

If we ignore God's warning and continue to stubbornly persist, we will experience bitterness in life as a result (Ref.: 1 Samuel 8:11-19; Ruth 1:20).

If God has moved the other person's heart against us ...

If God has incited the heart of our adversary against us,
surely there is also God's good, pleasing, and perfect will in it
(1 Samuel 26:19; Romans 12:2).

However, if our adversary's opposition
is merely a result of human schemes
(1 Samuel 26:19),
God will judge between us and our adversary,
and God will take vengeance on our behalf
(1 Samuel 24:12).

We must be wary of people whose words and motives are different.

General Joab told King David that General Abner had come to Hebron
to deceive him and to observe all his movements,
but David knew that Joab's real motive was
because he believed Abner had killed his brother Asahel in the battle of Gibeon
(2 Samuel 3:25, 30).

Leaders should be wary of individuals among their followers
whose words and intentions are not aligned, like Joab.

There may be more nonsense than we think.

King Saul had solemnly declared,
"Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes,
before I have avenged myself on my enemies,"
causing the Israelites to be weary and famished, unable to eat anything.
However, Saul's son Jonathan had not heard his father's order
and, dipping the end of his staff into a honeycomb, he ate some honey.
Immediately his energy was restored.
Someone informed Jonathan that Saul had strictly forbidden
anyone from eating, under penalty of a curse,
and that everyone was weary and famished as a result.
Jonathan responded, "That's absurd! Such a command is only harming us.
Look at how much energy I've regained from eating this honey.
If the people had been able to freely eat the plunder they took from the enemy,
wouldn't we have been able to defeat them even more?"
(1 Samuel 14:24-30).

When Jonathan declared that his father King Saul's command was absurd,
it was because he knew that the command
would only harm him and the people of Israel.
In the war against the Philistines,
the Israelites were obeying King Saul's command,
which left them unable to eat and famished.
Jonathan considered this command to be truly absurd.
We should discern whether something is sensible
or absurd using the wisdom provided by God.
If something sounds absurd, we should not heed it.

Sometimes we need to take action rather than just say something.

A wise wife like Abigail sometimes has to take action instead of telling her husband in order to avoid a family crisis caused by a husband like Nabal, who is a spoiled person (Ref.: 1 Samuel 25:19).

She must become a mother-in-law who feels even more heartbroken because of her daughter-in-law's wounds.

Naomi told her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, that her heart ached even more because God had punished her for hurting them (Ruth 1:13).

It must be her mother-in-law whose heart breaks even more for the hurt of her own daughter-in-law.

For her daughter-in-law's happiness

Naomi urged her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to their families as they journeyed back to Naomi's homeland, Judah.

The reason was that Naomi wanted them to go back to their own families and remarry, hoping they would find happiness in new marriages since they had served their husbands and Naomi faithfully.

A widowed mother-in-law should bless and send off her daughters-in-law for their happiness when they return to their families in the Lord.

They reveal their foolishness to everyone.

The foolish Amnon did not know
that it was a greater sin to hate Tamar
and send her away with hatred
than to love her so much and humiliate her
(2 Samuel 13:15-16).

A fool's ignorance reveals his foolishness to everyone
(Ecclesiastes 10:3).

Yet a fool does not know his shame
(Ref.: Zephaniah 3:5).

In order for everything to go smoothly ...

In order for everything to go smoothly,
we must follow God,
serve Him with fear, and obey His commands
without disobeying them
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:14).

In a word, obeying God's commands is
the secret to everything going smoothly for us.

Lessons for pastors and believers

Priest Eli told Samuel to tell everything God had said to him without hiding anything. Although Samuel was afraid to tell the priest Eli what he had heard from God, he did not hide anything and told everything to the priest Eli. Then priest Eli said, "It is the will of the Lord, and he will do as he pleases" (1 Samuel 3:15-18).

When meditating on this passage:

- (1) The pastors should not hide any word received from God but faithfully convey everything to the congregation.
- (2) Those who hear the word should adopt an attitude of submission, acknowledging that "whatever the Lord says, we will do" (v. 18) and embracing the mindset of "whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God" (Jeremiah 42:6) when humbly receiving God's word conveyed through His servants.

Pastors must be very wary of covetousness.

Pastors must be very wary of covetousness.

And they should not value their children more than God
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:29).

The pastor ...

Pastors should not sin against God by ceasing to pray for the flock of God that God has temporarily entrusted to them, but should continue to teach them what is good and right
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:23).

A person secretly plotting with impure intentions?

When someone is secretly plotting schemes with impure intentions behind our backs, gradually increasing their influence and gathering more followers, we should pray to God for protection from their schemes and plead that their plots do not succeed (Ref.: 1 Samuel 15:10-12; Psalms 21:11; 64:2).

A daughter-in-law who can't be stopped?

Among Naomi's two daughters-in-law, Orpah bid her mother-in-law farewell and returned to her own people (the Moabites) and her gods. However, Ruth refused to leave her mother-in-law's side and expressed her desire to accompany Naomi to the land of Judah, where she intended to live. Ruth declared that Naomi's people would be her people and Naomi's God would be her God. Furthermore, Ruth said to Naomi, "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." Naomi, seeing Ruth's firm resolve to accompany her, could no longer dissuade her (Ruth 1:14-18).

When reflecting on this passage, the phrase "love is as strong as death" from Song of Songs 8:6 comes to mind. In essence, Ruth is an unstoppable daughter-in-law who loves her mother-in-law Naomi deeply. I consider a mother-in-law blessed to have such a daughter-in-law.

We must not follow useless false gods!

We must not follow useless false gods who cannot help us or save us
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:21).

Rather than receiving help from useless people, we should receive the helpful help of God.

Not only did the men of Keilah help King Saul (1 Samuel 23:12),
but also the men of Ziph aided Saul in his attempt to kill David.
They went to Saul and informed him of David's whereabouts,
offering to deliver him if Saul would come down to their territory (vv. 19-20).
Despite Saul's efforts with various people to find David each day,
God did not allow Saul to capture him (v. 14).
Although King Saul declared, "I will surely find David,
even if I have to search every inch of this land" (v. 23),
God intervened to ensure that Saul could not find David.
We should seek the helpful assistance of God
rather than relying on the futile help of others.
This sentiment is echoed in Psalms 121 of the Modern Korean Bible:
"I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber.
The One who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

A foolish person repeats his foolish actions.

Foolish King Saul, after confessing his wrongdoing to David and saying,
"Today you have spared my life; I will not try to harm you again,"
foolishly committed another grave mistake
(1 Samuel 26:21).

It's like Proverbs 26:11 says,
"As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly."

A fool finds pleasure in doing evil, but ...

Abigail didn't say anything to Nabal about meeting David
after hosting a big feast and getting drunk.

But when Nabal woke up the next morning and mentioned the incident with David,
suddenly he was struck with a heart attack, and his body became as stiff as a stone.
He lay paralyzed for about ten days before dying, as God had struck him
(1 Samuel 25:36-37).

Despite the seriousness of the matter of meeting David,
Abigail, the wise wife, didn't say anything to her drunken husband Nabal
until the next morning when he sobered up.

"A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes,
but a person of understanding delights in wisdom"
(Proverbs 10:23).

"Do not speak to fools, for they will scorn your prudent words" (23:9).

"Walk with the wise and become wise,
for a companion of fools suffers harm" (13:20).

Without faith we cannot obey God's Word!

God's work is fascinating. The reason being, Saul, the king, clearly sought to kill David.

Thus, David, fearing Saul, left the town of Nob in the territory of Benjamin and went to Achish, the king of Gath (1 Samuel 21:1, 10).

From there, he fled to the cave of Adullam (22:1).

Departing from there, he went to Moab's Mizpah

and pleaded with the king of Moab to allow his parents to stay under the king's protection until he knew what God would do for him (vv. 3-4).

He received permission and sought refuge in the stronghold (v. 4).

One day, through the prophet Gad, God instructed David to leave the stronghold and go into the land of Judah (v. 5).

The reason this fact is intriguing is that when David followed the prophet Gad's instruction to enter the land of Judah, it was akin to inviting Saul, who sought to kill him, to come and capture him.

However, upon hearing that the Philistines were attacking Keilah, an important city in Judah, and plundering the newly harvested grain,

David asked God, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" (23:1-2).

God responded, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah" (vv. 1-2).

When David's men expressed fear about facing the Philistine army while they were already in Judah, David inquired of the Lord again.

Once more, God assured David, saying, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand" (v. 4).

When I reflect on this passage, I believe that from David's perspective, obedience to God's word was impossible without faith.

If David had relied on his own understanding (Proverbs 3:5), he would not have obeyed God's command to go down to Keilah.

This is because there was a high probability that Saul, who sought to capture and kill him, would have caught him in Keilah.

In reality, when Saul heard that David had gone to Keilah, he exclaimed, "God has delivered him into my hands, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars" (v. 7).

Therefore, Saul mobilized all his forces and planned to go down to Keilah

to besiege David and his men (v. 8).

Despite this situation, David wholeheartedly trusted in God (Proverbs 3:5) and obeyed God's word by going to Keilah, where he defeated the Philistine army and saved the people of Keilah (1 Samuel 23:5).

The lesson we learn here is that if we do not trust in God wholeheartedly and rely on our own understanding, we will never be able to obey God's word.

Furthermore, when we trust in God and obey His word, people around us, like Saul, who lack faith and rely on their own understanding, may have futile thoughts about God's guidance

(Saul thought that God had delivered David into his hands)

and wrong convictions (Saul was convinced that David was trapped in Keilah).

When David trusted in God wholeheartedly and obeyed God's word in faith, his fearful followers, who were initially hesitant, followed him to Keilah and fought against the Philistine army.

Seeing this, I believe they also fully trusted, relied on, and followed David, their leader, who trusted in God wholeheartedly.

This teaches us that leaders should follow God in faith, and those who follow leaders should follow them in faith as well.

We must be transformed rather than be deteriorated.

Saul, who once considered himself insignificant, became distorted.

After disobeying God's command and committing sin, he asked Samuel, "Please honor me now before the leaders of my people and before Israel by coming out publicly and affirming that I have acted honorably" (1 Samuel 15:17, 30).

In short, Saul deteriorated. The humble became proud.

The proud should continue to be humble, not the other way around.

I pray that we do not live by sight, but by faith.

King Saul waited for Samuel as instructed for seven days,
but as his men began to scatter due to fear of the approaching Philistine army,
Saul, feeling increasingly anxious, took matters into his own hands.
Unable to wait any longer, he offered the burnt offering
and the fellowship offering himself by setting them on fire.
However, just as he finished the sacrifice, Samuel arrived (1 Samuel 13:7-10).
Saul's excuse to Samuel was: "When I saw that my men were scattering,
and that you did not come at the set time,
and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikmash,
I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal,
and I have not sought the Lord's favor.'
So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering" (vv. 11-12).
When reflecting on this, we learn the lesson
that if we live by sight and not by faith, we cannot wait (Ref.: 2 Corinthians 5:7).
If King Saul had lived by faith, he would have waited for Samuel to arrive as Samuel had instructed.
However, King Saul acted based on what he saw.
What he saw was the mighty Philistine army coming up to wage war against Israel,
their forces numbering like the sand on the seashore,
with 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen (v. 5).
Seeing the overwhelming enemy forces, the Israelites lost all courage;
they scattered, hiding in caves, thickets, rocks, pits, and cisterns.
Some even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.
The sight of the trembling Israelites scattering
one by one, two by two, was terrifying (vv. 6-8).
So King Saul, unable to wait any longer for Samuel, acted foolishly.
In other words, he disobeyed God's command as a king (v. 13).
I think this is not unlike our own behavior.
Many times, we disobey God's word because, like King Saul, we act based on what we see.
We often experience situations where things seem to work out whenever we act
according to what we see, instead of patiently waiting in faith for just a little longer.
I experienced this again this morning.

God uses insignificant people

God chose Saul to be the king of Israel
when Saul himself considered himself insignificant
(1 Samuel 15:17; see also 9:21).
God also raised up Gideon,
whom He described as "the least in my family"
(Judges 6:15), to be a judge and use him as an instrument.
Furthermore, God appointed Paul (Saul), who said of himself,
"I am the least of the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:9),
and "the least of all the saints" (Ephesians 3:8; see also 2 Corinthians 12:11),
to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:8),
to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
In this way, God chooses and uses seemingly insignificant people
(Acts 4:13) as His instruments (1 Corinthians 1:28) to fulfill His purposes.

If we start to think of ourselves as significant after considering ourselves insignificant,

Before Saul became king, he said to the prophet Samuel,
"I am from the smallest tribe of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin,
and my family is the least important among all the families of the tribe.
Why are you saying such things to me?" (1 Samuel 9:21)
Interestingly, David also said to King Saul,
"I am from an insignificant family in my father Jesse's house" (18:18).
It reminds me of how God chooses those whom the world and even themselves
consider insignificant to be His instruments (1 Corinthians 1:28).
However, if we start to think of ourselves
as significant after considering ourselves insignificant,
we will no longer be used as instruments of the Lord
but as instruments of people.

“Rock of Escape” and “Rocks of the Wild Goats”

At the place called “Rock of Escape” (“Sela Hammahlekoth”), where King Saul and his army were closing in to capture David, God rescued David (1 Samuel 23:26-28).

In the place with the “Rocks of the Wild Goats,” God delivered King Saul into David’s hands (24:4, 9, 18), but David only cut off a corner of Saul’s robe and did not kill him.

This was because David knew that harming the king chosen and anointed by God was forbidden by God (24:6, 9), and also because he cared for Saul (24:9).

Reflecting on David’s care even for an enemy trying to harm him, I thought of how God, who loves us even when we are His enemies (Romans 5:10), gave His only Son for us (John 3:16).

Hence, it seems that Jesus told us to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44, NIV).

Dissatisfaction, complaint, incitement, betrayal, opposition, removal

When dissatisfaction accumulates regarding a wrongly appointed church leader, one of the complaining congregation members may rise up, incite the others, and betray and oppose that church leader.

The purpose of this opposition is to remove the church leader (Ref.: Judges 9:29, 31).

**It is better to obey than to disobey,
but what matters is whose orders we obey.**

Through the prophet Samuel, God commanded King Saul,
“When my people came out of Egypt, the Amalekites opposed them on the way,
so I have decided to punish them.

Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy them—
men, women, children, infants, cattle,
sheep, camels, and donkeys” (1 Samuel 15:2-3).

However, King Saul disobeyed God's command (v. 10).

Meanwhile, Doeg the Edomite,
who was Saul's chief shepherd (21:7),
killed 85 priests who wore the ephod after King Saul ordered him
to kill Ahimelech and his relatives,
who were the priests of the Lord (22:17-18).

Then he went to the town of the priests, Nob, by the king's command
and killed all the men, women, children, and infants,
as well as oxen, donkeys, and sheep” (v. 19).

While King Saul disobeyed God's righteous command,
Doeg obeyed King Saul's wrongful command.

Obedience is better than disobedience,
but what is important is whose command you are obeying.

Is God allowing marriage with unbelievers?

Within God's plan, He allowed Samson to marry a Philistine woman to seek an opportunity to strike against the Philistines who were ruling over Israel (Judges 14:1-4).

Here we need to understand theologically that there are two aspects to God's will: God's "directive will" and God's "permissive will."

For example, as a Nazirite dedicated to God, Samson marrying a Philistine woman who did not believe in God was never God's directive will. I

n other words, God's directive will for Samson was not to marry a foreign woman.

However, Samson disobeyed this will and married the Philistine woman.

This is an example of God's permissive will.

Here, saying that God allowed it means that

Samson was able to marry the Philistine woman

despite disobeying God's directive will and his parents' strong opposition because God permitted it.

The purpose of God allowing this marriage was to strike against the Philistines.

In other words, God allowed Samson to marry the Philistine woman he desired to use this marriage as a mean to judge the Philistines and save Israel.

Even though my husband can't see my pain ...

Even though my husband cannot see my pain,
the omniscient God sees and remembers my pain, hears my cries,
and will accomplish God's will in God's time and in God's way
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1 :11).

Although foolish Nabal repaid David's goodness with evil ...

Although foolish Nabal repaid David's good with evil (1 Samuel 25:21),
I think God gave wise Abigail as a gift to David (Ref.: Proverbs 19:14).

Although people sometimes lie or change their minds ...

Although people sometimes lie or change their minds,
God, our glory, never lies or changes his mind
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 15:29).

Even if people treat me like a fool ...

Because God chose David to be the leader of His people Israel,
David said to his wife Michal, who despised him in her heart
and mocked him with her words:
“I will continue to dance before the Lord to please Him.
I am willing to look even more foolish than this”
(2 Samuel 6:16, 20, 21-22).
Even if people treat me like a fool,
I will continue to do what pleases the Lord.

A person who steals people's hearts

We must be wary of those who are stealing the hearts
of those around us behind our backs.

The reason is that he may form his own group to oppose us
(2 Samuel 15:6).

Human schemes cannot overcome God's wisdom!

Although King Saul plotted to kill David, God was with David,
enabling him to act more wisely than all of Saul's servants.

As a result, David's name became highly esteemed
(1 Samuel 18:17-25, 28, 30).

Human schemes cannot surpass God's wisdom!

A lovely and beautiful couple ...

A loving and beautiful husband and wife stay together
during life and do not leave each other even until death
(Reference: 2 Samuel 1:23).

The feelings of a parent desperately praying to God to save their beloved child

The feelings of parents who desperately pray to God to save their beloved child who is seriously ill may be such that they refuse comfort from anyone (Ref.: 2 Samuel 12:15-17; Psalms 77:2).

I pray that my dear friend will believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

Jonathan listened to his covenant with his brother David and honored his request. Of course, the reason was his deep love for David, as he loved him as his own life. And Jonathan planned to inform David immediately if he discovered that his father Saul was plotting to kill David, so that David could escape.

In short, Jonathan wanted to rescue David, whom he loved, from the hands of his father, Saul (1 Samuel 20:8-12).

I aspire to be like Jonathan, who listens to the requests of his beloved friends.

I want to be like Jonathan, who loves his friends as his own life.

I pray that my beloved friends believe in Jesus Christ and receive salvation.

This is what the Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:4 –

"God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Like Samuel, even if I grow old and have gray hair ...

Like Samuel, when I grow old and gray,
I hope that people around me will hear,
“You have never deceived us
or mistreated us, nor have you ever taken a bribe”
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12: 4).

I want to become a sincere Christian who does not deceive others,
a loving Christian who does not mistreat others,
an honest Christian who never takes bribes,
and a Christian who does not love money.

Satan opposes Christians and constantly seeks opportunities to attack us.

King Saul told Ahimelek the priest
that David conspired against him and was plotting to oppose him.
He also accused Ahimelek of inciting David to rebel against him
and only seeking opportunities to attack him
(1 Samuel 22:13).

In reality, it was King Saul who opposed David
and was indeed plotting only to attack him.
Similarly, Satan opposes us Christians who believe in Jesus
and constantly seeks opportunities to attack us.

Satan wants us to be weak.

Satan wants us to be weak.

The reason is that Satan wants to bind us
with various bands of sin and make us obey
(Ref.: Judges 16:5, 7, 11).

Satan wants us to become slaves to sin again
(Romans 6:6).

Even if others try to harm us ...

Although King Saul sought to kill David, David did not harm King Saul.

Therefore, David did not commit any wrongdoing against King Saul
(1 Samuel 24:11).

Genesis 50:19 comes to mind:

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good
to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

When meditating on these verses,

even if someone intends to harm us,

we should not seek revenge, but rather pray, hope, and wait

for how God will turn it for good, fulfilling His good, pleasing, and perfect will

(Romans 12:2).

A new person, new heart, new spirit, obedient heart

Anyone who believes in Christ becomes a new person (2 Corinthians 5:17).
God gives new people who believe in Christ a new heart (1 Samuel 10:9),
a new spirit, and an obedient heart (Ezekiel 36:26).

Aren't they a dysfunctional family that does what they think well?

Isn't it a household that acts as one pleases,
with the mother, who claims to believe in 'God'
while attending church, not chastising her thief son with love,
but rather, after saying, 'May God bless you,'
making idols out of love for the crooked child?
Ultimately, if the child ends up making household idols
and even goes so far as to make one of his sons a pastor,
isn't this not honoring the Lord as king,
but rather, the mother acting according to her own thoughts
and the child acting according to his own thoughts,
like a dysfunctional family that acts as one pleases?
(Reference: Judges 17:1-6, NIV)

We must repay your vows.

Hannah, a praying mother,
upheld her vow to God by dedicating her son Samuel,
whom she obtained through a vow of prayer,
to God for his entire life
(1 Samuel 1:11, 20, 27).

This is reflected in Ecclesiastes 5:4:

"When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it.

He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow."

Satan only seeks an opportunity to incite and attack

King Saul told his servants
that his son Jonathan was inciting David,
claiming that Jonathan was only seeking an opportunity to kill him
(1 Samuel 22:8).

In reality,

it was King Saul who was seeking only an opportunity to kill David.

Similarly, Satan incites jealous individuals,
using any means possible,
to attack us, our families, and our churches,
seeking only an opportunity to harm us.

Persuasive and faithful person

Certainly, when Saul came into the deep recesses
of the cave to relieve himself,
David's followers thought that
God had handed their enemy, Saul, over to David's hands,
and they whispered to David, "Now is the moment"
(1 Samuel 24:3-4).

However, David only cut off a corner of Saul's robe
and felt guilty in his conscience,
so he persuaded his followers not to harm Saul (vv. 4-7).

Reflecting on David's persuasive words,
I think of David's followers who were convinced by him,
as they couldn't bring themselves to kill Saul (v. 7).

It seems like just as David was a faithful person to Saul (22:14),
David's followers were also faithful to him.

When I see how David persuaded his followers with the word of God,
Proverbs 16:23 and Job 6:25 in the Modern Korean Bible come to mind:

"The wise speak with words that are always careful and persuasive"
(Proverbs 16:23),

"Honest words are convincing ..."
(Job 6:25).

**God guides us delicately
and gives us a precious encounter in the Lord.**

Ruth happened to be gleaning in the field belonging to Boaz,
a relative of her father-in-law Elimelek,
when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem
and noticed her among the harvesters.
He asked the overseer of his workers,
"Who does that young woman belong to?"
and inquired about Ruth
(Ruth 2:3-5).

As I reflect on these words,
I believe that Sovereign God
guided Ruth and Boaz to meet each other,
orchestrating their meeting in His timing and in His way.
God also made Boaz, among many other workers,
notice and pay attention to Ruth,
a "foreigner who came from Moab with Naomi" (v. 6)
and a "Moabite woman" (v. 10).

In this way, I think that God delicately guides us
to precious encounters within His sovereign and benevolent will,
giving us meaningful connections in the Lord.

The Bible says covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

David saw a very beautiful woman bathing and had her identified.

Despite discovering that she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite,

David still brought her to himself and slept with her

(2 Samuel 11:2-4).

In the Ten Commandments, the tenth commandment states,

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife..."

(Exodus 20:17).

However, David violated this commandment

by coveting his neighbor's wife.

The Bible equates covetousness with idolatry

(Colossians 3:5).

Like David, we shouldn't be led by the lust of the eyes

(1 John 2:16)

or allow our eyes to be full of adultery

(2 Peter 2:14),

committing the sin of sleeping with a married woman

(2 Samuel 11:4).

How do you think the saints feel?

How would a believer feel
when he or she is misunderstood and scolded by the pastor?
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:12-14)

The Holy Spirit gives us all strength ...

I pray that the Holy Spirit gives us all strength
and sets us free by cutting off everything
that binds our hearts and lives
(Ref.: Judges 15:14).

Are you truly a sincere and honest person?

Do people in the world not only see no fault in us,
but also say to us, 'You are truly a sincere and honest person'?
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 29:3, 6)

I pray for God's great grace to quickly repent of the sin of adultery.

King David heard the news that Bathsheba, a married woman,
was pregnant with his child
and tried to cover up the fact by summoning Uriah,
Bathsheba's husband, who was fighting with the Israelite army
under the command of General Joab, to come to him from the battlefield.
David intended for Uriah to go home and spend time with his wife Bathsheba,
from whom he had been separated for a long time,
in the hope that they would sleep together.
However, contrary to King David's intentions and plans,
Uriah did not go to his house that night;
instead, he spent the night at the palace entrance with the palace guards.
Uriah's reasoning was that as long as the army of Israel was at war
and the Ark of the Covenant and General Joab
and his men were camping in the open fields,
he could not go home, eat, drink, or sleep with his wife.
Uriah solemnly swore before King David that he would never do such a thing.
Yet, despite this, King David invited Uriah to a dinner and tried to make him drunk,
hoping that he would go to his house afterwards.
However, even on that night, Uriah did not go home;
instead, he slept with the palace guards at the palace entrance
(2 Samuel 11:5-13).
Despite being separated from his wife Bathsheba for a long time,
loyal soldier Uriah did not sleep with her.
In contrast, David, abusing his kingly authority,
committed adultery with Bathsheba, who was his neighbor's wife,
quickly succumbing to the sin of adultery.
How many Christians are committing adultery like David today?
I pray for God's abundant grace for quick repentance from the sin of adultery.

He is a dangerous person who will use any means possible.

When King Saul failed twice to kill David
by throwing a spear himself,
he attempted to have him killed by the hands of the Philistines.

In this process,

Saul even offered his daughter to David as a wife

(1 Samuel 18:17).

Thus, Saul, driven by jealousy and fear of David,
not only his daughter but also the Philistine enemies
were used in his attempt to kill David.

It seems he spared no means to achieve his goal of killing David.

Those who fear and envy us,

while God is with us, may resort to any means to harm us.

Family members (especially married couples) should not behave like this!

Family members (especially married couples)
should not take advantage of each other's weaknesses
to harass and despise each other
(Reference: 1 Samuel 1:6).

Satan, who is very crafty, is still controlling very crafty people like Jonadab ...

The very cunning Jonadab (2 Samuel 13:3) said to King David, who had torn his clothes and lay on the ground, believing all the princes had been killed by Absalom, "Not all the king's sons are dead! Only Amnon is dead. Absalom has been determined to kill him ever since Amnon raped his sister Tamar. Do not be too distressed. Not all the princes are dead; only Amnon is dead" (2 Samuel 13:31-32).

In reality, Jonadab was the manipulative figure behind Amnon's assault on Tamar, which ultimately led to Absalom killing Amnon. Therefore, it can be considered that the one responsible for Amnon's death was the very cunning Jonadab.

The very cunning Satan continues to manipulate people as cunning as Jonadab to orchestrate attacks on the families of Christians, who are descendants of David and believers in Jesus Christ, leading to their destruction.

I pray that God will thwart the plans of such cunning individuals like Jonadab around us, preventing their schemes from succeeding (Job 5:12).

No matter how much your beloved wife continues to cry and beg you

No matter how much your beloved wife continues to cry and beg you, you must persevere until the end. Haha (Ref.: Judges 14:17).

A husband who doesn't even know why his wife is crying?

Her husband Elkanah did not know why his wife Hannah was weeping.

He did not understand why Hannah was so sorrowful that she couldn't even eat.

Elkanah thought he was better for his childless wife Hannah than ten sons and told her so (1 Samuel 1:8). A husband who does not even know why his wife is weeping can never truly comfort or bring joy to his wife.

A father who wants his son to be crushed?

Jonathan believed that his father, Saul, always told him everything, down to the smallest detail. Therefore, Jonathan did not believe that Saul was plotting to kill David, whom he loved dearly.

Jonathan said to David, "He wouldn't hide such a thing from me. It couldn't be true."

However, David knew that Saul was well aware of the close friendship between Jonathan and himself, and Saul didn't want to hurt Jonathan's feelings.

This is why Saul did not inform Jonathan about his plot to kill David (1 Samuel 20:1-3).

No matter how good the relationship between a father and son is, and no matter how much they talk about everything, what father would openly tell his son about a plot to kill the friend whom his son loves as his own life?

A father may not speak of certain things to avoid hurting his son.

However, our Heavenly Father was pleased to allow His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be crushed (Isaiah 53:10).

The reason for this is our transgressions (v. 5).

That is, God the Father laid all our iniquities upon His only Son, Jesus Christ (v. 6), making Him a sacrificial offering for our sins on the cross (v. 10).

As a result, we have received redemption and the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14) and have been justified (Isaiah 53:11).

A beautiful and exemplary mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship

Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, who was also a widow,
wanted her widowed daughter-in-law, Ruth,
to remarry and build a happy home again.
So, she decided to find a husband for Ruth.
She instructed Ruth to take a bath,
apply perfume, and dress in her best clothes.
Naomi then told her to go down to the threshing floor
and, when Boaz, who had been kind to her, fell asleep,
to go to his feet, uncover them, and lie down there.
Ruth responded, "I will do everything you say."
That night, Ruth went down to the threshing floor
and did everything her mother-in-law had instructed her to do
(Ruth 3:1-6).

When reflecting on this passage,

- (1) A mother-in-law should consider her daughter-in-law's happiness,
- (2) And a daughter-in-law should follow the advice of her mother-in-law
who is thinking about her happiness.
- (3) In this way, there can be no conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law,
and instead, their relationship can be firmly established
as a beautiful and exemplary one.

**No matter how much we miss each other, if we don't have a
forgiving heart, we will have no choice
but to distance ourselves from each other.**

For two years, Absalom had been in Jerusalem
without seeing his father, King David, even once.

He wanted to meet his father and tried to get General Joab
to mediate on his behalf, but Joab refused to meet him
(2 Samuel 14:29).

In desperation, Absalom ordered his servants to set fire to Joab's barley field,
which finally got Joab to meet with him (vv. 30-31).

At that meeting, Absalom said to Joab:

"I asked you to come because I wanted you to go to the king
and ask him why he brought me back from Geshur
if he had no intention of seeing me.

It would have been better for me to stay there.

Now, please arrange for me to see the king.

If I am guilty of any sin, let him put me to death" (v. 32).

Reflecting on Absalom's actions and words,

I think Absalom missed his father, David.

He wanted to see his father. He just wanted to meet him.

However, despite bringing him back from Geshur to Jerusalem,
his father David did not see him even once for two years.

This led Absalom to tell Joab
that he would have been better off staying in Geshur.

Reflecting on this passage,

I think that no matter how close a father and son live under the same roof,
an unforgiving heart creates a distance between them.

A heart filled with hatred drives people apart,
but a forgiving heart brings them closer together.

No matter how much longing there is,

\without a forgiving heart, distance between people is inevitable.

The relationship between father David and son Absalom does not seem healthy.

Absalom hated Amnon for disgracing his sister Tamar, and for two years, he probably did not speak to him at all (2 Samuel 13:22-23).

After those two years, Absalom killed Amnon and fled to Geshur, where he stayed for three years (v. 38).

As a result, it seems Absalom had no communication with his father David for five years. Even though David longed for his son Absalom (v. 39), it appears he did not seek out Absalom during those three years of his exile. The relationship between David and his son Absalom does not seem healthy.

What if a son who does not imitate the actions of his father and is greedy for money is appointed as the successor pastor of the church?

Samuel's two sons, Joel and Abijah, did not follow their father Samuel's example. They were greedy for money, accepted bribes, and failed to administer justice fairly. Because of their behavior, all the elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded, "Appoint a king to lead us, just like all the other nations have" (1 Samuel 8:1-5).

What will happen to a church if a pastor's son, who does not follow his father's example and is greedy for money, is appointed as the successor pastor of the church?

We may be very upset by our father's attitude.

When Jonathan realized that his father, Saul,
was determined to kill his dear friend David,
he became very angry and did not eat anything all day.
"This was because he was deeply hurt
by his father's attitude of insulting David so severely"
(1 Samuel 20:33-34).

Similarly, we can be deeply hurt by our father's attitude
if we see him insulting our beloved mother.

We must break your bad habits!

Every Sunday, as we go up to God's temple to worship,
couples must break the bad habit of constantly mocking,
ridiculing, and exploiting each other's weaknesses
to cause great distress and anger
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:6-7).

According to the evil deeds of the evildoers ...

We hope that God will reward the evildoers
according to their evil deeds
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 3:39)

It is questionable whether we can say that David, the father of Amnon and Tamar, was not responsible at all.

The very cunning Jonadab easily approached Amnon, who was sick with love for his half-sister Tamar and troubled every day.

He said, "Lie down and pretend to be ill.

When your father comes to see you, ask him to have your sister Tamar come and prepare food in front of you so that she can feed you with her own hands, and you will feel better."

This scheme involved their father David, ultimately bringing Tamar, who Amnon could not easily approach, to Amnon's house.

Following Jonadab's advice, Tamar brought flour, kneaded it, and made cakes in Amnon's sight.

She then took the cakes into Amnon's bedroom and fed them to him directly while he pretended to be ill.

Finally, when Tamar approached Amnon to feed her, Amnon grabbed Tamar and forced her to say,

"My sister, come and sleep with me."

Then Tamar refused, but Amnon did not listen to her and because she was stronger than Tamar, he attacked her and raped her (2 Samuel 13:5-14).

When I meditate on these words,

I think that father David was very unaware of his son Amnon.

For example, David appears to have been unaware that his son Amnon was deeply in love with and yearning for his half-sister Tamar.

Also, David did not know that Amnon was lying in bed and pretending to be sick.

If David had known about it, when Amnon said to him,

"Send your younger sister Tamar to cook food for me in front of me and feed me,"

David said, "David sent Tamar to go to Amnon's house and cook food for her."

He should not have been instructed to give (vv. 6-7).

The reason is that it was like giving a fish to a cat.

How could David, who loved and longed for Tamar so much that he could instruct Amnon, who was even sick, to go to Tamar's house and cook food for him?

As a result, Amnon raped Tamar (v. 14).

Can we say that father David was not responsible at all?

I think Tamar's going to Amnon's house was like a cow going to the slaughter, or a deer running into a snare (Proverbs 7:22).

Of course, the execution of all these cunning plans came from the head of the very cunning Jonadab, but I wonder whether it can be said that David, the father of Amnon and Tamar, was also not responsible at all.

Amnon's foolishness, our foolishness?

Amnon's foolishness was demonstrated when, against the advice of his half-sister Tamar, whom he deeply loved and desired, he rejected the good way of marrying her through proper channels by speaking to his father David.

Instead, he overpowered her due to his physical strength and raped her.

As a result, Amnon became "the most foolish man in Israel" (2 Samuel 13:1-2, 12-14).

The foolish are those who can only see the immediate pleasure before their eyes (Ecclesiastes 7:4), whose hearts lean towards doing evil (Proverbs 10:2), who act recklessly (Proverbs 14:16), and who ultimately pay the price for their foolishness (Proverbs 14:18), often leading to their own demise (1 Samuel 1:31).

Conscience's reproach?

David, pursued by King Saul who sought to kill him (1 Samuel 24:11), found himself in a cunningly opportune situation when Saul and his men entered the very cave where David and his men were hiding (v. 3).

David's men whispered to him,

"Now's your chance! Today the Lord is telling you,

'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'"

So David crept forward and stealthily cut off a piece of Saul's robe (v. 4).

However, afterward, David felt conscience-stricken.

The reason being, David knew it was forbidden to harm the king whom God had anointed (v. 6).

Reflecting on this passage,

I wonder if it was truly "the time" or "David's time" as his men suggested.

The "time" they mentioned, or "David's time,"

would likely have been the time for David to kill King Saul, his enemy, and take revenge.

In short, that time was when Saul was to be killed.

However, in my opinion, it was not God's appointed time.

In other words, the time when David could have killed King Saul was not God's appointed time.

We must keep in mind that what we perceive as God's timing and what God sees as His timing can be quite different.

Another thing to consider when reflecting on this passage is how even today, there might be people who, like David, knowingly or unknowingly disrespect God's anointed servants, which is something God has forbidden.

They might even think or feel derogatory thoughts toward them in their hearts, experiencing a sense of guilt in their conscience,

realizing they have sinned against God's chosen ones

(Matthew 5:22).

How many people might feel this sense of conscience's reproach?

How can I continue to live a married life with a husband like this?

Wise wife Abigail knew that her husband Nabal was a wicked man and indeed his name means Fool (1 Samuel 25:25).

One of Nabal's servants even described him as being so impossible to reason with that he couldn't even speak to him (v. 14).

Abigail, despite having a husband like Nabal, managed to continue their married life.

How was this possible?

I believe it was possible through the wisdom given by God.

"Do not forsake wisdom; she will protect you.

Love her, and she will watch over you"

(Proverbs 4:6).

How can we avoid direct confrontation and let the Lord ...

At times, God may lead us to avoid direct confrontation and instead maneuver us to position ourselves behind our adversaries, ready to attack.

The reason for this is that God goes before us to strike our enemies (Ref.: 1 Samuel 5:23-24).

Therefore, we need to be spiritually sensitive, obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and quietly trust in the Lord,

waiting for Him to strike our enemies

while we avoid direct confrontation when necessary.

Even if we suffer unfairly ...

Jonathan praised David to his father Saul,
saying that David was "a man without sin"
and "he has not done anything to harm you"
(1 Samuel 19:4-5).

David asked Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my crime?
How have I wronged your father (Saul) that he is trying to kill me?" (20:1).
David had committed no offense worthy of being killed by King Saul.
Jonathan was aware of this fact.

Nevertheless, Saul wanted to kill David
because he was jealous of him (vv. 18:9) and also feared him (v. 15).
There may be people who hate and trouble us without reason,
even though we have done nothing wrong to them.

We may feel unjustly treated.

This is what is mentioned in 1 Peter 2:19-20, Modern Korean Version:

"For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering
because they are conscious of God.

But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating
for doing wrong and endure it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it,
this is commendable before God."

Always do what is fair and right.

Church leaders must always do what is fair and right
for God's people, the believers
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 8:15).

One day there will be consequences for that wrongdoing!

When unrighteous and deceitful church members appoint us
as church leaders through dishonest means,
the eventual outcome of this wrongdoing is
that those same members will eventually betray us and turn against us,
even those who previously supported us will become our adversaries
(Ref.: Judges 9:23, 25).

We must not look down on her.

We must not despise our spouse in our hearts
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 6:16).

Ebenezer God, who has helped us this far ...

I pray that Ebenezer God, who has helped us this far,
will block all our enemies while we are alive
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 7:12-13).

God who strengthens the weak

Our God is the one who breaks the bows
of the warriors and strengthens the feeble
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:4).

We pray that the God who strengthens us when we are weak,
through His glorious power, may strengthen us
to endure and bear all things with joy
(Colossians 1:11).

The courage to fight head-on in spiritual warfare with the assurance of salvation and victory is ...

David was able to run towards Goliath with confidence of salvation
in the battle against the Philistines
because he had the assurance that the battle belonged to God
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 17:47-48).

In our spiritual warfare against ourselves, the sinful world, Satan, and death,
the courage to confront them head-on with confidence of salvation and victory
comes from the assurance that Jesus Christ has already triumphed on the cross
and that our spiritual battle belongs to the Lord.

The sin of despising worship is very serious in the eyes of God.

The sin of a pastor's children
despising the worship of believers to God
is a very serious sin in the eyes of God
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:17).

Even when Jesus comes back to this world ...

If the wise Abigail hadn't gone out to meet David,
there would have been not one male left alive
by morning among Nabal's household.

But when she returned home,
her husband Nabal was holding a great feast,
drinking heavily, and was drunk
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 25:34, 36).

It reminds me of Jesus' words about His second coming,
comparing it to the days before the flood
when people were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage,
unaware until the flood came and swept them all away
(Matthew 24:38-39).

Our meeting and parting today may be our last on this earth.

After learning that his father Saul was determined to kill David,
Jonathan should have parted ways with David,
whom he loved as his own life.

David knelt down before Jonathan,
prostrated himself on the ground three times,
and they embraced each other and wept together,
with David weeping even more bitterly.

Then Jonathan said to David,
"Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other
in the name of the Lord, saying,
'The Lord is witness between you and me,
and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'"

After this, they parted ways
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 20:41-43).

After their parting,
Jonathan died in battle alongside his father Saul (1:4).

When David learned of this,
he composed a lamentation mourning Saul and Jonathan.
In this song, he spoke about his beloved Jonathan, who had died:

"My brother Jonathan, I grieve for you;
you were very dear to me.

Your love for me was wonderful,
more wonderful than that of women" (v. 26).

Our meeting and parting today
could be the last on this earth.

I rely more and more on the Lord, who is my only strength.

David welcomed Abner and his twenty men
who had come to him in Hebron,
and David prepared a feast for them.
He ensured their safety as they departed
(2 Samuel 3:20-21).

However, David's commander Joab acted against David's wishes
by killing Abner, avenging the death of his brother Asahel (vv. 27, 30).
Joab's disregard for David's command stemmed from David's perceived weakness
in dealing with Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruiah (v. 39).

At that time, neither Ish-bosheth nor David
seemed to have more power than their respective commanders.

In a household context,
this could be likened to a husband being weaker than his wife,
or in a church setting,
the senior pastor being weaker than the elders.

Nevertheless, amidst this, we should follow David's example and confess,
"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God is my rock,
in whom I take refuge" (Psalms 18:1),
placing our ultimate trust in the Lord alone.

Only the Lord gave me this great victory.

I have been defeated in spiritual warfare countless times,
but only the Lord gave me this great victory
(Ref.: Judges 15:18).

**Why “at that moment the Holy Spirit of the Lord gave him strength,
and he tore the lion to pieces with his bare hands,
as one would tear a young goat”?**

Why did a young lion suddenly run out
growling at Samson as he was going down to Timnah,
and “at that moment the Holy Spirit of the Lord gave him strength,
and he tore the lion to pieces with his bare hands,
as one would tear a young goat”?

(Judges 14:5-6)

Could it be that God allowed Samson to marry a Philistine woman
as part of His permissive will,
but not necessarily as a direct expression of His directive will
to defeat the Philistines?

(Judges 14:4)

Why did he do that?

When Absalom had been in exile in Geshur for three years,
King David, his father, had almost forgotten the sorrow
over his deceased son Amnon and was now yearning for Absalom
(2 Samuel 13:38-39).

Despite this, David did not actively seek Absalom, and we may wonder why.

Could it be that he was still unable to forgive Absalom,
his other son, who had killed his son Amnon?

Why did God do that?

The Israelites' sin of rejecting God as their king
and demanding a human king like other nations,
even though it was a great sin in the sight of God,
was still accommodated by Him

(1 Samuel 12:13, 17).

Why did God do this?

Perhaps He allowed it to show the difference
between placing God as king and placing humans as kings,
through the consequences of our sinful choices

(Ref.: 1 Chronicles 12:8).

What we learn from the friendship between Jonathan and David ...

What we learn from the friendship of Jonathan and David
is that friendship in the Lord means not only showing God's love to each other,
but also showing love and kindness to one's family
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 20:14).

We must be very wary of the arrogance of thinking that our families and churches are strong.

The Jebusites living in Jerusalem thought their city was so secure that even someone like David and his army could not invade it. When David led his army to attack them, they shouted loudly, "You will never get in here! Even the blind and lame could ward you off" (1 Samuel 5:6).

However, David and his army attacked the Jebusites and captured the fortress of Zion (v. 7). The lesson from this passage for us is to be very cautious of prideful arrogance that assumes our homes and churches are so secure that Satan and his forces cannot invade them. Instead, we should always be vigilant and sober-minded (1 Peter 5:8), sharpening the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17), to effectively resist the devil and his schemes (Ephesians 6:11; James 4:7).

I hope that we all become possessed by the Holy Spirit.

When Samuel obeyed the word of God and anointed David with oil, the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day forward. However, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him (1 Samuel 16:13-14).

This presents a stark contrast:

- (1) Between the Spirit and the evil spirit,
- (2) David being captivated by the Spirit while Saul was tormented by the evil spirit, and
- (3) The Spirit being with David while departing from Saul.

The Spirit is with us who believe in Jesus.

May we all be captured by the Spirit.

I hope we lead our families well.

Because God is with our husbands/fathers as the head of our households,
if we lead our families well, our wives and children will also love us
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 18:14, 16).

Our children and descendants ...

I hope that as our children and descendants grow older,
they will receive more favor from God and people
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:26).

Everything He warned our family ...

Just as God carried out everything He warned
about the priest Eli's family from beginning to end
(1 Samuel 3:12),
I believe that God can carry out everything He warned
our family from beginning to end.

Our God comforts the humble ...

Our God is a God who comforts the humble
and speaks words that gladden his heart
(Ref.: Ruth 2:13).

Our God is a God who turns our sorrow into joy.

Hannah, who was often deeply distressed, ridiculed, mocked,
and mistreated due to her inability to bear children,
frequently wept and could not eat.
In her anguish and bitterness, she poured out her heart to God
(1 Samuel 1:6-7, 11, 15-16).
However, God heard Hannah's plea and gave her a son,
Samuel (v. 20), filling her heart with joy.
God blessed and exalted Hannah,
and she rejoiced greatly because the Lord had rescued her (2:1).
Just as He was Hannah's God,
our God is the one who turns our sorrow into joy
(Jeremiah 31:13; see also Psalms 30:11).

Don't we want the people we love to be our leaders?

While the house of Saul weakened because the Lord had departed from it, Abner, the commander of Saul's army, was strengthening his own position among the supporters of Saul's household (2 Samuel 3:1, 6).

Interestingly, Abner, who had made Saul's son Ish-Bosheth king over Israel (2:8), acknowledged to Ish-Bosheth that God had promised to take the kingdom from Saul and his descendants and give it entirely to David (3:9).

Another interesting point is that Abner reminded the elders of Israel, who had long desired to make David their king, of this promise (3:17).

Of course, Abner's purpose was to assist David in taking over all of Israel (3:12).

When thinking about why the elders of Israel had long desired to make David their king, I found the reason in this scripture: "Whatever Saul sent him to do,

David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army.

This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well" (1 Samuel 18:5),

"The Lord was with him, so David succeeded in everything he did. ...

All Israel and Judah loved David because he led them so well" (vv. 14, 16),

"... all Saul's officers loved him ..." (v. 22).

The reason the elders of Israel had long wanted David as their king was that they saw that the Lord was with David, enabling him to succeed in all he did, and because David led all the people of Israel and Judah so well, they loved him.

Don't we also want a leader who, with God's presence, succeeds in all they do and leads us well, so we can love and follow them?

Even though we haven't done anything wrong to the other person ...

Even though we have done nothing wrong to the other person,
the other person may fight with us and try to harm us.

However, God, the judge, will soon
determine right and wrong between us and them

(Ref.: Judges 11:27).

What we ask God for in prayer to live like people in the world is ...

When all the elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded,
"Appoint a king to lead us, just like all the other nations,"

Samuel was displeased.

God told him that the people had rejected Him as their king
and no longer wanted Him to reign over them

(1 Samuel 8:5-7).

When we pray to God asking to live like the people of the world,
it is an act of rejecting God as our King (Lord),
and this does not please Him at all!

What we want, what God wants?

The Israelites were eagerly desiring a king who would save them from the Philistines, while Saul was intensely focused on finding his lost donkeys (1 Samuel 9:20).

However, God greatly desires for one lost sinner to repent and return to Him (Luke 15:7, 10, 24, 32).

When we are in crisis ...

When we were in a crisis, we asked that person for help, but they refused at that time.

Later, if they come and complain about why we didn't ask them for help, how can we consider that a legitimate complaint?

(Ref.: Judges 12:1-3).

The secret to how we can become stronger is that God is with us.

David, with whom God was present, grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul, from whom God had departed, grew weaker and weaker (2 Samuel 3:1).

The secret to our increasing strength lies in God being with us.

If we truly want to return to God ...

If we truly want to return to God,
we must remove all the idols of this world from among us
and resolve to serve only God
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 7:3).

When we sin against God by doing evil in His sight ...

When we sin against God by doing evil in God's sight,
we give God's enemies an opportunity to despise and blaspheme God
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 12:13-14).

We must not see what we should not see.

We must avoid looking at what we should not see (Ref.: 2 Samuel 11:2).
We should not be led by the lust of the eyes (Ref.: 1 John 2:16).
We must make a covenant with our eyes not to gaze lustfully at women (Ref.: Job 31:1).
This is because human eyes are never satisfied (Proverbs 27:20)
and are filled with lust, leading to continuous sin (2 Peter 2:14).
As Pastor Lloyd-Jones said:
"The problem is your eyes. When you look at something, your heart follows. ...
If there is something that tempts you, do not look at it! ...
Do not let your eyes covet certain things. Stay focused straight ahead. ...
Make a covenant with your eyes to look straight ahead.
Follow only what God directs, focusing on holiness and heaven"
(Lloyd-Jones, "Darkness and Light").

We need to know.

We need to know. People must learn, even through adversity and suffering, that they cannot win through their own strength
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:9).

We may secretly do evil in the sight of God, but ...

We may secretly do evil in God's eyes,
but God exposes all the evil things we have done in secret before people see
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 12:12; Ephesians 5:11).

Could it be that we, like Saul, do not know?

When King Saul built an altar to God for the first time and asked,
"Shall I pursue the Philistine army? Will you deliver them into our hands?"
God did not answer him that day (God's silence).
Saul then said to the leaders of Israel, "Something is wrong.
Let us find out whose sin has caused this.
I swear by the name of the Lord who has saved Israel,
even if the sin lies with my son Jonathan, he must die!"
But no one among the leaders of Israel responded to him (the silence of the leaders of Israel)
(1 Samuel 14:37-39).
As we reflect on this passage, we see that not only did God remain silent towards Saul,
but the leaders of Israel were also silent. When King Saul said, "Something is wrong.
Let us find out whose sin has caused this" (v. 38), it seems he did not realize
that the "someone" could be himself.
Moreover, he did not seem to understand "what" he had done wrong.
Could it be that we, like Saul, are unaware of our own faults?

I hope that we too can learn this secret and pass God's test.

Because God caused Saul and his men to fall into a deep sleep,
David and Abishai were able to secretly approach Saul's camp
and take only his spear and water jug from beside his head
(1 Samuel 26:5, 12).

As I pondered this passage,

I wondered why God caused Saul and his men to fall into a deep sleep.

Perhaps God was testing David.

Since God had delivered Saul into David's hands,
it seemed like God was testing whether David would obey Him by sparing Saul,
whom God had anointed as king (vv. 9, 23).

The key to David passing this test was
that he believed God would repay the faithful with good
and that God valued his life just as David valued Saul's life,
so he desired God to rescue him from all trouble (vv. 23-24).

May we also learn this lesson and pass God's tests with faithfulness.

The Holy Spirit enables us to keep that promise.

The Holy Spirit who dwells in us reminds us
of the promise we made to our beloved friends
and enables us to keep it
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 9:1).

Those who hated us and kicked us out ...

What if the people who hated us and kicked us out
come to us because they are in trouble and say,
“We came to you because we really need you”?
(Ref.: Judges 11:7-8)

God who gives us encounters

In the meeting orchestrated by God between Samuel and Saul,
Samuel was informed in advance of Saul's coming the day before.
Saul, on the other hand, had sent his servant along with one of his men
to find the lost donkeys of his father Kish, which led them to the city of Zuph.
There, the servant suggested to Saul that they consult the man of God
in the city to inquire about the whereabouts of the donkeys.
This made it possible for them to meet Samuel.
The purpose of God bringing Samuel and Saul together
was to anoint Saul with oil and make him the leader of God's people.
This was because God, moved by the cries of the Israelite people,
had decided to deliver them from the Philistines through Saul,
as He had heard their cries and felt compassion for them
(1 Samuel 9:3-17).

When reflecting on this passage:

- (1) God hears our cries (prayers) in our times of distress,
- (2) He listens to our prayers and regards them with compassion, and
- (3) He grants us encounters in our lives to deliver us from that distress.

Therefore, after praying to God,
we need to anticipate with longing hearts the encounters that God provides.

We pray that the Lord will let us know ...

We pray that the Lord will let us know
that He has established us as leaders of His church and family
and that He has exalted His church and family
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 5:12).

How do we truly prove our innocence?

Since David was not involved in Abner's death,
he said, 'The Lord knows that I and my people are completely innocent
concerning the murder of Abner. May the guilt fall on Joab and his entire family'
(2 Samuel 3:28).

David mourned Abner's death and even composed
and sang a lament for him (vv. 31-33).

On the day of Abner's burial, David fasted and did not eat anything all day.

When the people saw this, they were pleased
and accepted whatever King David did with joy (v. 35).

'Then all the people of Judah and Israel realized
that David had no part in Abner's murder' (v. 37).

We must seek God's wisdom
on how to prove our innocence sincerely,
just like David
(James 1:5).

God who sees our suffering and is heartbroken

God is a God who is heartbroken
when he sees us suffering as a result of our sins
(Ref.: Judges 10:16).

God who turns our sorrowful hearts into joyful hearts

When the misunderstanding was cleared up
during her conversation with Eli the priest, Eli said to Hannah,
"Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you
what you have asked of him."
Upon hearing this, Hannah replied, "Thank you, sir, for your kind words."
Then she went on her way, ate something,
and her face was no longer downcast
(1 Samuel 1:17-18).

How was it that Hannah, who had been in such deep anguish and wept bitterly
while praying to God, was able to turn her sorrow into joy
and resume eating after just one word from Eli the priest?
I believe it was because God had heard Hannah's earnest prayer with tears.
Although God had not yet given Hannah the son she prayed for (v. 11),
He had already turned her sorrowful heart into a joyful one
(Ref.: Psalms 30:11; Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Jeremiah 31:13).

The price for our evil?

God loves and delights in paying the price for our evil through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, the tree of curse. (Ref.: Judges 9:57; Matthew 3:17, Galatians 3:13, Deuteronomy 21:23; Romans 8:3).

This is beyond our rational understanding.

Micah's mother, who had cursed the person who stole her 1,100 silver coins without realizing it was her own son, heard Micah confess, "I took it," as he returned the silver. She then said, "The Lord bless you, my son!" Not only that, but Micah's mother gave 200 of the 1,100 silver coins to a silversmith to make an idol for her son Micah, which was kept in Micah's house (Judges 17:1-4).

Do you understand this?

How could she curse the thief, and upon discovering it was her son, turn around and say, "The Lord bless you"?

However, in reality, because of Adam's sin, we too were cursed and spiritually dead, destined to be eternally condemned.

But God loved us first and granted us salvation by enabling us to believe in Jesus Christ, receiving all of God's spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).

This is beyond our rational understanding.

We can only humbly accept it through faith.

We may find ourselves in a very difficult position as parents ...

We may find ourselves in a very difficult position as parents who are grieving over their children in need.

However, like David, we must rely on God and gain courage (Ref.: 1 Samuel 30:6).

Taking revenge is God's work. God will reward you.

David praised God for sending the wise Abigail to prevent him from avenging himself by killing Nabal (1 Samuel 25:32-33).

Upon hearing of Nabal's death, David praised God for repaying Nabal according to his deeds and for keeping David from doing evil (v. 39).

Considering that David referred to avenging himself by killing Nabal as an evil act,

I believe that taking personal vengeance on our enemies is also an evil act.

Hebrews 10:30 in the Modern Korean Bible states:

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay."

Taking risks ...

I think it was not easy for Ruth, who came from the land of Moab, to follow the workers in Boaz's field and glean fallen grain.

The reason is that the young male workers might have harassed her.

We can infer this because Boaz told Ruth, "I have told the young men not to touch you" (Ruth 2:7, 9).

Despite this risk, Ruth gleaned grain to take care of her elderly mother-in-law.

We need to emulate this daughter-in-law who loves her mother-in-law so much.

There will be a price for making a married woman cry.

King David killed his loyal soldier Uriah, causing Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, to weep (2 Samuel 11:26).

There will be a price for making a married woman cry.

Legacy, property, rights, responsibilities?

Although we have the first right to inherit, that right may come with responsibilities we do not want.

If we take on those responsibilities, we might incur losses and potentially deplete our existing wealth, leading us to relinquish our right to the inheritance (Ruth 4:4-7).

When we avoid taking responsibility and only seek to protect our wealth, God might cause us to lose that wealth to bring us back to Him (1:21).

There is a need to clearly establish distance in the heart and especially in emotions rather than physical distance.

A man and a woman who should not love each other, and if one of them deeply loves and desires the other, merely being together in the same room is already a situation where they could easily fall into Satan's cunning temptation.

To avoid such a situation, those two individuals should establish healthy boundaries with each other and maintain a distance.

However, it's not just physical distance that's necessary but also clear emotional and especially affectional distance

(Ref.: 2 Samuel 13:1-14).

It is good to return favor with favor, but ...

Since the other person did me a favor, I also tried to do them a favor.

But if that person misunderstood me and made me feel embarrassed and offended me, what should I do to that person?

It is good to return favor with favor,

but it is bad to misunderstand favor and bring shame

(Ref.: 2 Samuel 10:2-6).

How evil is this in the eyes of God?

It is understandable to send loyal soldiers into the fiercest battlefield and have them fight on the front lines,

but if the intention is not to win the war

but to have those loyal soldiers die at the hands of the enemy,

how evil is this in the eyes of God?

(Ref.: 2 Samuel 11:15, 27)

This servant's family will enjoy eternal blessings from the Lord.

Lord, bless the family of your servant
and make this blessing last forever before you.
Lord, because You have spoken,
Your servant's family will enjoy Your blessings forever
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:29).

Is it right and true to appoint this brother as the leader of the church?

We need to think about whether it is right and true
to appoint this brother as the leader of the church
and whether what we are doing to the church members is justified
(Ref.: Judges 9:16).

“Ichabod”

When glory departs (“Ichabod”),
we are bound to lose the spiritual war
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 4:21-22).

I pray that we will worship God with this kind of heart.

I pray that God will turn our hearts of pain and sadness
and give us peace and joyful hearts
so that we can worship Him
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 1:18-19).

I want to experience the work of the Holy Spirit even more deeply.

The Bible tells us that after David, in the name of the Almighty God,
approached and defeated the Philistine giant Goliath,
and returned having slain him, King Saul conversed with David.
Following this encounter, the Scripture states that the heart of Jonathan,
Saul's son, was deeply drawn to David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul
(1 Samuel 17:45-51, 57-58; 18:1).

The Bible does not explain why Jonathan's heart
was so deeply drawn to David, loving him as his own soul.

When I meditate on this passage, I believe that it is the Holy Spirit dwelling within us
who enables us to form a deep bond of love, resembling the heart of God,
with individuals like David, who are after God's own heart
(Acts 13:22).

Thus, I think it is the Holy Spirit within us who enables us
to love such a person as if they were our own life.

In other words, I believe that Jonathan's heart was deeply drawn to David
and loved him as his own soul because the Holy Spirit worked in this way.
I long to experience more deeply the working of the Holy Spirit within us.

Aren't families and churches with such leaders bound to suffer?

King Saul, Jonathan's father, said to him,

"Jonathan, you have brought trouble upon yourself.

You must surely die. If not, God will strike me down, and I will die"

(1 Samuel 14:42-45).

At that time, the people of Israel protested to King Saul, saying,

"Shall Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel?

Far from it! As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did today what was right in the eyes of the Lord."

So, the people rescued Jonathan from death (v. 45).

When meditating on this passage,

it appears that not only did Jonathan respond to King Saul

with the words "That's ridiculous!" (v. 29),

but also the people of Israel said to King Saul, "Far from it!" (v. 45).

This indicates that when King Saul attempted to ascertain

"what was wrong" or "whose sin caused this" (v. 38),

Jonathan and the people of Israel were already aware,

but it seemed that King Saul himself was unaware.

It's a sad reality. I think family members

with such leaders as husbands and church members

with such leaders as pastors can suffer a lot.

Have you given these amazing blessings?

Lord, who am I and what is my family

and why have God given me these amazing blessings?

(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:18)

Such murderous jealousy even seeks to kill the object of jealousy through anyone and by any means.

From the moment King Saul began to look at David with murderous jealousy (1 Samuel 18:9), he:

- (1) Tried twice to kill David with his spear (vv. 10-11),
- (2) Attempted to have David killed by the Philistine enemies using his daughter as bait (vv. 17, 21, 25), and
- (3) Now even ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David (19:1).
Such murderous jealousy goes as far as attempting to kill the object of envy through anyone and by any means possible.

When we are deeply in love with someone we shouldn't love in a romantic relationship ...

In romantic relationships, when we find ourselves deeply loving, desiring, and longing for someone we shouldn't love, to the extent of being sick over it, and when we feel helpless about what to do, that's when Satan, the most cunning, easily approaches us, tempting us by saying, "I have a good trick. Do as I say" (Ref.: 2 Samuel 13:1-5).

However, the "good trick" Satan tells us is never a good one; it's a very bad trick, aiming to lead us into sinning against God.

They couldn't understand.

King David's servants couldn't understand.

How could King David weep and fast while his severely ill child was alive,
and then rise and eat after the child died?

(2 Samuel 12:21).

David's response was, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept.

I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.'

But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting?

Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (vv. 22-23).

However, I recall that when my firstborn, Charis, was alive,

I didn't cry or lose my appetite but ate well.

After the child died, I wept bitterly and lost my appetite.

‘Let us be strong!’

Let us be strong!

Let us boldly engage in spiritual battles

for our families and our churches.

Everything will be done according to God's will

(Ref.: 2 Samuel 10:12).

He didn't know that he was the one who deserved to die.

David, who committed evil in the sight of God (2 Samuel 11:27), did not realize that he himself deserved to die (12:5).

In other words, he didn't know that he had done evil in the sight of God.

It seems that David's conscience was so paralyzed by sin that it didn't function.

Similarly, if we don't repent of our sins (Ref.: Acts 2:37-38),

our consciences may also become paralyzed

to the point where we don't recognize our wrongdoing,

just as we're constantly pierced by the sword of the Spirit,

which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

If we do not have the heart to love our person, we cannot have the courage to protect that person.

Joab, the commander, should have had the courage to refuse King David's order to have Uriah killed, for the sake of his loyal soldier Uriah.

However, he lacked such courage, and furthermore,

he didn't have the love for Uriah, his loyal soldier,

to that extent. Joab's blind loyalty and obedience to King David

ultimately led to him being used as a tool for David's commission of murder

(2 Samuel 11:14-25).

Without a heart that loves one's own people,

one cannot summon the courage to protect them.

Blind loyalty and obedience to power

only serve to make one a tool for the sins of the powerful.

The best secret to raising children?

The best secret to raising children is
for our parents to follow everything God has commanded
(Ref.: Judges 13:13-14).

When our child says he will marry someone who does not believe in Jesus

When our child decides to marry someone who does not believe in Jesus,
we may stubbornly oppose it, not knowing that it may be God's plan
(Ref.: Judges 14:1-4).

There were countless times when I didn't know how to raise my children.

I confess that there have been countless times
when I didn't know how to raise my three children, the gifts of grace from God to me,
who is unworthy of being their father (Ref.: Judges 12:8, 12).
Even now and in the future, without God's help,
there will surely be times when I don't know
how to nurture my beloved three children.
However, I believe that God loves Dillon, Yeri, and Karis
more than I do, more than anyone else does.
Therefore, I want to continue to entrust my children to God the Father in prayer
and help them according to God's guidance.

He will not withhold mercy.

God will not withhold His mercy from us
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:15).

A father who doesn't want to put too much burden on his son ...

When his son Absalom invited him to a feast,
King David declined,
feeling that it would be too much of a burden,
and instead, he sent blessings to Absalom.
Upon hearing this,
Absalom requested that his brother Amnon join them.
King David then asked, "Why should Amnon go with you?"
However, because Absalom kept pleading,
King David, without knowing the reason
why Amnon should go with Absalom,
sent Amnon and all the other princes with Absalom.

A father who doesn't forgive his child?

Eventually, when Joab realized that King David was longing for Absalom, he sent a woman from Tekoa to him, instructing her to act wisely (2 Samuel 14:2). After briefing her on what to say, she delivered her message to King David (v. 19). The wise woman said to King David, "Your Majesty, you have acted like a guilty person in making this request because you have sentenced yourself" (v. 13). This was because King David had intervened in the woman's family matter, promising not to harm her remaining son, who had killed his brother in a fight (v. 6), and declaring, "As surely as the Lord lives, not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground" (v. 11). Therefore, in the eyes of the wise woman, King David's actions regarding Absalom, whom he had not brought back to the palace from exile, made him seem "guilty" (v. 13). When I meditate on this passage, I not only think that King David acted "like a guilty person," but I believe he actually was guilty. The sin I perceive is his failure to forgive Absalom. I think David truly never forgave his son Absalom for killing his other son, Amnon. Therefore, it wasn't until three years had passed since Absalom fled after killing Amnon and had been living in Geshur that David's sorrow for his deceased son Amnon was nearly forgotten, and only then did his heart begin to long for Absalom (13:38-39). Consequently, David eventually sent for Absalom to be brought from Geshur to Jerusalem (v. 21), but he instructed him to remain in his own house and did not allow him to appear before him for two full years. The reason was that David did not want to see Absalom (vv. 24, 28). If David had truly forgiven his son Absalom, he would have allowed Absalom, whom he hadn't seen for three years in Geshur, to be brought to Jerusalem and wouldn't have prevented him from appearing before him for another two years. What father can go five years without seeing a forgiven child? In my view, David was guilty. He was a father who did not forgive his child.

Let us quietly wait for God's guidance.

Until we know what God will do for us (1 Samuel 22:3),
we need to pray in faith and quietly wait for God's guidance.

I hope He will bless all of you who have remarried

Just as God blessed Ruth for remarrying (Ruth 4:13),
I hope He will bless all of you who have remarried.

The smallest and most insignificant person like me ...

Saul said to Samuel, "But I am only from the tribe of Benjamin,
the smallest tribe in Israel, and my family is the least important
of all the families in the tribe of Benjamin.

Why are you talking to me like this?"

Despite Saul's protests, Samuel took Saul and his servant into the banquet hall
and seated them at the head of the table.

Then Samuel served Saul the choicest cuts of meat,
which had been set aside for the occasion

(1 Samuel 9:21-24).

When I reflect on this passage, I'm simply grateful to think
that God might seat someone as insignificant and unworthy as myself
at the head of the heavenly banquet and then graciously serve me
with the very best He has prepared.

Our allies who are jealous and hate us are more dangerous than our enemies.

Because David was honored more than himself by the women of Israel,
King Saul began to look at David with jealous eyes from that day onward.

The very next day, an evil spirit sent by God seized Saul strongly,
and he began to act like a madman, shouting and raving.

Suddenly, Saul threw the spear he had beside him at David,
intending to pin him to the wall.

The fact that David managed to dodge the spear twice
indicates that Saul tried to kill David twice with the spear
(1 Samuel 18:6-11).

This makes me think that jealousy is extremely dangerous.

Interestingly, David did not flee from the Philistine giant Goliath,
but rather ran towards him (17:48).

Yet, he fled from King Saul, his own ally, who was trying to kill him (18:11).

Reflecting on this, sometimes an ally who is jealous and hateful
can be more dangerous than an enemy.

Because Almighty God is with us ...

Because the Almighty God was with David,
he grew stronger and stronger
(2 Samuel 5:10).

Because the Almighty God is with us,
we too can only grow stronger and stronger.

We need to confront directly and hit the mark accurately.

As Goliath came forward towards him,
David ran towards Goliath,
took a stone from his pouch, and slung it,
hitting Goliath squarely on the forehead.
The stone sank into his forehead,
and Goliath fell face down on the ground.
Thus, David, without a sword,
used a sling and a stone to defeat the Philistine giant.
He then ran to Goliath,
drew his sword from its sheath, killed him,
and cut off his head with it
(1 Samuel 17:48-51).
Reflecting on this passage,
we learn that we must confront
our challenges head-on with faith in Jesus Christ,
confidence in our salvation,
and assurance of victory.
Moreover, we must use the word of God,
the sword of the Spirit
(Ephesians 6:17),
to strike at the heart of our adversaries.
We are also reminded to run towards God's word
(Psalms 119:32).

Even when I am repaying God's good with evil ...

David had already decided to destroy Nabal and his entire household (1 Samuel 25:17) and was heading to Nabal's house with 400 of his men (v. 13).

As he went, he muttered to himself,

"What benefit was there for us in helping this man (Nabal)?

We protected his flocks in the wilderness so that nothing was lost, and he repays my good with evil!

May God curse me if by tomorrow morning

I leave even one of his men alive" (vv. 21-22).

At that moment, Nabal's wise wife, Abigail, saw David, quickly got off her donkey, bowed down at David's feet, and spoke wisely to him (vv. 23-30).

She prevented David from taking revenge by killing Nabal and his household (v. 33).

Reflecting on this passage,

I realized that even when I repay God's goodness with evil, the holy God, who should rightly punish me, is prevented from doing so because of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who is wisdom and righteousness, advocates for me before God the Father (1 John 2:1), thus shielding me from the punishment I deserve.

God did not repay our sins of evildoing on us ...

God did not repay our sins of evildoing on us, but on His only Son, Jesus Christ, who had no sin (Ref.: Judges 9:24, 56).

I pray that we can become people like Jonathan.

Jonathan's heart was deeply drawn to David, and he loved him as his own soul.

He made an eternal covenant of friendship with David, giving him his robe,
as well as his armor, sword, bow, and belt

(1 Samuel 18:1, 3-4).

Having a friend who loves us like Jonathan is a great blessing from God.

Furthermore, I pray that we can become people like Jonathan.

The Lord says, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed” (Luke 12:15).

God is saying to us who are greedy,

‘If what I have already given you was not enough,

I would have given you more’

(Ref.: 2 Samuel 12:8).

However, our hearts, which are not content and are filled with greed,
fail to be satisfied with the blessings God has already given us.

Thus, we break the Ten Commandments
by coveting what our neighbors possess

(Exodus 20:17).

To us, the Lord says,

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed"

(Luke 12:15).

The Lord has become our God.

The Lord has chosen us to be His people forever,
and He has become our God
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:24).

The word of the Lord is true.

Only the Lord is God. The word of the Lord is true.
The Lord made a promise to His servant in Matthew 16:18 and John 6:1-15
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7:28).

May the family of your servant be strengthened before you.

Lord, do according to your promise concerning me and my family,
so that they may exalt your name forever, saying,
“The Almighty God is our God,”
and may the family of your servant be strengthened before you
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 7: 25-26).

**We cannot describe in words the beauty
and preciousness of the Lord's love for our friends.**

Jonathan's love for his friend David
was deeper than the love of women (2 Samuel 1:26).
Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this:
to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).
However, Jesus laid down His life on the cross for us,
who were enemies of God (Romans 5:10).
And Jesus also commanded us to "love your enemies"(Matthew 5:44).
While the love of a friend like Jonathan,
which is deeper than the love of women, is beautiful and precious,
the beauty and worth of the Lord's love for us,
who were His enemies, is beyond words.

**A heart that is not satisfied with the blessings the Lord has already
given us is at great risk of becoming greedy and covetous.**

Why did the rich man who had many sheep and cattle
choose to take the poor man's ewe lamb, the only one he had,
to prepare a meal for the guest who had come to his house,
rather than using one of his own abundant sheep or cattle?
(2 Samuel 12:1-4)

Could it be because of the greed and covetousness of this rich man?
Greed prevented him from using one of his many sheep or cattle,
while covetousness led him to take the poor man's ewe lamb.

A heart that is not satisfied with the blessings the Lord
has already given us is at great risk of becoming greedy and covetous.

Whether we live or die, we will only follow the Lord.

When David fled because of Absalom's rebellion, he told Ittai the Gittite,

"You stay here and go back with your own people ..."

But Ittai replied to David, "As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be"

(2 Samuel 15:19-21)

Reflecting on this passage,

I am reminded of the words spoken by Ruth, the Moabite daughter-in-law, to her mother-in-law Naomi:

"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you.

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.

Your people will be my people and your God my God.

I will be buried where you die, and there I will be buried.

May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely,

if even death separates you and me"

(Ruth 1:16-17).

The commonality between Ittai and Ruth is their firm resolve to go with the ones they love, even to the point of sacrificing their lives.

We, too, should make a firm decision to follow our beloved Lord, pledging to go wherever He leads, even if it means life or death.

It is we who deserve to die, not others.

Saul said to the priest Ahimelek,
'You and your father's family are guilty of murder'
(1 Samuel 22:16).

In reality, the one who deserved to die was Saul,
who was arrogant and disobedient to God's commands
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 15)

When I reflect on this, I recall what King David said to the prophet Nathan:
"As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die!"
(2 Samuel 12:5).

At that moment, Nathan replied to David, "You are the man!" (v. 7).
The one who deserves to die is not someone else, but us.

We were not only physically dead but also spiritually dead,
deserving to die because we were enemies of God
(Romans 5:8, 10).

However, because Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal God
(1 John 1:2, 5:20) took upon Himself all our sins and died on the cross,
we have been resurrected (born again, the first resurrection)
(Titus 3:5),

becoming new creatures
(2 Corinthians 5:17),
and receiving eternal life
(John 3:15).

When Jesus comes again (the Second Coming of Jesus),
the dead saints will be resurrected (the second resurrection)
(1 Thessalonians 4:16),
and those who are alive until then will suddenly be transformed
(1 Corinthians 15:51),
being caught up together with them in the clouds
to meet the Lord in the air and be with Him forever
(1 Thessalonians 4:17).

To someone who is on the verge of death ...

Jonathan said to David, who was on the verge of death,

“I will do whatever you want”

(1 Samuel 20:3-4).

The reason is because Jonathan loved David like his own life (18:1).

When God lets us know someone who is on the verge of death,

we wish we could be a friend like Jonathan to that person.

Seeing the leader's faith ...

Followers must see the leader's faith

and agree with the leader to follow him

(Ref.: 1 Samuel 14:6-7).

Leaders' responsibilities

If those who follow are disobedient to the word of God,

leaders may fear them and comply with their demands,

thereby not only sinning against God alongside them,

but rather, they should first obey the word of God themselves,

whether those who follow listen or not,

rebuking them with love to bring them into obedience to God's word

(Ref.: 1 Samuel 15:24e; Ezekiel 2:5, 7; 3:11).

A wise person knows and confesses that everything is his fault.

The wise wife Abigail, in facing the crisis brought about by her foolish husband Nabal's wrongdoing, said to David, "Please, my lord, pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. As for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent" (1 Samuel 25:25).

“True words are persuasive.”

When her husband attempted to persuade the concubine who had left him and sought refuge at her parents' house to return home, and her father, pleased to see him, tried to persuade him to stay a little longer (Judges 19:3, 7), eventually, the husband succeeded in persuading his concubine, and despite his father-in-law's persuasion, he refused to stay one more night as suggested and left with his concubine from her father's house (v. 10).

Reflecting on these words, one ponders on the concept of "persuasion":

"The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction" (Proverbs 16:23),
"The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life" (v. 21),
"Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone" (25:15),
"How forceful are honest words!" (Job 6:25).

If we really think it's "my fault"...

If we truly know that it is “my fault” (1 Samuel 22:22),
we must be able to take responsibility (Ref.: v. 23).

If we truly believe that God is our witness ...

If we truly believe that God is our witness,
we must do as we say
(Ref.: Judges 11:10).

Who should truly be feared ...

The person we should truly fear is not someone like King Saul,
who has power, but someone like David,
who has God with him
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 18:12).

A true friend helps rather than being a burden to his or her beloved friend.

Hushai, David's faithful friend, did not choose a path that was a burden to David, but rather chose a path that was helpful to David (2 Samuel 15:33).

A true friend helps rather than being a burden to his beloved friend.

Jealousy makes us look at the other person crookedly.

King Saul, who viewed David with jealousy (1 Samuel 18:9), regarded David—his son-in-law, a loyal servant, and someone highly respected by all the palace officials (22:14)—as a traitor, constantly seeking an opportunity to attack him, and waiting for a chance to kill him (vv. 8, 13).

This demonstrates how jealousy prevents one from seeing others accurately and instead distorts one's perception.

Jealousy kills a fool.

King Saul, despite needing to fight the Philistines who were invading his country, relentlessly pursued and tried to kill David, a loyal man and ally of his own nation (1 Samuel 23). This shows he was a foolish king: "A tyrannical ruler practices extortion, but one who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long reign" (Proverbs 28:16), and "Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple" (Job 5:2).

There is a high risk of doing something foolish.

If you love and adore one person of the opposite sex too much,
to the point of getting sick,
there is a high risk of doing something foolish
(Ref.: 2 Samuel 13:1-2, 13).

We could easily be mistaken.

Clearly, God said to Samuel,
'Saul has turned away from me
and has not carried out my instructions,'
yet Saul told Samuel,
'I have carried out the Lord's instructions'
(1 Samuel 15:10, 13).

Reflecting on this passage, I realize that:

In God's eyes,
we may have clearly disobeyed His commands,
yet we might be completely deluded into thinking we have fully obeyed them.
From Samuel's perspective,
how could he trust King Saul's words over God's?
Despite this, do we sometimes find ourselves
believing human words more than the Word of God?

Jonathan defends his friend David

To Saul, who wanted to kill David, Jonathan praised his friend, whom he loved as his own life, saying,
"Father, do not harm your servant David.
He has not done anything to harm you;
on the contrary, he has done his best to help you in every way.
Have you forgotten how he risked his life to go out and kill Goliath,
and how the LORD brought about a great victory for Israel as a result?
You were very happy then.

So why now do you want to sin
by killing an innocent man like David without any reason?"
(1 Samuel 19:4-5)

However, when his father Saul furiously shouted at him,
"You son of a perverse and rebellious woman!
Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse
to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?
As long as that son of Jesse lives on this earth,
neither you nor your kingdom will be established.
Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!"

Jonathan responded again to Saul,
"Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"(20:30-32).
When thinking of Jonathan, who defended his beloved friend David,
it reminds us of God who vindicates the poor, saves the children of the needy,
and crushes the oppressor
(Psalms 72:4).

God lets us meet kind people and make us work

When Ruth said to her mother-in-law Naomi,
"Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain.
Perhaps someone will be kind enough to let me do it,"
Ruth did not have a specific field (place to work) in mind.
Naomi simply said, "Go ahead, my daughter."
So, Ruth went out into the fields,
and it just so happened that she ended up in the field
belonging to Boaz, who was a relative of her father-in-law Elimelech.
Moreover, the overseer of Boaz's workers allowed Ruth
to follow along and pick up the leftover grain, as she had requested.
Because of this, Ruth was able to "glean in the field until evening,"
working from morning until now
(Ruth 2:1-7).

Great mistakes vs. great things

Foolish King Saul made and continued to make "great mistakes,"
but he knew that David would do "great things" and would definitely win
(1 Samuel 26:21, 25).
Fools make great mistakes over and over again,
but wise people do great things and will surely win!

Greed leads to robbery.

In his greed, King Saul was only focused on seizing good things from his enemies,
so he disobeyed God's command and committed evil (1 Samuel 15:19).
Greed leads to robbery. It is something that God considers evil (v. 19).

**Whenever they see a chance,
they are looking for an opportunity to trap us and harm us.**

When King Saul heard that his daughter Michal loved David,
whom he had tried to kill out of jealousy, he was happy and thought:
“Another chance has come! I will give Michal to David,
and I will use her daughter to trap him and cause him
to die at the hands of the Philistines”
(1 Samuel 18:20-21).

People who are jealous and fearful of us
are always looking for an opportunity to harm us by trapping us.

What is best in God's eyes ...

Even if we disobey the word of God and do not want to keep
and get rid of everything that is best in our eyes,
even if it is the best thing in our eyes that is best in God's eyes,
we will get rid of everything even if we obey the word of God
and get rid of everything that is best in our eyes
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 15:9).

God's perspective and our perspective are different!

We must keep in mind that God's perspective and our perspective are different.
We look at a person's outward appearance, but God looks at the heart
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 16:7).

God molds our hearts just as He molded David's heart

King Saul, who had set up camp on the road to Hachilah Hill, opposite the desert of Judah, leading 3,000 elite troops to search for David as the Ziphites had informed him, was sleeping in his camp along with his military commander, Abner, and his men who were also dozing around him.

At that time, David knew Saul had arrived and sent out scouts to keep an eye on his movements.

That night, David secretly approached Saul's camp and looked around.

David, accompanied by Abishai, saw King Saul sleeping.

Abishai whispered to David,

"Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands.

Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear;

I won't need to strike him twice."

But David replied, "Don't destroy him.

Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?

As surely as the LORD lives, the LORD himself will strike him,

or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.

But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed."

He emphasized that it was forbidden by God to harm the anointed one

(1 Samuel 26:1-11).

Interestingly, in 1 Samuel 24, when King Saul,

who had come with 3,000 elite troops to the Rocks of the Wild Goats

to seek David, was nearly killed by David,

David refrained from harming Saul, saying

that it was forbidden by God to strike the LORD's anointed.

However, in 1 Samuel 25, David, despite being restrained by God

from taking revenge on the foolish Nabal, who repaid David's good with evil,

was about to kill Nabal himself.

God prevented this by sending Nabal's wise wife, Abigail.

Then, in 1 Samuel 26, when King Saul came again with 3,000 elite troops

to find David, David found Saul sleeping in his camp.

Though David had another opportunity to kill Saul,
he refrained, telling Abishai that he was certain
"the LORD Himself will strike Saul"
and refusing to commit the sin of harming the LORD's anointed.
Reflecting on this, it seems that from 1 Samuel 24 to 26,
God was shaping David's heart, not only preventing him
from committing the sin of doing what God had forbidden
but also assuring him that God would judge
between him and King Saul and avenge him (24:12).
This is why David said to Abishai,
"As surely as the LORD lives, the LORD Himself will strike him;
either his time will come and he will die,
or he will go into battle and perish" (26:10).
Just as God shaped David's heart,
we pray that He will shape our hearts as well,
progressively preventing us from committing sins
by doing what He has forbidden
and also giving us the assurance that He will avenge us.

I hope that God sees your injustice and resolves your grievances for you.

David did his best to help King Saul in everything.

He risked his life by going out and killing the Philistine giant, Goliath, resulting in a great victory for Israel by God's hand.

At that time, King Saul was very pleased.

Therefore, there was absolutely no reason for King Saul to harm David.

However, after King Saul began to look at David with jealous eyes, he unjustly sought to kill David without cause, thus sinning against God (1 Samuel 18:9; 19:4-5).

Sometimes, despite our best efforts to help someone, they may harbor intentions to harm us in return.

Even though we have done nothing to deserve harm from them, they might unjustly seek to harm us without reason.

We pray that God sees our injustice
and delivers us from the hands of our adversaries
(Jeremiah 3:59), just as He delivered David from Saul's hand
(1 Samuel 24:15).

God is with our children ...

I pray that God will be with our children like Samuel
as they grow up and make sure that all the words they preach come true
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 3:19).

We pray that God will bless our children ...

We pray that God will bless our children
and that the Holy Spirit will inspire them and use them as the Lord's tools
(Ref.: Judges 13:24-25).

May God prevent us from doing what He has forbidden.

Although David, who felt guilty even after gently cutting Saul's robe
(1 Samuel 24:4-6) and who insulted his own subordinates (25:14)
and repaid good with evil (21), could have sought revenge
against Nabal and his entire family,
whom God had forbidden him to touch (v. 26),
he should not have attempted to kill them himself.
Instead, God sent the wise Abigail to David,
preventing him from taking matters
into his own hands and seeking revenge (vv. 32-33).
We pray that God prevents us from doing what He has forbidden.
Therefore, like David, we should not do what God has forbidden.
However, even when we are tempted to do what God has forbidden,
we pray that God sends us wise individuals like Abigail
to prevent us from doing what He has forbidden.

Are we supporting the children God gave us throughout our lives and until we die?

When the angel of the Lord appeared to a woman
who had not been able to bear children and said,
"You are soon to conceive and bear a son,"
it was certainly astonishing news for her.
But even more astonishing was when the angel went on to say,
"The child shall be dedicated to God
from birth until the day of his death"
(Judges 13:3, 7).

How remarkable is that?
If God were to gift us with children when we thought we couldn't have any,
could we truly dedicate them to God
from birth until the end of their lives in faith?
Or are we currently dedicating the children God has given us to Him
throughout their lives until death?

It is a blessing given to us by God ...

What right do you have to claim the blessings that God has given us?
Never! (Ref.: Judges 11:23)

May God bless our grandchildren ...

I pray that God will bless us by giving us a new life through our grandchildren
and taking good care of us as we age
(Ref.: Ruth 4:15).

We pray that God will rescue us in His time and in His way of separation.

When King Saul pursued David and his men
as they went deeper into the wilderness of Maon,
south of the desert (1 Samuel 23:24), he followed them to that place.
Despite David's urgent attempts to evade Saul,
when Saul and his army were closing in on him,
news arrived that the Philistines were once again invading Israel.
Hearing this, Saul reluctantly abandoned his pursuit of David
and went to fight against the Philistine forces.
“So, from that day on, the place was called the 'Rock of Separation'”
("Sela-hammahlekoth": meaning "Rock of Division") (v. 28).

When I reflect on this passage,
I believe that God allowed Saul's relentless pursuit of David
and permitted the Philistines to invade Israel,
thereby dividing Saul's heart, ultimately leading to his downfall.
So, ultimately, I believe that God made Saul
give up his pursuit of David involuntarily.
How amazing is the working of God in this?
Just at the moment when Saul was tightening the net to capture David and his army,
God caused Saul to hear the news of the Philistines invading Israel once again.
It couldn't have been anything but God's perfect timing.
I pray that God will rescue us in His time and in His way,
according to His divine plan.

God can save us without all of that.

Even though we think that God needs all these things to save us in crisis,
God shows us that He can save us without all of them
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 17:47).

God treats us like nobles.

God raises the poor from the dust and from the ashes,
treats them like nobles, and places them in positions of glory
(1 Samuel 2:8).

God will not cut off His kindness forever!

David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan.
He restored to Mephibosheth all the land that had belonged to Saul,
his grandfather, and ensured that Mephibosheth would always eat at his table
(2 Samuel 9:3, 7).

The reason for this was David's covenant with Jonathan during his lifetime:
"Show me kindness, like that of the Lord, as long as I live,
so that I may not be killed" (20:15).

When Mephibosheth expressed astonishment at this kindness,
likening himself to a dead dog, he acknowledged David's grace and said,
"What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" (9:8).
Reflecting on this, I realized that even though I may feel unworthy,
God's kindness and love toward me and my family are never-ending.

God appointed an insignificant person like me ...

God appointed David, who was tending sheep, as the ruler of His people Israel,
and wherever David went, God was with him, destroying all his enemies before him
(2 Samuel 7:8-9).

Similarly, God has appointed an insignificant person like me (1 Samuel 18:23),
as the senior pastor of Victory Church, and for the past approximately 20 years,
He has been with me, fulfilling the promise of Matthew 16:18 to build His church.

God will definitely accomplish His will in His own way!

Abner, Saul's commander-in-chief, knew (believed) that God had already spoken about David, saying, "I will use my servant David to rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from all their enemies" (2 Samuel 3:18).

So, he reminded the Israelite elders who had long desired to make David their king (v. 17). Abner also conveyed this message to the people of the tribe of Benjamin (v. 19). Ultimately, Abner worked to ensure that all the people of Israel could accept David as their king (v. 21). Thus, God, who had appointed David as the new king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1, 12), strengthened him gradually (2 Samuel 3:1), even to the point of convincing Abner, Saul's commander-in-chief, to facilitate the acceptance of David as king by all the Israelites (v. 21). God always accomplishes His good, pleasing, and perfect will (Romans 12:2) in His own time and in His own way!

God guards the steps of the saints.

God will guard the steps of the saints, but He will allow the wicked to disappear silently in the darkness (1 Samuel 2:9).

God provides a way to escape when we are tempted, so that we can endure it!

David, acting in faith and obedience to God's word, went to Keilah, but he was aware that King Saul, who sought to kill him, was plotting against him (1 Samuel 23:9).

So, David cried out to God, "O Lord, God of Israel, Your servant has heard that Saul intends to come to Keilah to destroy the city because of me. Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him? Will Saul really come down, as Your servant has heard? O Lord, God of Israel, please tell Your servant" (vv. 10-11).

God answered, "He will come down" (v. 11).

Then David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?"

And God responded, "They will" (v. 12).

When I meditate on this passage, thinking from David's perspective, it is clear that he might have been justifiably angry and resentful.

After all, he had saved the people of Keilah from the Philistines, yet how could they betray him and his men by handing them over to Saul?

David had risked being captured by Saul—not just himself, but also his men—to rescue the people of Keilah. And now, those very people were ready to repay his kindness with betrayal by turning him over to Saul.

This could only be seen as an act of extreme ingratitude, repaying David's grace with enmity.

However, from the perspective of the people of Keilah, they might have been terrified.

Saul was so intent on capturing and killing David that they feared if they didn't hand David over, they themselves might be killed by Saul.

“So David and his approximately 600 men immediately left Keilah and kept moving from place to place.

When Saul heard that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up his pursuit” (v. 13).

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) says: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.

And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

God helps us even through the family of those who seek to harm us.

His father, King Saul, was trying to kill David,
but not only King Saul's son, Jonathan, but also his daughter, Michal, helped David
(1 Samuel 19:1-7, 11-12).
God helps us even through the family of those who seek to harm us.

God makes past events happen again and again.

David once again began to serve King Saul.
Later, another war broke out, and David led his troops to fight the Philistines and won.
However, Saul again tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him
(1 Samuel 19:7-10; cf. 18:11).
Similarly, in our lives, there are recurring events.
Ecclesiastes 3:15 says,
"Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before;
and God will call the past to account."

Those who oppose God will be shattered!

Those who oppose God will be shattered.
However, God will give strength and great glory to His chosen servants
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:10).

Let us encourage them to depend more faithfully on God.

When David was near Horesh, he heard that King Saul was coming to Ziph to kill him.

Although King Saul searched for David every day to kill him,

Saul's son Jonathan found David at Horesh and encouraged him,

saying, "Rely on God more faithfully. Do not be afraid. My father will not find you.

You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you.

My father knows this as well"

(1 Samuel 23:14-17).

Reflecting on the fact that while Saul sought to kill David,

his son Jonathan sought to encourage him,

I realize that God did not allow David to fall into Saul's hands.

Instead, God made sure that Saul could not find David, as Jonathan had reassured David.

Thus, Jonathan's words, "My father will not find you," came true.

God prevented Saul from finding David,

who relied more faithfully on God due to Jonathan's encouragement.

We must encourage and support those who are weak and powerless

(Isaiah 35:3).

We should strengthen their hearts and always encourage them to live by faith,

telling them that "we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God"

(Acts 14:22).

God listens to the desires of the humble, encourages them, and hears their cries

(Psalms 10:17).

Let us cherish God.

God says: "I will honor everyone who honors me,

and I will despise him who despises me"

(1 Samuel 2:30)

A demand to abandon God?

The Israelites rejected their God, who had brought them out of Egypt and saved them from the hands of the Egyptians and all their oppressors, and who had rescued them from all their disasters and sufferings.

Instead, they demanded a king for themselves

(1 Samuel 10:18-19).

We need to introspect whether our demands in prayer are, in fact, rejecting God.

We must serve God with all our hearts.

Although we have done all these evil things until now,
we must now not leave God and serve Him with all our hearts
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:20).

We must humbly listen to God's warning ...

We must humbly listen to God's warning
about what it means to no longer serve the Lord as the king of our home
and to make ourselves the king of our home
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 8:9).

God's salvation ...

God's salvation does not depend on whether there are many or few people
(1 Samuel 14:6).

This can't be anything other than God's amazing and abundant grace!

Ruth, a gleaner who was not even on the same level as Boaz's servant girls, heard Boaz invite her to eat with him.

She sat with the workers and ate her fill of the food Boaz provided (Ruth 2:14).

Similarly, a sinner, less than an insect, by God's total grace, is justified through faith in Jesus Christ and will one day enter heaven to participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb, feasting on the spiritual food God provides with the Lord.

This is nothing short of God's amazing and abundant grace!

I want to live a life that obeys the word of God.

God said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul? ...

Now go to Bethlehem and find a man named Jesse.

I have chosen one of his sons to be the new king of Israel."

However, Samuel responded, "How can I do that?"

The reason for his hesitation was that, although Saul was still the reigning king, God had already rejected him for his disobedience and had chosen David, one of Jesse's sons, to be the new king.

Samuel feared that if Saul discovered he was going to Bethlehem to anoint a new king as God had commanded, Saul would kill him.

Despite this, "Samuel did what the Lord said"

(1 Samuel 16:1-4).

Samuel, who told the disobedient Saul

that 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (15:22), obeyed God's word himself.

I too want to live a life of obedience to God's word,

just as Samuel did, proclaiming and following His commands.

It is best to listen to the word of God and obey it!

Rather than worship, evangelism, missions, volunteer work, donations, etc.,
it is best to listen to the word of God and obey it!
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 15:22)

When it is very difficult to hear the Word of God ...

When it is very difficult to hear the Word of God,
it can be very difficult for someone like Samuel
who has never heard the Word of God
to discern the voice of God calling us
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 3:1, 4-8).

When God's Holy Spirit strengthens us ...

When God's Holy Spirit strengthens us,
we are more than capable of conquering
(Ref.: Judges 14:6, 19; Romans 8:37).

Without God's grace, we cannot be kind to the wicked.

David said to King Saul the old proverb,
"Evil deeds come from evil men,"
and King Saul responded to David,
"You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good,
whereas I have repaid you evil"
(1 Samuel 24:13, 17).

This indicates that King Saul acknowledged himself as an evil person.
Seeing how David treated such an evil person kindly,
we learn, as Jesus taught, to love our enemies
and do good to those who hate us
(Luke 6:27).

Jesus said, "If you do good to those who are good to you,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners do that" (v. 33).

When we forget the grace of God ...

When we forget that all the blessings
God has already given us in Jesus Christ are entirely by His grace,
we run the great risk of disregarding God's word
and treating Him with contempt by doing evil in His sight
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 12:9-10).

Truly, the workings of God is intriguing.

It's intriguing to note that Saul's servants were aware that an evil spirit sent by God was troubling Saul (1 Samuel 16:15).

Furthermore, it's interesting that one of those servants knew about the fact that among the eight sons of Jesse from Bethlehem, the youngest, David, was chosen by God (v. 18).

However, what's even more fascinating is that Saul, the first king of Israel, upon seeing David, who would become the second king of Israel, admired and loved him instantly, even making him one of his armor-bearers (v. 21).

Truly, the workings of God are intriguing.

Something like a prelude to the fulfillment of God's direct will ...

God permitted Samson's desire to marry a Philistine woman [God's permissive will]

and as Samson was going down to Timnah for that purpose, the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him, prompting him to tear apart a young lion that roared at him.

Furthermore, "because the Spirit of the Lord was upon Samson," when he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of its inhabitants, it was like an overture in fulfilling God's direct will to strike the Philistines (Judges 14:1-6, 19).

Unless God allow us to help them

No matter how many people ask us for help,
it is of no use unless God allows us to help them
(Reference: Judges 11:8-9).

When a person idolizes money ...

The household gods of a man named Micah
became the idols of the Danite tribe
(Judges 18:31).

When one person idolizes money, there is a significant risk
that their household members will also idolize money.
Furthermore, if a church idolizes money,
many Christian individuals within our community
may also be prone to committing the sin of idolizing money.

Intentions to harm us?

They may profess love for us outwardly,
but inwardly they may harbor jealousy and intentions to harm us
(Reference: 1 Samuel 18:22, 25).

Children of a pastor with bad behavior?

How many children of pastors
are so bad that they do not know God?
(Ref.: 1 Samuel 2:12)

You must marry a virtuous woman.

Boaz recognized that Ruth's devotion had increased when he saw her serving her mother-in-law after becoming a widow. In other words, Boaz knew that Ruth was a virtuous woman. Eventually, Boaz married her. From a human perspective, one might think that marrying Ruth wasn't the obvious choice for Boaz. After all, Ruth was not only a widow who had been married once before but also a Moabite woman, not a Jew. Additionally, her mother-in-law Naomi had lost all her possessions and become destitute. Nevertheless, Boaz chose to marry Ruth because he knew she was a virtuous woman.

Could it be that David did not forgive Absalom and hated him for two years?

Why did Absalom name his "beautiful daughter" "Tamar"?

Perhaps he was thinking of his own "beautiful sister" Tamar when he gave the same name to his daughter.

Could it be that Absalom loved his sister Tamar so much?

However, despite his love for his sister Tamar,

Absalom must have harbored deep hatred toward Amnon, who raped her (2 Samuel 13:14, 32).

Absalom didn't speak to Amnon for two years (v. 22)

and then killed him two years later (vv. 23, 29).

It's interesting that Absalom hated Amnon for two years before killing him,

while his father David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem

but kept him away from himself for two years,

as he did not want to see Absalom (14:28).

This suggests that perhaps David harbored resentment toward Absalom for two years, similar to how Absalom felt about Amnon (until he killed him).

Let us rejoice even in tribulation, praise God, and declare His glory!

When I received the phrase

"We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2),

I thought of the words "We also rejoice in our sufferings" (v. 3).

The reason we rejoice even in our sufferings is that

we have hope for the glory that will be revealed when God comes

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:21).

Furthermore, we rejoice in our sufferings

because Christ is being preached

(Philippians 1:18).

Therefore, even though we may be imprisoned in the inner prison

(Acts 16:24),

we pray and sing hymns to God (v. 25).

As we declare to our souls, "Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God,"

and seek God's help through supplication,

we continue to praise God because of His help and deliverance

(Psalms 42:5, 11; 43:5).

The reason is that the Lamb who was slain on the cross

is worthy of glory and praise

(Revelation 5:12, 13).

God, who loved us and chose us in Christ before the creation of the world,

predestined us to be adopted as His children through Jesus Christ,

in accordance with His pleasure and will,

to the praise of His glorious grace,

which He has freely given us in the One He loves

(Ephesians 1:4-6).

Therefore, "My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds,

of your saving acts all day long—

though I know not how to relate them all"

(Psalms 71:15).