

## 47. The Book of 1 Samuel—30:1-20

---

### *“Losing What Really Matters”*

(5/22/16)

#### **1 Samuel 30:1-4 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, <sup>2</sup> and had taken captive the women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way. <sup>3</sup> So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. <sup>4</sup> Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

David was so busy trying to be successful in his profession as a military leader—so busy making a name for himself and gathering more and more wealth—that he neglected his family in the process and left them vulnerable to the enemy (and so did the men that followed him).

It wasn't until he and his men finally return home that they discover the enemy has taken from them their wives, their children and all the things they worked so hard to acquire—only then did they fully realize success means nothing if it allows the enemy to steal from you what really matters.

David was not unlike the young professional in our day that spends more and more time at the office conquering the corporate world and building his portfolio that he neglects what really matters in life and winds up losing his wife to another man who then becomes a father to his children.

It may sound a little trite but it is none the less true—the most important things in life are the things that money can't buy.

In some ways this story reinforces the axiom—“*You really don't appreciate what you have until you lose it*”.

Let's back up and see what led up to this terrible event taking place.

For over a year David and his men (and their families) had been living in Philistine country because David feared Saul would kill him—

**1 Samuel 27:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. *There is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand."

The land of Canaan was the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the children of Israel—the Promised Land.

And as such it represented God's perfect will for His people's lives—the place of blessing, worship (that's where the Tabernacle was located) fellowship and fruitfulness.

When Israel was in the land God promised to bless them—but when they were out of the land (in judgment or when they backslid like David and left) they were outside the center of His will for their lives and His blessing upon them were cut off or at very least severely limited.

So by David leaving the Promised Land and going to live “in the world” (the land of the Philistines—enemy territory)—right there he made his family (and the families of his men) an easy target for the enemy's attacks.

I believe that from a Christian standpoint this relates to the man who leaves God's perfect will for his life (and his family) that place of worship, fellowship and spiritual blessing found in the local church and goes back into the world to live.

It could be he does it because he's backslidden or his job has forced him to move away from a good church into a new town where he now has to work on Sundays—

There are many reasons why a man will forsake fellowship with God and the people of God in the local church and begin once again to fellowship with Philistines (unbelievers).

Not only did David drag his family away from the Promised Land to live among the Philistines—if that wasn't bad enough once he gets there he throws himself (and his men) into one military campaign after another trying build success and amass more and more wealth (chap. 27).

We see David's love for money and greed manifested even after God restores everything to him in v.20 of chapter 30—

**1 Samuel 30:20 (NKJV)**

**<sup>20</sup> Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those *other* livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."**

Had money become so important to David that it consumed his thinking?

Why had he left his family unprotected in the first place while he and his men went out conquering and pillaging—what mattered more to him at this point—his family or his success and prosperity?

Maybe I'm being too hard on David—it could be I'm misreading him as an overachiever, a workaholic and someone that was putting money and success above his family.

But even if I am I know that there are millions of professional people and corporate warriors in our country that are pouring huge amounts of time and energy into making a name for themselves.

They are consumed with a desire for success and wealth, and while they would probably not acknowledge they're placing wealth and success above their family (*"I'm only doing it for them..."*), still that is the end result—they're sacrificing their families on the altar of success and materialism.

The truly sad part is that they are oblivious to the fact that the *greatest* blessing that God has given them on this earth (a part from salvation in Christ) is their family—which if they continue to take for granted and ignore they will lose.

And it will happen when they least expect it, when they're at the top of their game (like David)—they will come home one day and find them gone—they will come home and find they've lost what really matters.

**Now let me broaden this message** to go beyond just the young professional climbing the corporate ladder who is in danger of losing his or her family through neglect because the lessons of this chapter can apply to all of us in some way, shape or form—how to deal with a crisis.

When I originally gave this message I titled it—*"When Life Takes a Turn for the Worse"* and I began it by asking a couple of questions:

- *What do you do when you're going along in life and things are going fine, you're being blessed, your family is healthy and your company is prospering—when all of a sudden the bottom drops out? Your spouse wants a divorce; your company is laying you off; the tests results have come back and show that you or one of your children has a serious and possibly life threatening illness.*
- *What do you do when the road you're on suddenly takes an unexpected turn and you find yourself in a place you never thought you'd be in, facing a situation you're not prepared to deal with?*

Well that's exactly what happened to David and his men as we already read—

**1 Samuel 30:1-4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, <sup>2</sup> and had taken captive the women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way. <sup>3</sup> So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. <sup>4</sup> Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.**

*Ziklag* means “winding road”—and that definitely describes “the road of life”.

You're going along fine where everything seems like smooth sailing when all of a sudden the road you're on takes a turn you didn't see coming.

And suddenly everything in life that matters to you—your marriage, your health, your financial security is suddenly gone—or at least is in danger of being taken from you.

How do you handle that? What do you do? Where do you turn for help and strength?

David is called in Scripture '*a man after God's own heart*'—he was a child of God and becomes, in this passage, an example of how all children of God should handle a crisis of this magnitude.

And how did David handle such a life shattering event like this?

## I. He strengthened himself in the Lord his God—v.6

### 1 Samuel 30:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

The answer to every trial, every tragedy, every unexpected turn in the road of life is always the same for the child of God—we first of all strengthen ourselves in the Lord our God.

You say, *"Okay but how do I do that?"*

### A. Remind yourself that God is still on the throne (sovereign)

I believe the first thing David did even if it's not mentioned here specifically (it is standard operating procedure for all Spirit-filled believers)—was to remind himself that God was still in control of every situation.

David had this mindset—we see it come through in one of the psalms he wrote—Psalm 42:

### Psalms 42:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *for* the help of His countenance.

When I'm facing a terrible problem I can go on being depressed, discouraged and defeated or I can say to myself,

*"What's wrong with you? God is still on the throne. He is with me in this circumstance. He will see me through this. I'm going to hope in Him and not give up".*

**B. Take some time to quiet your heart in God's presence—**

**Isaiah 30:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> ...In quietness and confidence shall be your strength..."

Fight the temptation to let your circumstance drain you of all hope and faith in the Lord's power to overcome whatever it is you're facing—again follow David's example:

**Psalms 27:13-14 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> *I would have lost heart*, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living. <sup>14</sup> Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!

The people of the world turn to pills and booze to get them through difficult times—but the children of God turn to the Lord for strength.

**Isaiah 40:30-31 (NLT)**

<sup>30</sup> Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. <sup>31</sup> But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

**Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)**

<sup>10</sup> Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

**C. Take refuge in His word and grab hold of His promises.**

**Psalms 34:17-19 (NLT)**

<sup>17</sup> The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. <sup>18</sup> The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. <sup>19</sup> The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time.

**Psalm 46:1-3, 10a (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. <sup>2</sup> So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. <sup>3</sup> Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!...<sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that I am God!...

**D. Praise Him for what He’s going to do**

It doesn’t say in this passage that David praised the Lord in this trial—but if you know anything about David he had a heart of worship and praise.

And by that I don’t mean he broke out in song or led his men in a chorus of “*How Great Thou Art*”.

I just mean David spent a few minutes in his heart telling the Lord that even though he didn’t understand why He had allowed this, he praised God for how He was going to work things out—and even if he didn’t we should.

But again I do believe he spent a little time offering up praise to God in the midst of this horrible circumstance.

“*But what if I don’t feel like praising God when I’m in the midst of a terrible circumstance?*”—that’s why the Bible calls it a “*sacrifice of praise*”.

I have been encouraged and strengthened many times when facing difficult circumstances by taking time to get alone with God and putting on some worship music and praising Him.

Praising God for what He’s going to do even before He does anything is a manifestation of faith which is essential if God’s power is going to flow into our lives and help us in our time of need.



So first David encouraged himself in the Lord and then he inquired of the Lord.

## II. He inquired of the Lord (he prayed to God for guidance)—v.7-8

**1 Samuel 30:7-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. <sup>8</sup> So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"...

So often when things take a turn for the worse in our lives—we spend most of the time trying to figure out how we're going to fix the problem and we pray last—when prayer should be one of the first things we do.

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

<sup>6</sup> Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

After encouraging himself in the Lord, David inquired of the Lord—

**1 Samuel 30:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all*."

If you are that workaholic we were talking about earlier who has lost your spouse and family, then this especially applies to you—go after them and try to win them back. (Explain)

To the church that had gotten so busy serving Him that it was neglecting their Spouse, Jesus Christ—He gave them this three step process for fixing their relationship—

**Revelation 2:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works...

*Remember—repent—repeat* (Explain)

**A. Obey God completely and with all your heart in all He tells you to do**

The solution to every problem and difficult circumstance is first of all turning to the Lord for strength and then guidance by going to His Word and doing all He has said (not to your friends or some counselor—but to God's Word).

**Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

**Joshua 1:8 (NLT)**

<sup>8</sup> Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

This is where many Christians blow it—they want to offer God 'selective obedience—what some have called "Salad Bar Spirituality". (Explain)

**B. Remember that anxiety, worry and fear will rob you of God's peace**

**Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)**

<sup>6</sup> Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. <sup>7</sup> Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

The English term *worry* comes from an old German word meaning to *strangle*, or *choke*.

That is exactly what worry is—it's a kind of mental and emotional strangulation, which probably causes more mental and physical harm to us than any other single cause.

Worry is not only bad for you physically; it is detrimental to your spiritual health as well—it will rob you of your peace, your joy, your hope and your faith.

The Word of God says, “*Do not fret (worry) it only causes harm.*” (Ps.38:7)

**C. Wait on God until you see how your circumstance turns out—remember what seems black today can be turned completely around by God tomorrow**

**Psalm 40:1-3 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. <sup>2</sup> He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. <sup>3</sup> He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD.

**1 Samuel 30:18-19 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. <sup>19</sup> And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all.

David recovered all that the Amalekites carried away—not some, not most—but *all*.

This is the Lord's will for all of His children—He wants us to recover all that has been ripped off by sin and the devil.

I can't guarantee that it will all be restored in this life but if not it will be multiplied back to you in heaven someday—until then no matter how badly the enemy attacks you—keep on fighting until you gain the victory—don't give up but strengthen yourself daily in the Lord your God!

## The Bottom Line—

Will we only love God, trust and praise Him when He blesses our lives and does for us what we want Him to do—

In other words, will we only be 'fair weather' Christians—or will we love Him and trust Him and praise Him no matter what?

It's a lot easier to talk about our faith then it is to live it out every day in our lives.

It's a lot easier to encourage others who are going through difficult times than it is to encourage ourselves when we're going through them.

### **Job 4:3-6 (NLT)**

<sup>3</sup> “In the past you have encouraged many people; you have strengthened those who were weak.  
<sup>4</sup> Your words have supported those who were falling; you encouraged those with shaky knees.  
<sup>5</sup> But now when trouble strikes, you lose heart. You are terrified when it touches you. <sup>6</sup> Doesn't your reverence for God give you confidence? Doesn't your life of integrity give you hope?

May the Lord give us faith to trust Him in every circumstance and do what Paul admonished us when he said,

*"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you".*