1 Samuel 11-12 • The Humble King

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

1 Samuel chapter 11. Do you know that there is only One who is worthy to reign over your life? Do you know that? There's only One. There's only One who deserves the role as king and ruler of your life. And obviously that is the Lord who created heaven and earth.

The interesting thing about this God who reigns over our lives is that He waits for us to crown Him king. He actually waits for you and I, and He does not impose Himself into that position of ruler in our lives.

And not only does He wait for us to crown Him king, even when He comes in, He doesn't insist or demand that all areas of your life be turned over to Him all at once.

I don't know about you, but I have found my Christian walk, which has now been some 30 years long, roughly. I have found my Christian walk to be a succession of events in my life that continually bring me to a place of surrendering aspects of my heart and areas of my life over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I probably, when I first came to the Lord, thought that it was this once and for all sort of a thing where you give your life to Jesus like we like to say. Or have you given your heart to the Lord? Well, we use that phraseology, but it never means that you give the totality of your heart over to the Lord.

There's always a new area that the Lord will make you and I aware of. Knock, knock, knock. Hello, child of mine. Did you notice that little thing right there? Yeah. Well, that one's still in your control. Very, very completely in your control and you need to surrender it to Me.

And then there's this tug of war that usually it goes on. Right? Between us and the Lord, where He gently is convicting us through His Spirit to surrender that area to Him, and we're fighting back. And then we'll give it up for an hour or so and then take it back. And the conviction continues and at least we hope it continues.

And eventually we come to a place of surrender. We come to a place of personal defeat where we allow the Lord, and it's a very sweet sort of a surrender on our part. But we allow the Lord to conquer us in another new area of our lives. And we say, we finally bow the knee, and we say, Jesus, go ahead, conquer me in this place too, and we give Him that Lordship.

And there's this freedom that comes from allowing Him into that area of our life and we rejoice in that freedom for a period of time. And feel pretty good about ourselves until the next area of conviction comes along, and we're reminded of yet something else that needs to be brought under His Lordship. And it's just this continual process, isn't it? And it's really a beautiful thing.

But here's the interesting thing about this God who waits for us to crown Him. He will not only wait patiently for you and I to crown Him Lord, He will allow us, crazy as it may sound, to dethrone Him. He will even allow us to dethrone Him.

Of course, He'll allow us to feel the misery that comes along with that, but He will allow it. And we do it sometimes. I've done it. Maybe you don't. I've done it. I've done it on numerous occasions.

I've taken an area of my life back and placed it then firmly under my own lordship, small l, for a while anyway. Until I was so miserable I couldn't see straight and wanted nothing more than to bring it back under His Lordship and the order. The order that comes from His Lordship.

Have you noticed that in your life? Have you noticed that when you give things to the Lord, He begins to order our lives according to the wisdom of His Word. And what comes from order? Peace, doesn't it? Remember what Paul says in 1 Corinthians; I believe it's chapter 14. He says, our God is not a God of disorder but of peace. (1 Corinthians 14:33) So we know what comes from God's order. It brings peace into our lives and we rejoice in that peace.

So how do you know when got an area of your life that's out of order? It's the opposite of peace. It's got chaos. That is the opposite of peace. If something's chaotic, could be your relationships, could be your marriage, which is, should be the most intimate relationship on earth. Maybe that's chaotic.

It could be your sexual life, could be your finances, could be any number of things in your life that's just got chaos written all over it. And one of the reasons, sometimes the reason for that is that it has fallen under the wrong lordship. The wrong ruler is in charge.

Now, I understand with the issues of marriage, I brought up the issue of marriage. Sometimes your relationship can be chaos and it's not necessarily your fault. I understand that. Marriage is one of those unique sort of arrangements that requires two people to be in unity. You could be totally wanting to have your marriage under the Lordship of Jesus, and the other person doesn't. And that can produce chaos. I understand that.

But you understand the principle of what I'm saying here. Rejecting God is a serious matter. And that's one of the, the reason why Samuel was so grieved in the section we looked at before, when Israel came to him and said we want a king. Samuel didn't say something that I wish he would have.

You know how you ever find yourself in that place. You read the thing over and over and you think, wow! Here's what Samuel should have said; you've got One. And he, I feel like he could have done a better job of just explaining, do you understand that! In your wanting a king, a human king, you are dethroning the One that you've got, the King of the universe, who has been Lord and King over this land.

Well, it probably wouldn't have mattered anyway. He went through and told them all the things that life would produce for them with a human king and that didn't sway them at all.

So they demanded a king. They rejected God. They demanded a king. God gave him a king. His name is Saul. And we're in the glory days of Saul right now when he did okay. He started off a pretty humble man, but that didn't continue.

And that's one of the things Samuel also didn't say to the people when he was telling them about what life was going to be like under their king. He didn't, he didn't say, well guys, what happens if your king is a jerk? And he makes life miserable for you.

What happens if he becomes this raving megalomaniac; this total just insane with pride sort of an individual, who would rather kill people than give up his throne? Then what are you going to do? Because that's exactly what Saul became. Probably wouldn't have mattered. They have, sometimes we have to live through things, don't we?

Had God come and told you, in no uncertain terms, how life was going to be like when you decided to go your own way, it probably wouldn't have made any difference. However, going through it made the difference, usually. Sometimes makes the difference in our lives.

But we're going to give Saul an opportunity to be a good guy here in chapter 11. It tells us in verse 1 that, *"Then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you." (ESV)* Stop there.

Well, it's commonly referred to as giving up. The men of Jabesh-gilead are on the outskirts of Israel. They're south of the Sea of Galilee and east a little bit. And they're quite a ways out. They're what you would say, on the edges of Israelite territory. Remember at this particular juncture, Israel doesn't have a standing army. They simply would come together whenever there was a threat. So the men of Jabesh-gilead know that. We don't really have an army that we don't have any way to really defend ourselves. We've got a city.

You notice it says that the king of the Ammonites came and besieged the city. What does that mean? To besiege a city meant to encamp, in fact, your Bible may even say, *"encamped."* But they would come and they would camp around the city and they would keep people from going in and they would keep people from coming out. And they would essentially starve the place out because a city would have to have some movement of goods and services to keep the city in food and that sort of thing.

They would besiege a city by setting up camp around it, and then they would begin to erect what they called, siege works. Which were like, for all intents and purposes, ladders, to be able to scale the city wall. But it would take a period of time and they weren't in any big hurry, because they wanted to starve the people inside the city, because if they did, they would become very weak.

Most of the time, the people would just give up. They'd become so weak and they'd finally say, we give up. Or if they didn't give up, by the time you finally do get your siege works built and you make your way into the city, they're in such a weakened condition, they can't even put up a fight. Either way, it's a win win situation.

But in this case the men of Jabesh-gilead, they don't even put up a fight I don't even know why they didn't just open the door. But they just sent a message to the Ammonites and they said we give up. Make a treaty with us and we'll serve you.

I want you to hear what the Ammonite character then says in verse 2, *"But Nahash the Ammonite said to them,* (okay) *"On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus bring disgrace on all Israel.""*

And this is, this is just cruelty and arrogance speaking. And he's basically, he's so confident in his ability to take this place and do what he wants with it, that he's like, okay, you want to give up? On one condition, I'll gouge out… And what he's saying, the condition is, it's unspoken, but the condition is, I'll let you live if you let me gouge out all of, your right eye out of every person. Otherwise, I'm just going to come in and kill you. I'm just going to come in and wipe you out.

"[3] The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days' respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you." [4] When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people, and all the people wept aloud."

[5] Now, behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen." So what's Saul doing? He's king over all Israel, but he's still farming. This is really a departure. By the time David takes over the king, he'll actually build a palace eventually, and he'll live in Jerusalem, and he'll do the work that a king is supposed to do, which is also judging the people.

But at this point, Saul is still farming. He's just going on with life as usual at this point. So he comes in out of the field, *"And* (he says) *Saul said, "What is wrong with the people, that* (what are) *they are weeping* (about)*?" So they told him the news of the men of Jabesh. [6] And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul…"* Did you notice that? The Spirit of God rushed upon him.

What is that again? He was baptized by the Holy Spirit. And this is the exact language that was used previously when it said the Spirit came upon him, when he came in contact with the prophets, right? And he began to prophesy.

So the Spirit, remember, even in the Old Testament, the Spirit comes upon many times whenever needed. The Spirit comes in, in the New Testament, once when we're saved, but upon whenever needed.

So the Spirit comes upon him and look at this, *"…and his anger was greatly kindled."* And this is a righteous anger. He has this righteous anger of the Lord. And, *"[7] He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. [8] When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand."* So 330,000.

"[9] And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, (or by noon) *you shall have salvation.'"* (or deliverance is what that word means) *When the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. [10] Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you.""*

So they basically send a message to the Ammonite ruler, and they say, alright, tomorrow we'll give up. Just give us, overnight, put our stuff in order. And of course, they're not telling them that they've got a deliverance on the way.

"[11] And the next day Saul put the people in three companies. And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together." So, great victory.

[12] Then the people said to Samuel, (notice who they're talking to, they're talking to Samuel) *"Who is it that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death.""*

You guys remember this? When they installed, when Samuel installed Saul as king over Israel, do you remember? We ended our study last week with a comment by some worthless men who said, who's this Saul character anyway? What's he going to do to save us? He's not going to be able to save us. And it says they despised him.

Now their first opportunity to see the Lord work through Saul takes place and God brings about a great deliverance. And now all the people are like, okay, who are all those people talking about Saul saying that he couldn't do anything for us? Bring him on out and we'll kill him and stuff. Put him to death.

Notice Saul's response. *"[13] But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day,* (and why?) *for today the LORD has worked salvation in Israel.""* Again, that word means, deliverance in Israel. You got to like this. You got to like this about Saul.

It would have been an easy thing flesh, fleshly speaking, to take advantage of the excitement of the people. The fact that they just had a victory. To say, you know what? This is a great opportunity to get rid of my enemies. These guys that are just big fat jerks. They're pretty much worthless. They're a drain on society and they do nothing but complain and murmur. Bring them out here.

Let's get rid of them. We'll just clean things up a little bit. Would have been an easy thing to do.

But I think it's interesting that at this point anyway, Saul is recognizing that the battle was won by God. And that's exactly what he says here. He says, no, we're not going to do that. First of all, nobody's going to die. We've just been delivered from our enemies.

Had the Lord not fought for us, we might all be dead. But God fought on our behalf and He brought about a great deliverance this day. So if God delivered us from our enemies, should we then begin to kill ourselves? No, nobody's going to die today in Israel. And then I love what he says, for today the Lord has worked deliverance. *"...for today the LORD has worked salvation in Israel."* Oh, if only Saul kept that uppermost in his mind. Amen. These early adventures of Saul, though, are pretty good.

"15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly."

What's going on here in this last verse of the chapter? I thought they already installed Saul as king. Well, they did, but it was mostly Samuel. It was mostly Samuel who brought the people together and said, you guys wanted a king, here's your king. And they all went, long live the king. And then Saul went back to his farm and started farming.

And because there was really no. It's like, now what do we do? We got a king, it's like, do we have a parade? I don't know. So they just went back to life as usual. Well, then a battle situation came up and suddenly they saw how the Lord was willing to work, even through their disobedience, and to use this king to bring about a great deliverance in Israel.

And now the people are on board suddenly, when it affected them personally, now they're okay with it. Now they're like, okay, we're going to crown this guy king. If we didn't do it officially before, we're going to do it officially now. So they decided to redo the coronation process.

Chapter 12. Well now, the king is firmly installed, so what's going to happen in Chapter 12? This is basically going to be Samuel's farewell speech to the people. *"And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you. 2 And now, behold, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray; and behold, my sons are with*

you. I have walked before you from my youth until this day. [3] Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you.""

What is, what is Samuel doing? You might be, it's like, well, this is a strange farewell speech. I mean, wouldn't it be okay just to go, alright, looks like we got things squared away, we're all good, you're good, I'm good, goodbye. I'm going to go to Tahiti now and wind out my twilight years just soaking up the sun.

And Samuel starts talking to them about his life and he says, I want you to, I want you to tell me, testify to me. What have I done wrong? Have I defrauded you? Have I stolen from you? Have I oppressed you? Have I hurt you in any way? He said, I've served the Lord before you from my youth until now. Remember he started about age three or four until this time. He has literally been serving the Lord from like age three or four. What have I done?

Why is he doing that? Because remember the people rejected God and they rejected God's established system of leadership. And that system of leadership was Samuel as a judge. And so Samuel is saying, so you wanted me out, and you wanted the king in. Okay, your king is in, so this is me, saying goodbye.

But before I go, can I just ask you guys something? What exactly did I do wrong? What exactly did I do to deserve the boot? And now Samuel is not feeling sorry for himself. This is not a pity party. Because this is to get the people to think through this whole process. Why, again, did you want a king? Was it because the established situation wasn't working and so forth.

And the people respond here in verse 4, and *"They said,* (well, what are you talking about?) *"You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand.""* Did we ever say that you did? I mean, man, aren't you a little touchy in your old age?

"[5] And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."

He's basically doing this for the record. He's saying, okay, for the record, are you saying to me that I never did anything wrong? They're saying, yes, you never did anything wrong. For the record. Alright, for the record.

"[6] And Samuel said to the people, "The LORD is witness, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt."

He reminds them that the established form of leadership in Israel was God choosing the leaders. He reminds them. Who chose Moses? The people? Who chose Aaron to be high priest? The people? No. It was the Lord.

"[7] Now therefore stand still that I may plead (or your Bible may say *reason*) *with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous deeds of the LORD that he performed for you and for your fathers."* Then he begins to go through some history.

"[8] When Jacob went into Egypt, (remember? because of the famine) *and* (ultimately and eventually) *the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to the LORD and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. [9] But* (what did they do?) *they forgot the LORD their God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them. [10] And they cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.'"*

And what did God do? Verse 11. *"And the LORD sent Jerubbaal* (and by the way, that was Gideon) *and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety."*

He's reminding them, listen, the only reason you guys ever had problems with warfare was because of your disobedience. That's why kings came against you, because you disobeyed. But even when you disobeyed, God raised up deliverers. And he begins to recount just a handful of them. He leaves out a ton of them. But he's basically giving them a quick history lesson of the Book of Judges.

And what did God do? He delivered you from your enemies. And the result was you lived in safety. Isn't that a picture of your life and my life when God delivers us from sin? We cry out to the Lord about the areas of sin in our lives and God delivers us. And we live in safety and it's wonderful. But what do we do? We fear again.

Look at verse 12. This is important. *"And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God was your king."*

What prompted them to do that? For a king. We looked at the other reasons that were revealed to us earlier in the Scriptures They wanted a king like the nations, they wanted to be like the nation's the peoples around them They wanted to have an army.

This was the big thing though. They were being threatened again by Nahash of the Ammonites. And they were and they were fearful even though Samuel is telling him here, did God ever not deliver you from your enemies? He always raised up a deliverer. He always took care of you. He always worked out the details.

God came to your aid over and over and over and over again. Can't God say that to you and me? Does, does He ever say that to you? Is there ever a time when I've not delivered you? When you've cried out to me? Have I ignored you? Have I just let you alone? Have I forsaken you? Is there ever a time that I have forsaken you? The answer is no.

But then something happens. We become fearful. There's an enemy that mounts a campaign against us. And what do we do? We run to the world. We run to get our own answers, and so forth, once again. And what we end up doing is we end up rejecting God. It's tantamount to that.

Verse 13, *"And now behold the king whom you have chosen,* (or) *for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you."* Now, and look at this, this is such mercy on God's part.

Now, *"14 If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well."*

Isn't this amazing? Isn't this incredible? And people say there's no mercy in the Old Testament. This is God saying to them, you guys have blown it so bad that you absolutely kicked Me off the throne. And you installed, because you were fearful, a human king, who is going to be an absolute jerk and he is going to be a crazy man, but you're going to have to live with him.

But listen to Me. He says, even now, even now, if you will turn to Me, if you will follow Me, if you will be obedient to Me, if you will follow My Word, it will go well with you. Even now, it's not lost. All is not lost.

How many times has the enemy whispered in your ear when you've messed up and basically told you, you're toast? It was all over except the screaming. The enemy loves to do that. Do you know that? Do you know that's the enemies? One of his favorite whisperings. You mess up, you do something stupid, you do something you shouldn't do. You go run after the world, you run after your own solution. You try to fix your own problem. You basically forsake the Lord. And the enemy's like, well, phew! Glad I'm not you. Pretty much over for you. Yeah. Yep. Glad I'm not you.

And God says, even now, even now, I love you and I am here for you. And if you will turn your heart back to Me, and if you will recommit your heart to Me today, to live and to walk after Me with all of your heart, this can work. This relationship can still work. We can still do this. It's pretty amazing stuff, but there's also a converse.

Look at verse 15, *"But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD,* (in fact) *but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you* (and guess what?) *and your king."*

In other words, you guys wanted a king. I gave you a king. Just know something. It isn't a panacea. This is not a magic bullet. This is not a wand that you can wave over your problems and have them go away.

Listen, obedience to the Lord is still a key element, He's basically telling Israel. To this relationship, to this covenant that we have established. Whether you have a king or not. Or a human king over you or not, you are still required to walk with Me to walk before Me. And let me tell you something you all disobey Me and it's going to go bad for you and your king.

"Now therefore (verse 16) *stand still and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. [17] Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king.""*

To get a rain storm that is accompanied by thunder and the wind of just that kind, that's a very, very dangerous thing to happen during wheat harvest because it can ruin the whole harvest. It can literally ruin the harvest.

"[18] So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

[19] And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." [20] And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. [21] And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty."

Oh, that is so deep. That, I mean, isn't that just good? Don't *"turn aside to empty things."* You know why? Because they're empty. It's not rocket science, but it's deep from the standpoint that this is so, this is so our lives. This is so us. You've done all this evil, yet, turn back to the Lord with all of your hearts.

Now they don't do that by the way. In fact, you can even hear in their voice. There really isn't a voice of repentance that's spoken here. They're sorrowful. Pray, *"Pray… to the LORD your God…"* And that's a little bit of a bummer too.

Shouldn't they be saying, we come to the Lord, our God, we will come before the Lord, our God, and, and repent of this great thing. They don't, they say, wow, your God's pretty ticked I see. Well, would you intercede on our behalf to your God and pray for us and so forth. Rather than coming before the Lord in brokenness. And that's what God's looking for out of you, and I. Brokenness.

As a parent when my kids, did something they shouldn't have done, I always looked for brokenness. And brokenness is an attitude It's an attitude. It's not just sorrow for getting caught. It's brokenness that, dad, that was wrong, what I did, and I'm really sorry. It's a genuine heart condition and that's what a parent looks for. Because you often what you get from your kids is just sorrow because they got caught or no sorrow at all in the face of getting caught.

And so you look for that attitude that says, I'm, I really am genuinely sorry. And you know what? When my kids were genuinely sorrowful and there was a real true brokenness there. Every parent knows, you don't, you don't have to punish your kid at that point. They've punished themselves. They've understood the dynamic of the consequences of their actions. And punishing them at that point would add insult to injury, and would actually be counterproductive.

I mean, when kids are genuinely repentant and genuinely broken over what they've done, apart from punishment, even, you just go, wow, that's, that's so sweet. And you sit down with your child, you put your arm around them, and

you talk and you just, you have a great interchange over what has happened, and so forth. It's those kids who harden their hearts that you struggle with. And they become stiff necked in the face of getting caught and the punishment that often is associated with it. Then you fear for the child.

And these guys are like, yeah, pray, to God, because this is pretty. We see this pretty heavy stuff, but they didn't repent. They didn't turn around and go the other way. And you really, in this passage, wish that they would have.

And I love how he says, don't be afraid now, but don't *"…turn aside after empty things…* (which can't) *profit or deliver, for they are empty."* Boy, the world is just full of so many empty things that we can turn to so easily, so quickly. May the Lord deliver us from empty, empty decisions. Empty actions on our part. Empty solutions to problems.

When you are faced with a problem, get into the habit of asking yourself, and why am I doing this? Second, guess yourself. Why am I doing this? Am I doing this because the Lord is leading me to do this, or am I doing this because it's what I've learned, or it's just coming up, it's bubbling up from inside of me out of fear or panic or whatever? Is this because I've been counseled by someone else to do this? Why am I doing this? And is this, in fact, the Lord's solution for this issue.

That's the question that we all need to be asking about what we do and why are we doing this? Why am I doing this? And it doesn't even have to be a solution to a problem. It can be a solution to a perceived condition.

I ask people all the time, well, you try to if you can get a word in edgewise sometimes, but even why people go to school. Like college I'm talking about. Why are you going? Why are you doing that? Well, it's what you do. Bad answer. What that tells me is, I'm going because it's a. expected of me, b. its traditional, c. I don't want to live under a bridge for the rest of my life. I want to have money. Bad answer. Why are you doing it? Why are you going to school?

Why are you going to learn this or why are you going to take those classes? Why? Why? The Lord leading you? Is God directing you to do that? Or is that your solution?

See the problem, the perceived issue or problem or condition is I want to be able to pay my bills. Hey, that's acceptable, that's fine. Okay, so I'm going to go to school, and I'm going to learn to trade, or I'm going to learn this, so I can have a career or something like that.

The basic essence of that is sound but have you prayed? Is the Lord leading you? Is the Lord guiding you in the direction that you're going, or is it just a decision that you've made?

You see, we do this and it starts with fairly innocuous things. You might, and you might even be saying, pastor Paul, aren't you picking knits here a little bit? I mean, good grief. What's the big deal? People have going to school, the place of their choice for a long time around here. It's never seemed to hurt anybody. That's not the point. The point is it establishes a precedent in our lives. Do you understand that? Do you understand establishing precedents, patterns, ruts?

We teach our kids from their earliest years, Well, you're going to grow up, you're going to go to school, you're going to graduate from high school, and then you're going to go to college. And we just tell them these things are expected out of them. And we establish a precedent of just that's the way you do it. It's tradition. You go to school, all the kids are… And you, dad's looking, all my kids are going to go to college. You're going to graduate with a degree in something, sort of a thing. I understand, I understand.

But when you become an adult and you begin thinking for yourself and praying about things and you recognize that your life is not your own, but it belongs to the Lord.

We have I think it is important for us to begin to say why am I doing this? Is this the Lord's leading? Father God lead me in the way that I am to go. Open the doors that you want me to walk through. I am going to trust you to guide my life. My life doesn't belong to me. It belongs to You, so You take me where You want me to go.

Oh, I wish I would have been able to think through things like this when I was in my younger years. I really do. I wish I would have had the an upbringing, that said to me, give your life to the Lord and trust Him to lead you as He sees fit because He's a good leader. He's a good father and He won't leave you nor forsake you. I wish I'd heard those things when I was a kid. I grew up just like a lot of you just thinking that's what you do. That's what you do. And it becomes this habit. It's a habitual behavior.

And then we become believers. I mean, we become, committed adult believers and we have problems and we face issues. Who are the Ammonites in your life who have just laid siege to your city? Who are they? What are they? I don't necessarily, but we all have them. We all have Ammonites. We all have enemies.

We all have things that come up against us and lay siege and they don't want to let us out. And they don't want to let anybody in. And they're just going to sit there and wait us out until we finally give up and we say, all right, come on in. I surrender. So who are your Ammonites and will you trust the Lord?

Verse 22. *"For the LORD will not forsake his people,…"* If that isn't underlined in your Bible, it probably should be. *"For the LORD will not forsake his people,…"* That's a promise. *"For the LORD will not forsake his people,…"* Am I saying it enough? Is it getting through your heart? *"For the LORD will not forsake his people,…"* Do you believe that? Sometimes. Right? Sometimes I do. Sometimes I don't. Right? If we're going to be honest, isn't that the truth?

Sometimes we don't believe it. You know what? I'll admit it right here in front of you. Sometimes I don't believe the statement. On my good days, no problem. I got it dialed in. Bad days when the ammonites are knocking at my door, and they want to break it down, and come in, and kill me. I'm not so sure about that, but we can always be sure can't we? We can always know.

"For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. (and God is no less pleased to have you be a child of his) *[23] Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you,…"*

Now, you remember what the people said to him? They said, hey, you need to pray for us. Would you please intercede for us? And, and so, Samuel says, *"far be it from me that I"* wouldn't do that. I will pray for you. In fact, not to do so would be a sin against the Lord. And he says, and look at this, *"…and I will instruct you in the good and the right way."*

In other words, as long as there's breath in these lungs, I will tell you go this way and not that way. I will instruct you. That's the role of a teacher. I will instruct you in the good and the right way. That's, in fact, that's a beautiful description of a teacher right there.

"[24] Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. [25] But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

What does it mean to fear the Lord? We've talked about this before. To fear the Lord means to consider my actions appropriately under His Lordship and rule. That's what it means. To consider appropriately my actions under His Lordship.

In other words, if I'm going to do something, is that what the Lord would have me to do? And if it's not what the Lord would have me to do, then I'm not going to do it. That's what it means to fear the Lord. Putting God first, making His will your ultimate desire, right?

To fear the Lord, I fear the Lord. Doesn't mean I sit in cowering fear and I'm afraid to even talk to Him. It means I understand that He is in charge of my life. I understand He's the sovereign ruler over all the earth and over my life as well. And that there are consequences to going my own way and I want to keep those out of my life.

It's really the same thing that a child— do you know that when you're telling a child don't do this? And if you do, I will spank you. You're putting the fear of parent in them. That's all that is. You're basically giving them a choice. They can do what they've been told not to do, or they can deal with you. No, they cannot do what you've told them not to do, or they can deal with you. They can choose to obey. Or they can deal with the consequences, right?

And what is going to stop them from doing what you've told them not to do? Fear right. Do you see why our culture has gotten so tweaked? You're never to do that with the child. Well listen. If a child doesn't have a fear of parent, they got no fear. And they will do what they find good in their own eyes. And not only will it be a danger to them, but it'll be, it'll create misery for you as their parent. And I mean, misery. Misery.

I am a firm believer in the fact that a lack of parenting is probably the number one cause of violence in the home later on. When children get older, the kids never corrected, never corrected, never corrected. There's no fear in their eyes.

And then they finally get to the point where the young man's a teenager and he does something to cross dad. And dad never, ever corrected him once. And now they have this disobedience and it's really just like two grown adults. And what are they going to do? They're going to tighten up their fists and come at each other. Because there was never a place for correction and obedience in the home.

Anyway, so it's really the same thing when we talk about the fear of God. It's the same thing. God says, listen, I love you. I love you with an everlasting love. But these things, there are things in this world that will hurt you. They will hurt you bad. And if you go there, it's going to be bad news. If you hear the voice of God and you respond, that's what it means to fear the Lord.