

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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Today we'll look at II Samuel, Chapter 5. David is now king of all Israel with headquarters at Hebron, the capital of Judah. He wants to move his capital to Jerusalem, the city where, in Abraham's time, Melchizedek was king and God was the High Priest. This was brilliant thinking. It would eliminate the foreign wedge between the southern and northern tribes. At this time, though, the city was called Jebus and was partially held by the Jebusites, the local Canaanites. Jerusalem was a city of hills. Mt. Zion, the southern hill, was very high and had valleys on two sides so it needed defence on only one side. The Jebusites had built a citadel on that side and for 400 hundred years had successfully resisted the attempts of the Jews to displace them. At this time, the northern part of Jebus was inhabited by the Benjamites and the southern part by the Jebusites who were quite safe in their citadel. They had a water supply which had been provided by digging a 40 ft. shaft through rock down to the one perpetual spring in all of Jerusalem which was just outside of this hill. They had access to the water through this shaft and could sit up there with an abundant supply of water. Incidentally, this is the same water source that Hezekiah accessed by digging a 1800' tunnel from the Pool of Siloam. You can walk through it today. This has been a source of water for Jerusalem for many years. It was very helpful during sieges. Outside Jerusalem there is nothing. Any invading army attempting a siege had to bring water from a long distance. It was quite a burden on them. Meanwhile the Jews could sit inside the city drinking bubbly, fresh, pure, spring water. At the time we are discussing here, so could the Jebusites. The place where God wanted to establish his name was a defiant force of Amorites. It was the ideal city for David to take. It did not belong to anybody yet, literally, that is. If he wanted to unite the tribes of Israel, instead of some city that would cause jealousy, here was a city in Benjamin, yet not really belonging to Benjamin, which had been unconquerable for 400 years. It had real political implications. It would bring the tribes together in a neutral position, and, if he could take it, it would display David's remarkable ability to fight, to be their king, their leader, their captain. So his first move in attempting to consolidate his empire was to move against the Jebusites. He probably did it immediately because he had a large group of troops here which had gathered to make him king.

So we pick up in verse 6, now, as he begins moving against Jerusalem.

II Samuel 5:6:

Now the king and his men went to Jerusalem [which was called Jebus then] against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, [they were local Canaanites] and they said to David, "You shall not come in here, but the blind and lame shall turn you away"; thinking, "David cannot enter here." Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. And David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, through the water tunnel." Therefore they say, [a proverb] "The blind or the lame shall not come into the house." So David lived in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built and fortified all around from the Millo [which is the citadel] and inward.

David has been engaging in guerrilla warfare for sometime now, and he knows all kinds of tricky and sneaky ways to avoid being captured. He understands fighting and, as a result, picks the one route that can get them into the citadel, up the water shaft. In I Chronicles 11, he issues a challenge, whoever is first up the water shaft and attacks the Jebusites shall be commander and captain of all Israel, and Joab does just that. Joab may be an unprincipled character but he is smart, and he is a good leader. He takes the gang up through the water shaft, breaks out into the city and takes the whole citadel.

He may have had in mind how the city of Babylon was taken. Babylon also was impregnable. It was designed to be self-sustaining with fields for growing food within its thick walls. With the Euphrates river running through the middle of it, all nature of crops, fruits, nuts, cereals, could be grown. It was fourteen miles on each side and had walls thick enough to race four horse chariots along the top rushing troops from place to place. Well, Darius, the Mede was pretty smart. When he wanted to take

the city, which was down on the plain, up behind the hill he built a viaduct. Then one night, when he wanted to take the city, he collapsed the walls into the river thus making a dam and forcing the water down this viaduct and around the city. His troops, then, just followed the receding water down the river bed, walked under the city walls and slaughtered the inhabitants. This is very much akin to what Joab did. This could be where David got his idea of slipping up the shaft.

David takes the city now and calls it the "city of David."

II Samuel 5:10:

And David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him.

God wanted him to have that city. David was a type of Jesus Christ, and God wanted his king to be the one to take that city which was to be called the city of David, the city of God. So for 400 hundred years God preserved that city, right in the middle of Israel, just for David.

It is an intriguing thing to watch the sovereignty of God and how he preserves things for you. Did you ever dream that God might set something up just for you? Did you ever look upon someone who comes into your life as someone that, from all eternity, God has set apart just for you? It is very helpful in counseling, for example, to realize when you look at somebody who is totally bombed out and you have no idea what to say, "Hey, wait a minute. If I really believe the Scriptures, then from all eternity God has sent this person into my life at this time just for me, and I am God's ideal person for this situation. I don't know why yet, but there are no accidents in my life, and God has planned this from all eternity." So it makes this: my counselee, or your Bible class, or your witness to your neighbors, or the boss you've got, or the job you've got, whatever. It is exactly what God wants you to have. It is uniquely yours, not anyone else's. It is your apple to pluck.

There had been attempts to take the city of Jerusalem for 400 hundred years, but all that had been taken was the northern part of it. Why? It was David's apple to pluck. It was to be the city of David (as a type of Jesus Christ), so God reserved it for him. For 400 hundred years it was a festering wound in the side of Israel but God delivered it to them right on schedule. The tragedy is that David gave away the chance to be the leader himself. Joab, as we know, is an unprincipled character and once more takes an opportunity to build another brick in the wall he is building for himself in the kingdom.

Then God gives David a second sign he has set this city aside for this king.

II Samuel 5:11:

Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees [Cedar, by the way, was extremely desirable in the ancient near East for palaces. Cedar was the mark of an especially good palace. It really set you apart. So this was a very special gift from Hiram] and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a house for David. And David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

David finally gets a house built, or rather a palace, a gorgeous thing built by a foreign king. It finally dawns on David that God has truly set him up to be the king of Israel, and God is going to exalt the nation of Israel for his children.

What is there about the history of the Promised Land, particularly from the patriarchal times, that might give David this concept? What did God make Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do while they were in the land? Hebrews 11, Genesis 12-21. God gave them the land. He said, "It's yours." From the Euphrates to Egypt, [eventually the exact distance of David's kingdom, by the way.] But what did he make the patriarchs do while in the land? Dwell in tents. Yes! He never gave them a city. They were never allowed to build a city. They were never allowed to take a piece of dirt and say, "This is my dirt. This is my city," and settle down. As Hebrews points out, they had to live as aliens, as foreigners, in the land of promise, the inheritance, which God had given them. David had the Abrahamic Covenant in his background. He knew it very well. Now God has had a foreign king build him a palace, a solid structure, in the midst of a city the Jews had never been able to take. It begins to dawn on David, now, that God is really moving to give him the kingdom which he promised under the Abrahamic Covenant. It is intriguing that when David got through, he not only had a palace in Jerusalem, but also the land of Canaan which stretches from the Euphrates all the way down to Egypt. He had the promised land under his authority. Part of it was under his direct jurisdiction, part of it as vassals, but he controlled from Egypt to the Euphrates, most of the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, the very land God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So as God begins to allow him to do these things, David begins to see the hand of God at work.

Unfortunately he also sees something else. In the ancient near East, one of the signs that you were a really great king was the magnificent harem you had. The bigger the harem, the bigger the king, because generally you made alliances by marrying the daughters of other kingdoms. So David succumbed, unfortunately, to the very thing the nations around him were doing even though he was God's king.

II Samuel 5:13:

Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David.

Remember he had six wives, plus concubines, in Hebron. In Jerusalem he takes more wives and more concubines. He is building up this magnificent harem. He probably had a tally of ten wives. He had nineteen sons by his wives. We don't know how many concubines he had or how many children he had by them. They are not enumerated. He also had a number of daughters. The tragedy of the situation was that instead of breeding a family, it bred competition. The lusts of David's heart and the desire of David's heart to be magnificent like the kings about him resulted in the destruction of the nation.

A member of the class indicated she always thought all of David's wives were Israelites.

These wives here are Israelite wives, as far as we can tell. We don't know anything about his concubines. All we know is that he had at least ten wives; we can't figure out the number of concubines. We can figure out that he had at least 19 sons, probably by his wives, since only the sons of wives are listed by name, [and many daughters], beyond that we can't tell.

He extends his borders up to the land of Canaan where he picks up some Semitic women, whether or not they are Israelites I don't know, but at least they are Semites, if he goes up to the Euphrates.

Where did his son Solomon get his idea of multiple wives and multiple concubines? From his dad. It worked for David. It will work for Solomon. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. You can imagine the number of children he had. What chance would there have been for a one-flesh relationship with even 10 wives and umpteen concubines? Absolutely none. Where in Scripture did God point out that marriage was to be a one-flesh relationship in Ephesians 5? No, Genesis 2. God was against plural marriages from the beginning of marriage. It was in the law of God and this law was to be read daily and memorized by the kings of Israel, one man, one woman, one-flesh forever. They knew it. But looking around they said, "Hey, by marrying here and marrying there, I can get powerful families on my side. I can get powerful nations on my side. I can make alliances here. I can make alliances there. I can save all kinds of trouble. By marrying the daughter of this king over here, no way will he come over and fight me when I have his grandchildren. His wife would cut him off at the knees." So David falls into this trap. Solomon falls into exactly the same trap. There are five basic rules that God had laid down for the kings of Israel to obey. There were also a couple the nation had to adhere to in choosing their king. He had to be an Israelite from among the brothers and he had to be God's choice, but then there were five things God demanded the king must choose to obey [found in Deuteronomy 17]. #1- He was not to multiply horses. He was not to trust in a standing army of chariots even though all the nations around him had them. "I'm going to fight your battles for you." #2- He was not to multiply wives lest they lead his heart astray from God. #3- He was not to multiply for himself gold and silver. He was not to make himself rich by being king. #4- He was to write down for himself a copy of the law of God, and he was to read it daily. He was to be a man of the Word of God. #5- He was not to lord it over his brothers. He was to be a servant, a brother. God was king and the king of Israel his vicar, his substitute, his visible representative.

A member of the class wondered if maybe God was injecting a certain compromise considering the cultural environment in which they were living, not insisting on one woman marriage, but considering the culture.

Let me change the word compromise. God makes no compromises. You will see that in the life of David. You are going to see tragedy in the life of David because of his "compromises." You are going to see it in the life of Solomon. He destroyed the kingdom with his compromises. Now God did, as it says in Acts 17, allow for the ignorance of the people, but David is still mightily with the Spirit of God, and I don't see that the Spirit of God is any less God in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. He is God! He is just as capable of illuminating the mind of an Old Testament person living in that culture not to "compromise" as he is in the New Testament. It is in the law of the Jews; a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they, the two, shall become one flesh. That started way way back. Since David is still mightily in the Spirit of God, if he were open to hear, he would be told. In other words, you don't have to be a victim of your culture.

Now God does allow for cultural habits or patterns. When the gospel moves into a new area, God does not upset the local culture. However, we do. We have done it many times. As I have mentioned to this class before, we have done it in Africa. We have put women into prostitution in the name of Jesus Christ. Multiple wives were normal in the tribes. We went into the tribes, won them to Christ, then laid down Western rules. "OK, you are allowed one wife only, and that is the first one. The rest of them have got to go." Well, in their culture there was no market for a used wife. So their only alternative was prostitution. In the name of Jesus Christ, we put women into prostitution. We don't do that any more. We make missionaries take a course in cultural anthropology before we send them out. God changes the lives of the people, and then allows the changed lives to begin to change the culture. Jesus Christ never spoke against slavery. 1/2 to 2/3 of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves, animals, no rights. Christ said if you were a Christian slave, you were to be the best slave in town. I Peter says, even if your master was the worst person in town, a rotten guy; even if he hit you in the face with his fist, [literally in the Greek], it was pleasing to God if you

served him faithfully and respectfully. Why? Because a pagan could not do that. They would be bitter and resentful and try to double deal in any way they could, but you are to be different. You are to serve an unkind master the very best you know how. He also said, "Master, remember you have a master in heaven. You are to treat your slaves with fairness and justice, since you are going to answer to me someday." And then he allowed the changed lives of the masters to begin releasing the slaves, and the changed lives of the slaves to begin converting the masters. So, when Onesimus ran away from his master Philemon and was converted, Paul sent him right back to his master. Oh, yes, he did send a letter with him in hopes that Philemon would release Onesimus, but he did not order it.

A member of the class asked, "Were slaves killed in that era?"

Yes, and tortured badly, too. You see the Romans were spread so thin that they couldn't stand any kind of uprising and, as a result, could be very brutal to slaves. Unless Philemon was a brother of Christ, he could kill Onesimus. He could torture him, imprison him, condemn him to fight beasts in the arena, expose him to die of starvation, or kill him, with or without cause. If a slave ran away and was caught he could be crucified. My point is Paul did not order Philemon to let Onesimus go. Instead Paul said, "Charge what is owed you to my account." He hoped that Philemon might decide to set Onesimus free, but he didn't order him to do so, and he sent Onesimus right back to his master. God is in the process of changing a whole culture. He's not interested in culture shock but culture change. He knows that, as the gospel spreads, it will change people and that, in turn, will change the culture.

A member of the class mentioned that God did make certain adjustments for certain times.

Yes, that's right. Divorce is an example. Through the Mosaic Law God gave the right of divorce because a woman, in those days, had no life outside of marriage or her father's house. Therefore, in order to set her free from marriage, she was given the writ of divorcement. But Christ cites that as an exception due to the hardness of their hearts. It was the lesser of two evils, and therefore God, for the woman's sake, allowed the lesser of two evils. He makes no fun about it; it is evil. God still hates divorce. But he also knows there is a culture out there which God is in the process of changing. The tragedy here is that David did not have to be a victim of culture.

You ask me if I think a believer could have the ability to judge right and wrong taken away from him. It seems David got to the point where he didn't know it was wrong to have multiple wives.

Well, we are going to see this in the tragedy of Michal in the very next chapter. She was David's first wife. Do you remember how David got his first wife? She was a gift from Saul primarily as a snare. "I want 100 foreskins of the Philistines. That is all I ask for a dowry, David." He wanted Michal, who loved David, to be a snare to get David killed by the Philistines. It didn't work though. David didn't love Michal, but David wanted Michal, because as a Princess, he would be married to one of the daughters of Saul. So, David went out and got 200 foreskins. He doubled his dowry, and he really sealed Saul into his promise. He got Michal, but it never says David loved Michal in Scripture. Michal saved David's life. When Saul was trying to kill him, he ran home, and Michal said, "Get out of town. I know, Daddy." She took her household god, an idol, which was big enough to simulate a body and put it in bed. She covered it over with clothes and put the goat hair thing on its head which was worn at night in those days. She, the Princess of Israel, has a household idol which is big enough to substitute for a body. She is an idolatress in the midst of Yahweh worshippers. She risked her life for David. Then, while David is gone ten years in the wilderness, Saul gives her to another man. David comes back into Hebron, but it is seven years before he takes her back and then it is only, as we saw in chapter 3, because Abner is moving in on the house of Saul by grabbing one of Saul's concubines. David is playing oneupmanship with Abner, "I will make a covenant with you, sure, but I won't even talk to you until you deliver me Michal, Saul's daughter." He wasn't just talking. He wanted the daughter of Saul back. Good politics! Unfortunately, David was a lousy husband.

So, getting back to verse 13, David, like the other kings, increased wives and concubines, violating the principles of God. Interestingly, even though God blesses David's building of the kingdom, he does not allow sin to go unpunished or the consequences of sin to go unrewarded. While David is expanding the kingdom and claiming the Abrahamic Covenant, he is sowing the seeds that will lead to the destruction of that kingdom in two generations. His son Solomon follows in his father's footsteps and even goes so far as to violate #5 rule for kings and become a tyrant. His kingdom splits with one part going to his son Rehoboam.

God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows he shall also reap. If he sows to the flesh, he will reap of the flesh corruption. If he sows to the Spirit, he will reap of the Spirit life everlasting. Two systems side-by-side right down here. David is both a beautiful example and a tragic example of both sides. Blessed by God on one hand and with the curse of sin on the other. Both of them go hand-in-hand as we walk through life; Here the blessing from God as we go in Christ, and over here the effect of sin we have allowed in our lives. God gives us the blessings and he allows the sin's effects along with it. You don't escape. Don't ever kid yourself; God is not mocked. He has no double standards, one for Christians and one for unbelievers, not even for David, a man after his own heart.

Now the Philistines heard David had been anointed king over Israel, verse 17. Remember the Philistines saw David as kind of a hostage, or at least a loyal vassal to Achish, king of Gath. While Abner tried to gather all of Israel under his domain, David was another man with a strong force. The kingdom was divided by Abner and David into two different spheres of influence. The Philistines weren't about to attack David as long as David could keep Abner from trying to regain all the territory the Philistines had taken. But now David is the uniting force. So, before he can reorganize and really get in the saddle, they want to move in and wipe him out.

And so II Samuel 5:17:

When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David; and when David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold. [*This is the citadel he has. It worked for the Jebusites, and it will work for David*] **Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim** [*This is simply the valley right outside to the west of Jerusalem. They come right up to the city just over a little hill from the city. David got smart again*] **Then David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt Thou give them into my hand?"** [*Or shall I stay locked up here in the citadel?*] **And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand."** **So David came to Baal-perazim, and defeated them there;** [*literally, he smote them there*] **and he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters."** **Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim.** [*Lord of the breakthrough*] **And they abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away**

I Chronicles 14 indicates they burned the idols with fire. Deuteronomy 7 says any idol is contaminated. It should be treated as a contaminated piece. The Israelites were not to even take the gold or silver off of it. The whole idol was contaminated and should be totally destroyed by fire no matter how valuable or how precious it was. So they took the idols and burned them. Now this is a very important and interesting point for Chapter 6. It tells the Israelites the idols of the Philistines have no power whatsoever.

That was not true of the Ark of God. About 75 years earlier when Samuel was being sponsored by Eli and was just getting started in his prophetic ministry, the Philistines and Israel locked horns, and the Philistines won the first battle. The Israelites figured, "Since the Philistines bring their gods to battle, we'll bring our God to battle." So they got the Ark of the Covenant and brought it up to battle with a great shout. The earth shook and when the Philistines hear about the Israelite God coming into their camp, they were terrified. This was the God that destroyed the Egyptians. But one of their generals got smart and said, "OK, either we fight and win or they fight and win. Either we become their slaves or they become our slaves. You want to be slaves of Jews? You have a choice to make." So they went out and routed the Israelites slaughtering 30,000 of them. They took the Ark of the Covenant, destroyed the two priests who were with it and brought the Ark into their city. They had captured the God of Israel. You can just feel their sense of triumph. They set up the Ark in the temple of Dagon, their god of fertility, one of their chief gods. When they go back the next morning, Dagon is lying flat on the ground prostrate before the Ark. That is kind of embarrassing to live with. They put Dagon back up again and next morning he is lying face down, his hands cut off, and his head rolled off. He was destroyed while the Ark just sat there. Meanwhile the city was struck by disease.

I Samuel says, "...He [God] ravaged them and smote them with tumors..." Since one of the results of bubonic plague is tumors and swollen lymph glands, a high fever and prostration, it could have been the bubonic plague. The city of Ashdod, where the Ark was situated, was being wiped out by God. So the Philistines decided to take the Ark to Gath. The plague swept Gath. It just followed the Ark right down the trail. And more hundreds died. The Philistines wouldn't give up the Ark, so they took it to Ekron. It swept through Ekron. Wherever the Ark of God went, it wiped out Philistines. After several months, the Philistine begin to suspect the Ark and this plague must go together. Remember the plagues of the Egyptians? And so they call in the diviners, the magicians, their astrologers, their religious leaders, "Let's cast out this God and get a little peace." They really have respect for the Ark now. They put it on a brand new cart, and, since they can't send it back without a guilt offering, they include five gold tumors and five gold mice. Then to make sure about this god, "We'll take two cows that have never had a yoke on them and who are also nursing their calves. We will take their calves away from them so they'll want to stay here, and then we'll point this Ark toward Israel and see what happens." Even with the calves back there screaming for momma, that Ark went "swoosh" right into Bethshemesh in Judah. The Philistines knew then that that was what that God wanted.

When Bethshemesh saw the Ark coming, the people all rejoiced. They slaughtered the cows, broke up the cart and made a great feast. However, in the midst of the rejoicing, some of the men were struck dead for looking into the Ark. "This God is impartial. No double standard here. He wipes out Philistines for irreverence. He wipes out Jews for irreverence." And all of a sudden the rejoicing turned to fear. So to get it away from them, they move the Ark to the nearest big city which was Kiriath-jearim, one of the Gibeonite league cities, that league of Canaanites cities that way back had tricked the Jews by saying they came from a long distance, remember. It is a Canaanite city, but they don't care. They just want to get the Ark of God out of Bethshemesh. It is intriguing. They put a Levite in charge of it, but except for a caretaker, it sits there for 75 years, at least, untouched and unused. They've got the tabernacle way over in Gibeon, without the Ark, and that is where they are doing their sacrifices. They don't go near the Ark; they are scared to death of it; it kills Jews as well as Gentiles. We want to remember that when we get into chapter 6.

I Samuel 5,22:

Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim. [Exactly the same setup. The same exact circumstances. The same purpose in mind. Everything is the same. David is still wise. He still goes to the Lord] **And when David inquired of the Lord, He said, "You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees.** [Don't make an outward assault. Go around behind and wait.] **And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the Lord will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines.** [This time I am going to do the killing. I am going to do the assaulting.]

A member of the class asked, "When David asked, he got a direct answer. Do you think God deals with us that way, or are we in a different type of relationship?"

I believe he gives direct answers about 90% of the time. He hasn't "spoken" to me like to David, but I've been mulling over a problem, and while I'm studying a passage of Scripture that has nothing to do with my problem, I'm not looking for an answer, all of a sudden, "Pow," the answer just leaps out at me. We do have the Word of God, and it will leap out at you. There is only one catch. In John 5 the Lord told the Pharisees who were Old Testament scholars and who knew the Old Testament, [in fact the good solid Pharisees memorized the Old Testament; the mediocre ones only memorized the first five books of Moses] "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me: and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life." They didn't want that Jesus as their Messiah. They had a different Messiah in view. So even though they worked through all the Scriptures and knew them by heart, they never saw Jesus, because they didn't want to see Jesus. We go to the Bible many times when we are looking for an answer, but we really don't want to know the answer. We've got the answer we want, and we are trying to find a proof text that will fit it. Isn't it wonderful when you can find that proof text. The Bible is a tremendous thing if you want to twist it. Remember the famous example; three Scriptures; all of them scriptural; all of them the Word of God, "Judas went out and hung himself. Go thou and do likewise. What thou do, doest quickly." All of those are from the Word of God. They are all inspired by the Spirit of God. They are all part of the Word of God just as much as anything else. But simply out of context. With those Scriptures, I could justify killing someone. That's what we do. We play what I call "Sword drill." With the Bible in front of you and closed eyes, you jab your finger anywhere on the page. "There it is. That is the verse for the day." Then you can go out and do whatever you want. Problem is a text, without a context, is a pretext. You have to be willing to do God's will. The Lord said, "If you are willing to do My will, you shall know the teaching whether it be of God or man." The key of course is, "If you are willing to do My will." That is where it gets kind of tight doesn't it? I can have all kinds of desires for God, if he would only cooperate. In pre-marital counseling you ought to see the Scriptures people use when they want to get married. It is amazing what they say.

II Samuel 5:25:

Then David did so, just as the Lord had commanded him, [Instead of going out from the citadel and attacking as he did the first time, remember, he goes way around behind the Philistines and waits. So, what happens] **and struck down the Philistines from Geba** [That should be Gibeon literally, about 5 miles N.W. of Jerusalem] **as far as Gezer.**

David went out and hid in the bushes. God in some way disturbed the Philistines and struck them down. They began to flee northward and, of course, fled right past David in total rout. He chased them all the way from Gibeon to Gezer, all the way back to Philistine country, butchering them as he went. He didn't do a thing in that battle except chop up Philistines and rack up the spoils. First time he met them head on and won. The second time God did the job and David just collected the results. He was totally passive in the second encounter although the circumstances were the same. In other words, you cannot set God in a little box and say, "This is what God does. This is the way he is going to act." God wants you to bring every single item before him because he has some amazingly imaginative ways of dealing with your problem. Whoever thought God would run the Philistines right by the Jews who were waiting in ambush when just before he had David meet them head on? But he did, and they won, and David named the place "Lord of the Breakthrough."

God has different ways of fighting. Sometime it's a head-to-head confrontation with Satanic forces. At other times it may be an action-passive situation where you are totally helpless and hopeless, and yet your life radiates Jesus Christ. The Lord illustrates this. How did he handle Satan in the temptation in Luke 4? He came out of the wilderness being tempted by the devil [the tense there indicates for forty days he was being tempted] but the climax came when he fled temptation. How did he handle Satan? Yeah! A direct frontal assault. Satan says! Scripture says! How did he handle Satan at the cross? He went to his Father and told him, "If it be your will, Abba, Abba, let this cup pass from me, yet not my will but Thine be done." He didn't want to go to that cross. He was a very human person, as well as being God. How did Satan get clobbered at the cross? In Colossians 2 my Bible says that "Christ triumphed over him and made a public display of him leading him through the streets of heaven chained to his chariot hub caps [in the idiom]" reminiscent of a Roman conqueror who chained his defeated captives to the hub caps of his chariot and rode through Rome dragging these people with him. Those in front were allowed to return to their own territory to be trained by

Romans and to rule under Roman authority. Those behind, who were considered dangerous, were going to the coliseum to be butchered. But all of them were dragged through town by the conquering general who approached the Emperor to receive the crown of victory. That is the exact idiom that is used in Colossians of Christ's victory over Satan at the cross. He exposed Satan for what he was. The Prince of the Power of the Air is vicious, mean, cruel and despotic. He cannot create but only destroy, twist and pervert the things of God. The Garden of Gethsemane was a desperate time, but the Father knew best.

Again I ask, "How did Christ win?" He allowed himself to be killed. When Peter pulled his sword to defend his Lord, Christ said, "Put away your sword. I could appeal to my Father and he would put twelve legions of angels at my disposal." A Roman legion was 6800 foot soldiers. 12 x 6800 is in the 80,000s. I submit to you Jesus didn't need any help from bumbling Peter. Anytime he wanted to he could have had 80,000 angels, any one of which could have destroyed the whole of the opposing forces. The singular angel of death wiped out all of the first born of Egypt in one night. No, he won a tremendous victory. The greatest victory of his whole ministry was won by giving himself up to a Father's will and being slain. He accomplished far more in his death than he ever did in his life. The total impact he had during his life was probably on 500 people and some of them were doubters. His ministry, as far as nose count, conversions, goes was a lousy ministry compared to, say, Billy Graham's. He had nobody at his trial. There were only 120 at Pentecost, and that was after 3-1/2 years of ministry. Billy Graham does better than that in one night. But when Christ died, he triumphed over Satan.

Fortunately David made the right choice, and it says in I Chronicles 14 that after that, "Then the fame of David went out into all the lands: and the Lord brought the fear of him on all the nations." When David butchered those Philistines, a magnificent army, a skilled fighting force who would never have been able to be thrown out of Palestine, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer, that's when the fear of God, the fear of David, fell upon all the other nations. Remember God did the smiting. David just followed up. Don't ever, ever put your God in a box. Don't ever get your God in a rut. He is beautifully imaginative. And I don't care if your circumstances are exactly the same, and something worked once before, don't ever assume he will use the same process again. Always go to the Lord and say, "Well, how do we do it this time?" Allow an imaginative God to give you some delightful surprises in how he does these things. And when you do, the fear of God will be manifest through you to those about you. They'll see a life they can't explain.

Let's look at chapter 6 next time, and see how quickly David forgets.

Father, we thank you, now, for your Word and for the way it does show us how you operate and what a delightful and imaginative God you are, and how you delight in pleasing and surprising your children. Father, please teach us not to take away those chances for you to surprise us and our delight in seeing you triumph in many various ways. So teach us, Father, to go to you for each thing, no matter how similar the circumstances, and to trust you to work your perfect will in our lives, to deal with the Philistines as they come, and even though the same setup is exactly the same help us to realize that you are a God of amazing imagination and that you have an infinite number of ways of handling the enemy. Father, never let us get stale or in a rut but always to just rest in you and your refreshing ways of dealing with the problems of life. We thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

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