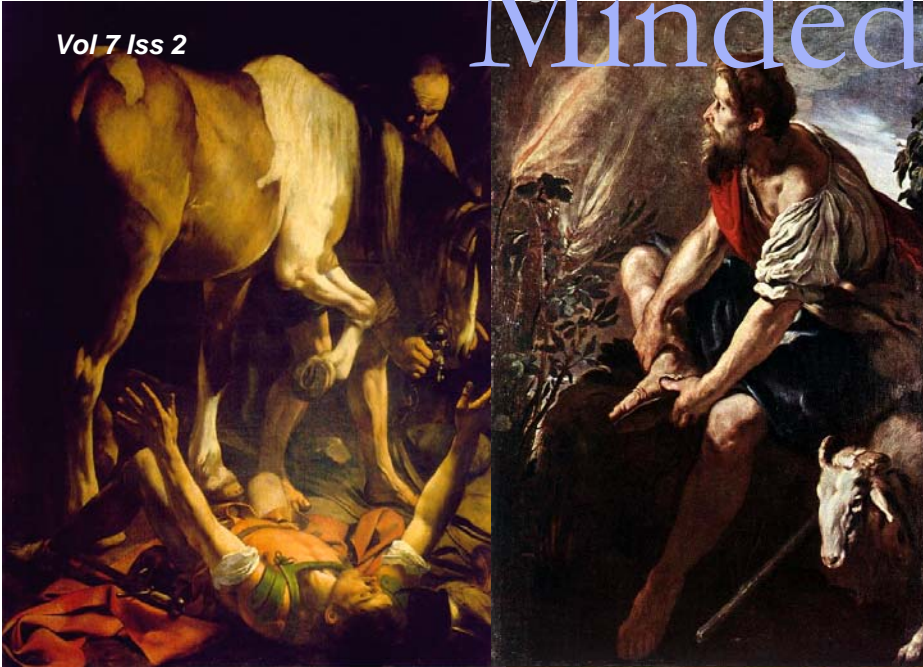


You're of no earthly value unless you're...

Heavenly Minded

Vol 7 Iss 2



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See www.heavenlyminded.com for this issue and much more!

Dear Friends,

Many of you know our son John Phillip. He has been walking with the Lord through some rough experiences recently and we asked him if he might share with you some of what he's learning. We hope it will bless and encourage those of you in similar situations.

In Christ's Love, John and Darlene Dickey

My dad once asked me to pose for a picture that he wanted to draw for the cover of Heavenly Minded. I initially thought 'Awesome, I'm going to be on the cover of Heavenly Minded.' However, when we started preparing to shoot the picture, it became painfully clear that my picture really wasn't going to be on the cover. My swelling ego deflated quickly when he asked me to wrap my head with *toilet* paper to look like a man who had covered himself because of leprosy. Consequently, the only visible part of my head was my eyes. Looking back, it was quite humorous; but also, after some recent events in my life I pondered, 'Maybe I was more like the leper than I'd realized'.

If you read in Luke 5:12-15, you find a story of man who was an outcast of society. He was "full of leprosy," and as such was both feared and despised by the people. You know, it's reasonable to assume that this man was at one point normal. He probably had a life -- work, kids, a wife who loved him, and even friends who enjoyed being with him. However, by the time he came to Jesus, he was certainly alone. He literally had nothing -- an outcast from all the ones he loved.

The only thing this nameless man had was a hope and trust in Jesus. Yet even as he approached the Lord, he risked losing his life for those surrounding Christ might easily have stoned him. His hope and trust in Jesus was evident when he said, "Lord, if You are willing, You CAN make me clean." This man was at the end of his rope and had nothing left but he could still hope and trust in power of Jesus.

Reading this, the passage hit home to me. You see, a few months earlier, unlike this man, I lost my trust in Christ. I was going to school and was loving being a dad and husband. My life was complete, at least in my perspective. We had fellowship in our home with a few other couples, my kids were growing up in a good environment, I loved my wife with all my heart, and was doing great in my school work. However, there was still a problem in my heart. *(Continued on last page)*



Recreation, God's Way

People don't like to stop.

On my way to work just today, approaching a train crossing, the lights began to flash and the striped barricade began to lower on both sides of the road. The car coming toward us on the other side sped up and swerved into our lane in order to miss the lowering bar but also nearly hit the approaching pick-up truck in front of me. As a consequence, the driver of the truck (who also was trying to beat the barricade) had to slam on his brakes and came to a stop just under the lowering barricade on our side of the road which noisily bounced a couple times first on his front hood and then on his roof. I just watched in amazement and shook my head. People don't like to stop.

Nevertheless, stopping is fundamental to recreation. Oh, not what we commonly call recreation but re-creation, being made new. And this is absolutely essential to all of us. Now, physically, your body stops you every day – you have no choice. Ultimately, you will sleep. And of course, sleeping brings refreshment and a renewal of sorts.

Now, many of you Bible students, when you think of being renewed will flash to Isaiah 40:31 which says, *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint."* But this is not speaking principally of the renewal of your temporal body and strength.

You see, that word "wait" is better translated 'look eagerly for, hope,

expect', and "renew" is really much better translated as 'to pass on or away, pass through, pass by, go through'. If you reread the verse with this in mind you can better see that this is speaking of anticipating the Lord's return and at some point, either being called home or by the rapture, passing through the strength of the flesh. There, with the Lord and with your new heavenly body, you will indeed fly as an eagle, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. It's a glorious promise.

But physical re-creation is not what we're going to talk about because short of heaven, it's benefits are very temporary. No, what I'm going to share with you, if you receive it, will lead you to both genuine and much longer lasting refreshment.

Paul spoke of it in terms of the mind, that is, how we think and especially how we learn. He wrote in Romans 12:2 *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the **renewing** of your mind..."* and in Eph 4:23 *"And be **renewed** in the spirit of your mind;"* Then, as if to amplify he wrote in 2 Cor 4:16 *"...but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is **renewed** day by day."* So, what exactly is this "inward man"? I'll try to explain:

You see, we were created as triune beings -- spirit, soul and flesh. Here's how they came about.... Back in Genesis, *"...the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* (Gen 2:7) God started with the dust of the

ground, the lowest thing in His creation and then breathed into the man the 'ruach', the breath, which is the same word used for His Spirit, that which is above all creation. The result of this combination was a soul, a living soul. That which could be influenced by either source.

When man sinned, he died spiritually. That means he was separated from God. The connection with God which made his soul alive was severed. Which influence was left then to influence the soul? The dust, the world. Now, when you are truly saved, your spirit is revived, made alive again by the Holy Spirit. At that point, your soul is no longer governed only by the flesh. From this point on, your soul, the spiritually influenced part of your mind begins to be rewired, "transformed". That is, your soul, your inner man is being made new. It is not, however, purely automatic.

Jesus, however, gave us the key. He told us how it works both at the point of salvation and during the process of sanctification. But before I point you to His answer, let me illustrate its three principle points with three principle men:

Moses was at the turning point of his life. There, on the backside of a place that rivaled the moon for least likely places to vacation, the man picked by God wandered with the flock of his father in law. You remember the story from Sunday school no doubt. After 40 years of learning to be a somebody in Pharaoh's household, Moses then spent another 40 years learning to be content as a nobody. It's one thing to live in the desert wilderness with a bunch of smelly sheep and

goats. It's quite another to be content there... especially after experiencing the pleasures of the court of a mighty king.

For Moses, it was a long and lowly road of preparation, but God knew he was ready by a simple test. It started with a bush, an ordinary bush with an extraordinary flame. Now, it was not uncommon to see a bush or scrub-tree burning in this desert wasteland, but this one was different – remember? It burned with fire but was not consumed. Now, in order to notice such a thing, Moses had to gaze upon it for some time. In fact, he probably did a double or triple-take. He may have wondered if it was a mirage.

But the scripture says that it wasn't until Moses said, *"I will go over and see this strange sight-why the bush does not burn up,"* and turned aside, that God called to him.

This really is fascinating – Moses, like most of us in this day could have missed it and probably would have years earlier. When life is full of business that makes us feel important, such things are either unnoticed or unappreciated. But Moses, after forty years of doing what his Egyptian upbringing taught him was abhorrent (that is, shepherding) noticed the supernatural within the natural. He was a big man in a big hurry to do big things back in Egypt. But here, there was no one to impress, no schedule to keep, no day-timers or PDA's. In appreciating this wondrous sight, **Moses had to draw near and stop.**

Elijah was a busy man – false prophets to kill, evil kings to chase. It was hard to get an appointment

with him and not get fire called down on you. But Elijah burned out. – no more fire from heaven, no more fire in his soul. Consequently, God led him on a hike to a wilderness cave in Mt Horeb – you know, the place where Moses got the 10 commandments. Same place where he stopped to see the burning bush. There, *“a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks... and after the wind an earthquake... And after the earthquake a fire.”*

Must have seemed familiar to Elijah. After all, this was his style. But the Bible records, *“the LORD [was] not in the wind... [or] the earthquake... [or] the fire.”*

But then, a still small voice called to him. It was the Lord, -- **Elijah drew near and stopped (his attitude).**

Stop was not in Saul’s vocabulary. Ignoring the ‘goads’ of God’s Spirit, he unceasingly chased after new Christians, imprisoning them or abetting in their murder. Talk about a type A personality! Now, Moses had a 40 year winding down, Elijah had a 40 day hike; neither of these things was in the cards for Saul. He just kept pushing the conviction of God’s Spirit away. So God stopped him in his tracks. Knocking him flat, God got his undivided attention. *“And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”* In mercy, **Saul was drawn near and stopped in his tracks.**

And so, the first part of Christ’s answer to renewing the inner man is to **draw near to the Lord and stop.** The next part has to do with how you ‘walk’ with Him.

Moses was in a hurry; way ahead of the Lord. At forty years of age, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews and he killed him. As a result, he had to flee for his life into the Sinai wilderness. Some forty years later, he’d slowed down; in fact, he’d slowed down too much – when God called him to go back to Egypt, he made lame excuses. However, over the next forty years he learned to walk most of the time in pace with the Lord...remember? The pillar of fire and the cloud that moved? When they moved Moses moved. That was the deal.

Elijah was always out in front and seemingly bold as a lion. Even in obeying the Lord – defending the faith – but he got too far in front. The scene was mount Carmel. Responding to Elijah’s challenge, king Ahab had gathered the prophets of Baal, some 450 of them. Of course the outcome was a clear victory for the Lord as he responded graciously to Elijah’s call for fire from heaven and all the prophets of Baal were slain. One problem however; Elijah had misrepresented himself. *“Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men.”* 1 Kings 18:22

After this though, he fell behind, way behind the Lord’s pace, for shortly afterward, when he found out that the queen wanted to kill him he *“went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”*

Later, in that wilderness cave he hiked for 40 days to find, the Lord corrected him about being the only one on the planet to serve God. He said He’d reserved 7,000 in Israel who were faithful. He also gave him a new direction and a faithful helper, Elisha. In the years that followed, Elijah dealt with both Ahab and Jezebel and never misrepresented himself; in fact, he never referred to himself. And he never backed down or became fearful.

In fact, I submit that as an illustration of how synchronous his walk became with the Lord, we find him finishing his ministry by being shadowed by Elisha. Three times this happened – *“Then Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So they came to Bethel... then Jericho... and then Jordan.”* Elisha’s walk with Elijah was a mirror of Elijah’s walk with our Lord.

Newly saved, Paul was so ahead of the Lord! He wanted with all his heart to reach the Jews for Jesus. He preached to them in Damascus and they tried to kill him; then he preached to them in Jerusalem and they tried to kill him there too. As a matter of fact, he was causing such a commotion that he had to be sent away just so the churches could have peace. *“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”* Act 9:31

But as with Moses and Elijah, he then fell behind; he just ‘camped out’ so to speak in Tarsus for years. Whether he felt rejected or not we don’t know, but he clearly had no significant impact recorded for us in the scripture. Finally, Barnabus came to Tarsus and brought him back into ministry within the greater body of Christ. After this, throughout the rest of the book of Acts, we find him always seeking specific direction step by step from the Holy Spirit.

Each of these men got ahead of the Lord, then got behind, yet they each came to eventually keep pace with Him – to walk in lock-step with Him.

So the first part of the Lord’s answer to recreation, to renewal, is drawing near to the Lord and stopping, ceasing from your own attitude or activity. Next, is in the course of serving Him, coming to keep pace with Him – closer and closer, literally step by step. The third part has to do with learning.

I used to teach at Ball State University in Indiana. Now, in that role, I was supremely concerned that my students learned the material I presented to them. But that kind of learning isn’t what God uses in His recreation process. What He intends for us to ‘learn’ is illustrated partially in the following verse: *“Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)* You see, in spending time

with Jesus, Peter and John learned something, oh not just facts, not simply information – they picked up on Jesus' character. In this case, they learned to be bold as the occasion warranted it.

However, the best example is found in the book of Revelation. There, the apostle John, a good Jewish boy and mature Christian – one who definitely knew who to worship and who not to, got a bit confused. On two occasions, when he fell in worship before the messenger showing him around so to speak, the saint said, “See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!” Now, why did John do that? I submit that it was because he thought this fellow servant was indeed Jesus! There is coming for us in heaven, in the presence of Almighty God, a glorious transformation. John wrote, “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*” (1 John 3:2)

You see, the learning we're concerned with is not an issue of facts, data, or information. It's not a method, process or technique. There's no accreditation or diploma. The learning we care about is experiential. In fact, the word for learn in the new testament is born from the word meaning to know, specifically to know through an intimate relationship.

Moses and the Lord had such a relationship. In Exodus 33, we read,

“Then Moses said to the LORD, ‘See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.” And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”” (Ex 33:12-14) As a consequence, Moses saw the glory of the Lord as He passed by and later descended the mount with his face glowing. (Ex 34)

Elijah and the Lord had such a relationship. Only two men in the history of the earth have been taken to heaven before death. Enoch, of whom it was written that “he walked with God” and Elijah who was caught up in a whirlwind by a chariot of fire. Wow! No one else was ever chauffeured like that. You gotta believe Elijah **knew** the Lord.

Paul had such a relationship. He wrote: “*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*” 1 Cor 13:12
“*And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*” Eph 3:19
“*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*” Phi 3:10

And so the three part answer to God's recreation of the inner man has nothing to do with golf or fly fishing or idle time. In fact, too much idle time can be a trap. You know yourselves that idle time is not necessarily related to renewal. In fact, Ezekiel recorded that it was too much idleness that led to the destruction of Sodom. He wrote to Jerusalem, “*Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, ...*” (Ez 16:49)

The three parts are these:

- To draw near to the Lord and to stop, to cease your own activity and ‘attitudes’
- To come to minister with Him in step, in lock step unity
- As a result, to come to know Him and consequently to be like Him inwardly.

As we began this lesson, I told you that Jesus laid the whole issue to rest (ha). He told us how it works both at the point of salvation and during the process of sanctification. Here's what He said: “**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**” Mat 11:28 – 30

- *Come to Me ... and I will give you rest.* That word “rest” literally means stop. Do you see the pattern? Draw close to Him and He will give you “stop”.

Usually, we can't stop ourselves. Our activity or attitude is overbearing. We simply need to draw near to Him and He will stop us.

- *Take My yoke upon you.* It's not a leash or tether. A yoke requires you to walk in harmony with Him – not ahead or behind but rather in unity, step by step.
- *And learn from Me – gentleness and humility.* You won't just learn to plow or pull the right way. Rather, you'll take on the character of the one you're yoked to.
- As a consequence, *you will find rest for your souls.* This word “rest” is different from the first one. It is anapausis in the Greek and means not only rest and refreshment but literally, **recreation.**

Oh, to be like my Lord! (See 2 Cor 3:18) This is the essence of heavenly mindedness isn't it. This is the goal. This is real, eternal refreshment and renewal. This is recreation God's way!

The Oil Weapon

Until the early part of the 20th century, economic inflation was virtually unknown in the United States. In terms of purchasing power, in 1900, an 1800 dollar was worth only sixty-seven cents

That is to say, what cost a dollar in 1800 cost only sixty-seven cents a hundred years later. Rather than losing value, the value of a US dollar went up thirty-three cents in the 19th century.

Over the 20th century, the trend reversed. Although the US grew more and more wealthy and powerful, eclipsing the rest of the world's economies early in the 20th century, the purchasing power of the dollar began to steadily decline.

What cost a dollar in 1900 costs \$21.15 one hundred years later.

So, what happened? A lot of things. It will be hard to compress it all, but I will try to hit the highlights.

Early in the 20th century, the Congress authorized the creation of the Federal Reserve Banking System to serve as America's central bank. Uniquely, the Federal Reserve was not created as a US-owned central bank, but rather, is made up of a consortium of banks, most of them foreign owned.

We've discussed the conspiracy theories about the motives behind the creation of the Federal Reserve in previous volumes. What is relevant to today's topic is

how its initial creation and subsequent use triggered the law of unintended consequences now facing our economy.

Until the Great Depression, the US dollar was tied to gold, as it had been since the passage of the Currency Act of 1793. A dollar was redeemable in gold, and therefore, the supply of dollars was finite.

In the 1920's, the Federal Reserve began issuing more dollars than there was gold on hand to back them to finance the booming stock market. When the market crashed in 1929, the inflation and ballooning government deficits put more money into circulation than there was gold to redeem it.

President Franklin Roosevelt ordered all privately-held gold to be confiscated to satisfy existing creditors and the Banking Act of 1933 severed the linkage between gold and the US dollar.

After the outbreak of World War Two, America became the armory to the world, selling billions and billions of dollars worth of weapons to the Allies, for which it demanded payment in gold. By war's end, the majority of the world's gold reserves were back in the United States.

The Bretton Woods Agreement in 1945 made the US dollar convertible to gold at the government level. This established the US dollar as the world's reserve currency. The twin wars on poverty and in Vietnam drained the US economy, forcing the Fed to increase the money supply,

most of which ended up as foreign reserve currency holdings.

The runaway inflation caused by the artificial increase in the money supply began to worry investors. By the 1970s, foreign governments began demanding payment for their dollars in gold. On August 15, 1971, the US announced it was 'severing the link between the dollar and gold' and defaulted on its payments.

In order to keep the dollar (and the global economy) from collapsing, the US had to find some economic replacement for the gold standard. In 1973, Washington cut an iron-clad deal with the Saudis. The US would prop up the Saudi regime in exchange for a Saudi pledge to accept only US dollars in payment for oil sales. Eventually, the rest of OPEC followed suit.

The world had to buy oil. And since they could only buy them with US dollars, they needed to continue to hold US dollars in reserve.

That explains much about why every successive president since Richard Nixon pays homage to the King of Saud. And why Washington is so willing to look the other way whenever the House of Saud gets caught with its hand in the cookie jar.

It is a symbiotic, if fragile, relationship. The House of Saud needs the United States to keep its regime in power.

And the United States needs the House of Saud to keep the dollar from collapsing.

In 2005, Iran announced the creation of what he called, the "Iranian Oil Bourse". It is based on a euro-oil-trading mechanism that naturally implies payment for oil in Euros, rather than dollars. The Iranian Oil Bourse would allow anyone willing either to buy or to sell oil for Euros to transact on the exchange, thus circumventing the U.S. dollar altogether.

The Chinese and the Japanese are especially eager to adopt the new exchange, because it will allow them to drastically lower their enormous dollar reserves and diversify with Euros, thus protecting themselves against the depreciation of the dollar.

The Russians have inherent economic interest in adopting the Euro – the bulk of their trade is with European countries, with oil-exporting countries, with China, and with Japan. Adoption of the Euro will immediately take care of the first two blocs, and will over time facilitate trade with China and Japan.

The Arab oil-exporting countries will eagerly adopt the Euro as a means of diversifying against rising mountains of depreciating dollars. Just like the Russians, their trade is mostly with European countries, and therefore will prefer the European currency both for its stability and for avoiding currency risk, not to mention their jihad against the US.

Hugo Chavez, who now sits atop the world's largest proven oil reserves, announced that Venezuela was ready to move his country's foreign-exchange

holdings out of the dollar and into the euro.

In spite of the skyrocketing economy, the value of the US dollar it is based on continues to decline in value against other currencies, especially the euro. And, for the first time since the First World War, the value of the European stock market has passed that of the United States.

European market capitalization rose to \$1.57 trillion, passing the US market value of \$1.56 trillion. European market shares are outperforming the US by a margin of almost two to one. And since 2003, the euro has risen 26 percent against the dollar.

Back in 1969, Hal Lindsey wrote in the Late Great Planet Earth that he believed something had to happen in the near future, if indeed these are the last days as foretold by Scripture. Somehow, he said, something had to happen to cause the decline or fall of both the Soviet Union and the United States, to make way for the rise of a European superstate.

Remember, in 1969, America was at the height of its power and the Cold War was at its hottest. Western Europe was still struggling with post war reconstruction and Eastern Europe was firmly under the heel of Soviet domination.

The idea of a European superstate rising to eclipse both the United States and the Soviet Union in our lifetimes was laughable.

But the Bible said that the same generation that witnessed the restoration of Israel would see the revival of the old Roman Empire, the annihilation of Russia at the head of a Persian-led Islamic confederation on the mountains of Israel and says nothing at all about the existence of a global superpower resembling the United States of America.

Hal had witnessed the restoration of Israel --the budding of the fig tree.

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

So, based on the Bible he fully expected to witness the rise of a revived Roman Empire and the decline and fall of the Soviet and American empires. That was thirty-eight years ago.

Now, Hal is seventy-seven. Two out of three events are a reality. The economic war now being waged against the United States could give him three for three -- in his lifetime.

**Jack Kinsella - Commentary - 04/07
The Omega Letter**

The Life of David – Part 1

An Interactive Bible Study Text: 1 Sam 16, 17

Suggested method – Read the specified verses, taking turns. Then read the comments. Consider carefully the application and context; ask questions and answer openly. Participation is paramount.

Chapter 16

V1 – 5

Samuel sincerely asks God how he can go to Bethlehem. Why? With what attitude did Saul begin? (See 1 Sam 10:19-22) What has he become?

When Samuel comes to the town, what is the reaction? Why do the people regard Samuel with such respect? Does this differ from the way we today regard those called to the Lord's service? If so, why?

V6,7

Why do you suppose Samuel thought Eliab was the one? Does the outward appearance influence our perspectives on God's will?

V8 - 11

Eliab means "God is father"
Abinadad means "My father is noble or willing"
Shammah means "astonishment"

From oldest to youngest they are presented but God says, "Not here". David is an after thought by his own father. Do we as parents always see what God has in store for our kids?

V12

David has a ruddy complexion, has a beautiful presence about him and is handsome. Considering that this is probably Samuel's record – what is he still tending to?

V13, 14

David the younger is favored above his brethren. Does this remind you of anyone else? (See Gen 37:3) What is different about the presence of the Holy Spirit in David's life than with the judges or with Saul? (See v 13) In this, who does he typify? What is the fundamental difference pertaining to the Holy Spirit between His presence in the lives of OT characters and us as believers? (See 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; 1 Jn 4:13)

V15 – 20

David has been anointed to be the next king and then God orchestrates an internship for him. Was it an accident that someone in the court just happened to know of a shepherd boy in Bethlehem who could play the 'guitar'? A "valiant man and a man of war"? Wait a minute; David's not even old enough to fight? Is this a matter of salesmanship? It's possible that Samuel is the one giving this advice to Saul – notice it is specified that David is with the sheep.

V21

Initially, Saul loved David greatly, but this will change.

V22, 23

David's ministry is refreshing to Saul. What is David learning in this situation?

Chapter 17

V1-3

Generally speaking, it is in the valleys that the battles are fought. We as believers revel in the 'mountain top' experiences but though they inspire us with awe and thankfulness they do not engage our faith. What God has taught us is put to the test in the valleys of life. What have you learned from the Lord in the 'valleys'?

V4-7

Goliath was between 8'6" and 9'2" tall and his armor weighed between 150 and 200 lbs. His size seems to the knee-knocking Israeli soldier overwhelming. Have you ever faced an overwhelming problem?

V8-11

In any contest, it's always useful to *demoralize* your opponent, and strike *fear* in their heart. First, it may keep you from ever going to battle with them, because they are so afraid. Second, if it does come to battle, they will fight with fear and apprehension, and so with your words, you've done a lot to win the battle before it even begins! What does 2 Tim 1:7 say?

Saul had special reason to be afraid. Goliath was the giant among the Philistines, and Saul was head and shoulder taller than other Israelite men (1 Samuel 9:2). Saul was the logical choice to square off against Goliath, and we can expect he knew others were expecting him to fight Goliath. What do we learn here about Saul?

V12 – 19

Why did David leave the court of Saul? What does this say about David?

V20-23

Did David know what he was getting into? Did this whole challenge present itself gradually or suddenly?

V24-30

David's attitude is completely different than the other men of Israel, including King Saul. David is concerned with God's cause before everything. Before his own personal safety, before his own personal glory, before his own personal honor, he has a passionate concern for God's cause. Where did David get this perspective, this courage?

When David was misunderstood and rebuked, publicly, by his own brother, probably amid the laughs of the other soldiers, he could have blown it. But he showed the strength of the armor of God in his life, and replied rightly. He didn't care about his glory or success, but only for the glory and success of the LORD's cause. *Goliath was a dead man right then! This is where the battle was won!* – You see, if Eliab's hurtful words can get David in the flesh, and out of the flow of the Spirit of the LORD, then David's strength is gone. But when David ruled his spirit and answered softly, he was more in step with the Spirit of the LORD than ever. You could start digging Goliath's grave right then!

How much of what we do 'in the flesh' is needed by God or glorifies Him? How about if it seems to us to be very successful, does that make

a difference? Did Satan ever try to get Jesus to do things on his own?

V31-37

This is generally God's pattern for preparation. He calls us to be faithful right where we are at, and then uses our faithfulness to accomplish greater things for Him. If David had run scared at the lion or the bear, he would never have been ready to fight Goliath now. But, he was faithful then. Who does David claim will deliver him? His brothers? The hosts of Israel? Saul? God may send help in many forms but we would do well to always remember Who it is that delivers us.

V38-39

David had to *renounce* Saul's armor. He had to vow, "I will not fight with man's armor. I will trust in the LORD and His armor instead." Often we want a safe "middle ground" where we try to wear both kinds of armor. But God wants us to trust in Him and Him alone.

V40

There is only one verse in the Bible with this word translated "smooth". Why do you suppose the Holy Spirit included this descriptor? What makes a stone smooth? How does that apply to us as believers? (See 2 Cor 4:7-10)

Why five stones? Does the number five have any significance in the Bible?

V41-44

When Goliath asked, "Am I a dog?" it was worse than it sounds. The

Hebrew word for dog (*kaleb*) is used in passages like Deuteronomy 23:18 for male homosexual prostitutes. What is the essence of Goliath's speech? What is the essence of Satan's attempted dialog with us?

V45-47

He's no longer in the fields with the sheep, no longer in the court of the king, no longer talking to his brothers; he's face to face with the enemy – what does he say and how does it say it? Does he believe it? How do you know?

V48

Abraham arose early in the morning the day he was to sacrifice Isaac. David ran into the battle. What do these things share in common?

V49-51

How did David act? Did he listen to the words of his enemy?

V52-54

What is it about courage and faith that inspires others?

V55-58

Why doesn't Saul recognize David? Does David seem to care? Does this reveal anything about David's heart and motive?

Now summarize together what you've learned.

Thanks to David Guzik and others whose material is available on line at the Blue Letter Bible website – blueletterbible.org.

(Continued from first page.)

Since my brother died several years earlier, I'd had a hard time trusting that Jesus really cared about my life. Now, I loved Jesus with all my heart but felt myself slowly not trusting Him. The Lord knew this and was not going to let it go uncorrected.

Last fall, my life came apart in a single instant. My wife decided to leave. This came out of nowhere in my perspective. At that moment I thought I was going to lose everything I loved so much; and through a long series of Job-like trials that ensued, I lost my trust in Christ and fell into utter despair.

When I came home with my kids I was in the hardest experience of my life. I lived in this limbo of not knowing what to do and at the same time not trusting in Jesus. I felt like a thousand knives were piercing through my heart everyday. I felt probably a lot like the leper in Luke. He too most likely lost all that he loved and had to live with the hurt everyday. From my own experience, it's quite possible that at some point he also lost faith in God's love toward him.

Nevertheless, in this story we find him reaching out in trust and faith. So, what happened to change his heart? Perhaps, he heard from the others around him that many were getting healed and that Jesus cared about the sick; maybe he'd learned that Christ didn't look down on them with disdain like the rest of the people did.

Whatever the case, there had to come a point when this leper chose to trust in Jesus. He'd heard the

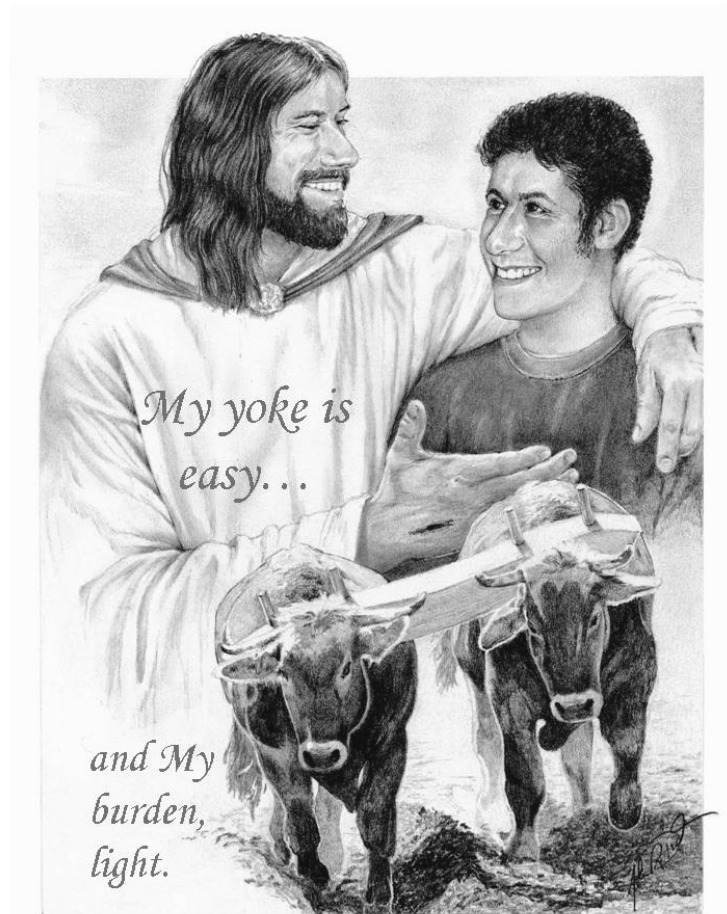
stories, saw others healed, but he had to make that choice.

I too had to come to that point. I had to say to my soul enough is enough...do I trust Jesus or not? I remember being on my knees and telling the Lord how much I loved Him and Him responding with, "I know." I remember my prayer and how I told the Lord that I will choose to trust Him no matter what. At that moment, one of the hardest times in my faith and trust, the Lord met me. Not with a fuzzy, fluffy, tingle-filled moment but just a sound peace. I chose to trust in Christ and chose to believe that He did care.

I too, like that leper, heard Jesus say "I am willing; be cleansed." From that moment, I started to trust the Lord again, and now my faith is being built up everyday. I would love to say that everything went great after that with no more trials, but I would be lying. The truth is that life got harder, but the Lord answered my prayers and my trust.

The point to this testimony is that trusting is a choice you make, not a feeling. This life around us is sometimes hard and unfair, but Jesus does love us. He is there walking right by our side and never lets us go. What we can count on is that He is making a real home for us in heaven and soon we'll be there at peace. So, like that leper, go to Jesus in the time of your need, He is there and willing to "make us clean."

-- John Phillip Dickey



Yokefellow by JR Dickey