

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

MARCH 7-13

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 12-13

"Presumptuousness Leads to Dishonor"

w00 8/1 13 ¶17

Presumptuousness Leads to Dishonor

¹⁷ At first glance, Saul's actions might seem justifiable. After all, God's people were "in sore straits," "hard pressed," and trembling because of their desperate situation. (1 Samuel 13:6, 7) Certainly, it is not wrong to take the initiative when circumstances warrant it. Remember, though, that Jehovah can read hearts and perceive our innermost motives. (1 Samuel 16:7) Hence, he must have seen some factors about Saul that are not directly stated in the Bible account. For example, Jehovah may have seen that Saul's impatience was stirred by pride. Perhaps Saul was deeply irritated that he—the king of all Israel—had to wait for someone he viewed as an old, procrastinating prophet! In any event, Saul felt that Samuel's tardiness gave him the right to take matters into his own hands and to disregard the explicit instructions he had been given. The result? Samuel did not praise Saul's initiative. On the contrary, he chastised Saul, saying: "Your kingdom will not last . . . because you did not keep what Jehovah commanded you." (1 Samuel 13:13, 14) Once again, presumptuousness led to dishonor.

w07 6/15 27 ¶8

Jehovah Values Your Obedience

⁸ The Bible record of King Saul underlines the vital importance of obedience. Saul started off as a humble and modest ruler, 'little in his own eyes.' In time, though,

pride and false reasoning began to govern his decisions. (1 Samuel 10:21, 22; 15:17) On one occasion, Saul was to face the Philistines in battle. Samuel told the king to wait for him to come to offer sacrifices to Jehovah and to provide further direction. However, Samuel did not come as soon as he was expected, and the people began to disperse. Seeing that, Saul "went offering up the burnt sacrifice." This was displeasing to Jehovah. When Samuel finally arrived, the king excused his own disobedience, saying that because Samuel was late, he 'compelled himself' to offer up the burnt sacrifice to soften Jehovah's face. To King Saul, offering that sacrifice was more important than obeying the direction he had received to wait for Samuel to make that sacrifice. Samuel told him: "You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of Jehovah your God that he commanded you." Disobedience to Jehovah cost Saul his kingship.—1 Samuel 10:8; 13:5-13.

Spiritual Gems

w11 7/15 13 ¶15

Will You Follow Jehovah's Loving Guidance?

¹⁵ Did those people think that a human king would somehow be more real, more dependable, than Jehovah? If so, they were truly pursuing an unreality! And they were in danger of pursuing many other satanic illusions. Human kings would easily lead them into idolatry. Idolaters make the mistake of thinking that physical objects—gods made of wood or stone—are somehow more real, more reliable, than the invisible God, Jehovah, who created all things. But as the apostle Paul noted, idols are "nothing."

(1 Cor. 8:4) They cannot see, hear, speak, or act. You might be able to see them and touch them, but if you were to worship one, you would, indeed, be pursuing an unreality—an empty illusion that would bring only disaster.—Ps. 115:4-8.

MARCH 14-20

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 14-15

"Obedience Is Better Than a Sacrifice"

w07 6/15 26 ¶4

Jehovah Values Your Obedience

⁴As the Creator, Jehovah already owns everything we have in a material way. That being the case, is there anything that we can give him? Yes, we can give him something very precious. What is that? We can draw the answer from the following admonition: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me." (Proverbs 27:11) We can give God our obedience. Though we have different circumstances and backgrounds, by being obedient, each of us can respond to the vicious claim of Satan the Devil that humans will not remain loyal to God in the face of trials. What a privilege that is!

it-2 521 ¶2

Obedience

There is no substitute for obedience, no gaining of God's favor without it. As Samuel told King Saul: "Does Jehovah have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying [form of *sha·ma'*] the voice of Jehovah? Look! To obey [literally, to listen] is better than a sacrifice, to pay attention than the fat of rams." (1Sa 15:

22) To fail to obey is to reject the word of Jehovah, to demonstrate that one really does not believe, trust, or have faith in that word and its Source. Hence the one failing to obey is no different from the one practicing divination or using idols. (1Sa 15:23; compare Ro 6:16.) Verbal expressions of assent mean nothing if the required action does not follow; the lack of response proves a lack of belief or respect for the source of instructions. (Mt 21:28-32) Those satisfying themselves with only hearing and giving mental acceptance to God's truth, but not *doing* what it calls for, are deceiving themselves with false reasoning and receive no blessing. (Jas 1:22-25) God's Son made clear that even those doing things *similar* to those commanded, but evidently in a wrong way or with a wrong motive, would never gain entrance into the Kingdom but would be completely rejected.—Mt 7:15-23.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 493

Compassion

Yielding to pressure to show compassion when it is contrary to God's will can have serious consequences. This is revealed in what happened to King Saul. The time had come for the execution of divine judgment against the Amalekites, the first people to stage an unprovoked attack on the Israelites after their departure from Egypt. Saul was commanded not to have compassion on them. Giving in to the pressure of his subjects, he did not follow through completely on Jehovah's command. Therefore, Jehovah rejected Saul from being king. (1Sa 15:2-24) A person's cultivating deep appreciation for the rightness of Jehovah's ways

and putting loyalty to Him foremost can prevent his erring, as did Saul, and losing divine approval.

MARCH 21-27

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 16-17

"The Battle Belongs to Jehovah"

wp16.5 11 ¶2-3

"The Battle Belongs to Jehovah"

David reassured Saul by recounting what had happened with the lion and the bear. Was he boasting? No. David knew how he had won those battles. He said: "Jehovah, who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear, he is the one who will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Resigned at last, Saul responded: "Go, and may Jehovah be with you."—1 Samuel 17:37.

Would you like to have faith like David's? Note, then, that David's faith was not mere idealism or wishful thinking. He had faith in his God because of knowledge and experience. He knew Jehovah as a loving Protector and a Keeper of promises. If we want to acquire such faith, we need to keep learning about the God of the Bible. As we live by what we learn, we will find that the good results will likewise strengthen our faith.—Hebrews 11:1.

wp16.5 11-12

"The Battle Belongs to Jehovah"

To this day, David's response stands as a great statement of faith. Just imagine the young man calling out to Goliath: "You are coming against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I am coming against you in the name of Jehovah of armies, the God of the battle line of Israel, whom you have

taunted." David knew that human power and weaponry mattered little. Goliath had shown disrespect for Jehovah God, and Jehovah would respond. As David put it, "the battle belongs to Jehovah."—1 Samuel 17:45-47.

David was not blind to Goliath's size or his weapons. Yet David refused to let such things daunt him. He did not make the mistake that Saul and the members of his army did. David did not compare himself to Goliath. Instead, he looked at Goliath in comparison with Jehovah. Standing some nine and a half feet (2.9 m) tall, Goliath towered over other men, but how big was he compared to the Sovereign of the universe? Really, like any human, he was barely more than an insect—in this case, one that Jehovah was ready to exterminate!

wp16.5 12 ¶4

"The Battle Belongs to Jehovah"

Today, servants of God do not engage in carnal warfare. That time has passed. (Matthew 26:52) Still, we do need to imitate the faith of David. Like him, we need to see Jehovah as real—as the only God to serve and to hold in awe. We may, at times, feel small in comparison to our problems, but our problems are small compared to Jehovah's limitless power. If we choose Jehovah as our God and we put faith in him as David did, then no challenge, no problem, need daunt us. Nothing is beyond the power of Jehovah to conquer!

Spiritual Gems

it-2 871-872

Saul

It was after this and after the anointing of David as Israel's future king that Jehovah's

spirit left Saul. From then on “a bad spirit from Jehovah terrorized him.” Having withdrawn his spirit from Saul, Jehovah made it possible for a bad spirit to gain possession of him, depriving Saul of his peace of mind and stirring up his feelings, thoughts, and imaginations in a wrong way. Saul’s failure to obey Jehovah indicated a bad inclination of mind and heart, against which God’s spirit offered Saul no protection or resistive force. However, since Jehovah had permitted the “bad spirit” to replace his spirit and terrorize Saul, it could be termed a “bad spirit from Jehovah,” so that Saul’s servants spoke of it as “God’s bad spirit.” On the recommendation of one of his attendants, Saul requested that David be his court musician to calm him when he was troubled by the “bad spirit.”—1Sa 16:14-23; 17:15.

MARCH 28–APRIL 3

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 18-19

“Remain Humble When Successful”

w04 4/1 15 ¶4

Rely on God’s Spirit in Dealing With Life’s Changes

⁴ Soon this shepherd boy would rise to national fame. He was called to attend to the king and to play music for him. He killed the warrior Goliath, a giant so fierce that even the seasoned soldiers of Israel feared to face him. Placed over the men of war, David successfully battled the Philistines. The people loved him. They composed songs lauding him. Earlier, an adviser to King Saul described young David not only as one “skilled at playing” the harp but also as “a

valiant, mighty man and a man of war and an intelligent speaker and a well-formed man.”—1 Samuel 16:18; 17:23, 24, 45-51; 18:5-7.

w18.01 28 ¶6-7

See the Difference in People

⁶ Some people become proud because of their good looks, popularity, musical ability, physical prowess, or exalted position. David had not just one of these assets but all of them; yet, he remained humble throughout his life. After he killed Goliath and was offered the daughter of King Saul to be his wife, David said: “Who am I and who are my relatives, my father’s family in Israel, for me to become son-in-law to the king?” (1 Sam. 18:18) What helped David remain humble? The qualities, abilities, and privileges David had were because God ‘stooped down,’ or humbled himself, to pay attention to him. (Ps. 113:5-8) David knew that he did not possess anything good that he had not received from Jehovah.—Compare 1 Corinthians 4:7.

⁷ Like David, Jehovah’s people today strive to show humility. We are awed by the knowledge that Jehovah, the greatest Person in the universe, manifests the appealing quality of humility. (Ps. 18:35) We take to heart the inspired counsel: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience.” (Col. 3:12) We also know that love “does not brag, does not get puffed up.” (1 Cor. 13:4) When we show humility, people may be drawn to Jehovah. Just as husbands can be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, others can be drawn to God by the humility shown by his people.—1 Pet. 3:1.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 695-696

Prophet

Though appointed by Jehovah's spirit, it does not appear that the prophets spoke continually under inspiration. Rather, God's spirit 'came upon them' at certain times, revealing the messages to be announced. (Eze 11:4, 5; Mic 3:8) This had a stirring effect upon them, impelling them to speak. (1Sa 10:10; Jer 20:9; Am 3:8) Not only did they do things that were out of the ordinary but also their expression and manner doubtless reflected intensity and feeling that were truly extraordinary. This may explain in part what is meant by individuals' "behaving like prophets." (1Sa 10:6-11; 19:20-24; Jer 29:24-32; compare Ac 2:4, 12-17; 6:15; 7:55.) Their total concentration and zealous boldness in their mission might cause their behavior to appear strange, even irrational, to others, just as a prophet so appeared to military chiefs when Jehu was anointed. Yet, on realizing that the man was a prophet, the chiefs accepted his message with full seriousness. (2Ki 9:1-13; compare Ac 26:24, 25.) When Saul, in pursuit of David, was caused to 'behave like a prophet,' he stripped off his garments and lay "naked all that day and all that night," during which time David evidently escaped. (1Sa 19:18-20:1) This does not mean that prophets frequently went naked, for the Biblical record shows the contrary. In the two other cases recorded, the prophet went naked for a purpose, to represent some facet of his prophecy. (Isa 20:2-4; Mic 1:8-11) The reason for Saul's nakedness—whether to show him as a mere man, divested of his royal garments, impotent against Jehovah's own regal authority and

power, or for some other purpose—is not stated.

APRIL 4-10

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 20-22

"How to Be a Good Friend"

w19.11 7 ¶18

Build Strong Friendships Before the End Comes

¹⁸ Today, our brothers and sisters face a variety of challenges. For instance, many suffer from natural or man-made disasters. When that happens, some of us may be able to welcome these friends into our home. Others may be able to help financially. But all of us can ask Jehovah to help our brothers and sisters. If we learn that a brother or sister is discouraged, we may not know what to say or how to react. But all of us have much to offer. For example, we can make time to be with our friend. We can listen sympathetically when he or she speaks. And we can share our favorite comforting scripture. (Isa. 50:4) What matters most is that you are there with your friends when they need you.—**Read Proverbs 17:17.**

w08 2/15 8 ¶17

Walk in Jehovah's Ways

⁷ *God expects us to be trustworthy friends.* (Prov. 17:17) King Saul's son Jonathan befriended David. When Jonathan heard that David had killed Goliath, "Jonathan's very soul became bound up with the soul of David, and Jonathan began to love him as his own soul." (1 Sam. 18:1, 3) Jonathan even warned David when Saul wanted to kill him. After David fled, Jonathan met him and made a covenant with him. Speaking

to Saul about David almost cost Jonathan his life, but the two friends met again and renewed their bond of friendship. (1 Sam. 20:24-41) At their last meeting, Jonathan strengthened David's hand "in regard to God."—1 Sam. 23:16-18.

w09 10/15 19 ¶11

Maintaining Friendships in a Loveless World

¹¹ *Be loyal.* "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress," wrote Solomon. (Prov. 17:17) When composing those words, Solomon may have had in mind the friendship that his father, David, enjoyed with Jonathan. (1 Sam. 18:1) King Saul wanted his son Jonathan to inherit the throne of Israel. But Jonathan accepted the fact that Jehovah had chosen David for this privilege. Unlike Saul, Jonathan did not become envious of David. He did not resent the praise David received, nor did he swallow the slander that Saul spread about David. (1 Sam. 20:24-34) Are we like Jonathan? When our friends receive privileges, are we happy for them? When they suffer hardships, do we comfort and support them? If we hear harmful gossip about a friend, are we quick to believe it? Or, like Jonathan, do we loyally defend our friend?

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/15 24 ¶4

Highlights From the Book of First Samuel

21:12, 13. Jehovah expects us to use our mental faculties and abilities to deal with difficult situations in life. He has given us his inspired Word, which imparts prudence, knowledge, and thinking ability. (Proverbs 1:4) We also have the help of appointed Christian elders.

APRIL 18-24

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 23-24

"Wait Patiently on Jehovah"

w04 4/1 16 ¶8

Rely on God's Spirit in Dealing With Life's Changes

⁸ David refused to harm Saul. Exercising faith and patience, he was content to leave matters in the hands of Jehovah. After the king left the cave, David called out to him and said: "May Jehovah judge between me and you; and Jehovah must take vengeance for me from you, but my own hand will not come to be upon you." (1 Samuel 24: 12) Though he knew that Saul was in the wrong, David did not avenge himself; neither did he speak abusively to Saul or about him. On several other occasions, David restrained himself from taking matters into his own hands. Instead, he relied on Jehovah to set things straight.—1 Samuel 25:32-34; 26:10, 11.

w04 6/1 22-23

Do Your Circumstances Control Your Life?

The third lesson is that instead of using unscriptural means to change our circumstances, we should wait on Jehovah. The disciple James wrote: "Let endurance have its work complete, that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything." (James 1:4) Endurance should be allowed to have "its work complete" by our permitting a trial to run its full course without resorting to unscriptural means to bring it to a swift end. Then our faith will be tested and refined, and its sustaining power will be revealed. Joseph and David had this kind of endurance. They did not try to

work out a solution that might incur Jehovah's displeasure. Instead, they worked to make the best of their situations. They waited on Jehovah, and what blessings they received for doing so! Jehovah used both of them to deliver and to lead his people.—Genesis 41:39-41; 45:5; 2 Samuel 5:4, 5.

We too may face situations for which we could be tempted to seek unscriptural solutions. For example, are you discouraged because you have not yet found a suitable marriage mate? If so, avoid any temptation to disobey Jehovah's command to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39) Are you dealing with problems in your marriage? Rather than give in to the spirit of the world that promotes separation and divorce, work through the hard times together. (Malachi 2:16; Ephesians 5:21-33) Are you having difficulties caring for your family because of your economic situation? Waiting on Jehovah includes avoiding questionable or illegal activities to try to obtain money. (Psalm 37:25; Hebrews 13:18) Yes, all of us must work hard to make the best of our circumstances and put forth effort to give Jehovah something to bless. As we do so, let us be determined to wait on Jehovah for the perfect solution.—Micah 7:7.

Spiritual Gems

w17.11 27 ¶11

Let Nothing Deprive You of the Prize

¹¹ If we cultivate love and kindness in our heart, we will not easily become jealous. God's Word says: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous." (1 Cor. 13:4) To prevent jealousy from taking root in our heart, we must strive to see things from God's standpoint, viewing our brothers and sisters as members of the same Christian body. This will help us to show fellow feeling, in

harmony with the inspired counsel: "If a member is glorified, all the other members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:16-18, 26) Thus, rather than feel jealous, we will be happy when others receive blessings. Consider the example of King Saul's son Jonathan. He was not jealous when David was appointed heir to the throne. Rather, he encouraged David. (1 Sam. 23:16-18) Could we be as kind and loving as Jonathan?

APRIL 25–MAY 1

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 25-26

"Do You Act on Impulse?"

ia 78 ¶10-12

She Acted With Discretion

¹⁰ How did those hardworking soldiers treat the shepherds? It would have been easy for them to help themselves to a sheep now and then, but they did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they were like a protective wall around Nabal's flocks and servants. (**Read 1 Samuel 25:15, 16.**) Sheep and shepherds faced plenty of dangers. Predators abounded, and Israel's southern border was so close that bands of foreign marauders and thieves frequently attacked.

¹¹ It must have been quite an undertaking to keep all those men fed in the wilderness. So one day David sent ten messengers to Nabal to ask for help. David chose the moment wisely. It was the festive time of sheep-shearing, when generosity and feasting were customary. David also chose his words with care, using polite terms and forms of address. He even referred to himself as "your son David," perhaps a respectful acknowledgment of Nabal's greater age. How did Nabal respond?—1 Sam. 25:5-8.

¹² He was outraged! “He screamed rebukes at them” is how the young man mentioned at the outset described the scene to Abigail. Miserly Nabal complained loudly about his precious bread, water, and slaughtered meat. He ridiculed David as inconsequential and compared him to a runaway servant. Nabal’s view may have been similar to that of Saul, who hated David. Neither man had Jehovah’s view. God loved David and saw him, not as a rebellious slave, but as the future king of Israel.—1 Sam. 25:10, 11, 14.

ia 80 ¶18

She Acted With Discretion

¹⁸ She took responsibility for the problem and asked David to forgive her personally. She realistically acknowledged that her husband was as senseless as his name implied, perhaps suggesting that it would be beneath David’s dignity to chastise such a man. She expressed her trust in David as Jehovah’s representative, recognizing that he was fighting “the wars of Jehovah.” She also indicated that she knew of Jehovah’s promise regarding David and the kingship, for she said: “Jehovah . . . certainly will commission you as leader over Israel.” Further, she urged David not to take any action that might bring bloodguilt upon him or that might later become “a cause for staggering”—evidently referring to a troubled conscience. (**Read 1 Samuel 25:24-31.**) Kind, moving words!

Spiritual Gems

ia 80 ¶16

She Acted With Discretion

¹⁶ Does this mean that Abigail was rebelling against her husband’s rightful headship? No; keep in mind that Nabal had acted

wickedly against an anointed servant of Jehovah, an action that could well result in death for many innocent members of Nabal’s household. If Abigail failed to act, might she become a sharer in her husband’s guilt? In this case, she had to put submission to her God ahead of submission to her husband.