

“PRAYING THAT THEY WILL TRUST GOD WITH HARD SITUATIONS AND NOT REBEL”

Every day of our lives we make choices. Those choices will often involve a response to an authority God has placed around us. For a moment look at I Peter 2:13 with me:

Submit in the New Testament world this word often speaks a soldier's absolute obedience to his superior officer.

Romans 13:1 reminds us there is no authority except from God. Since He alone is the sovereign ruler of the universe (Ps. 62:11; 103:19; 1 Tim. 6:15), The Lord has placed no less than four different levels of authority on earth:

- 1) Political: the government over all citizens;
- 2) Spiritual: the church over all believers;
- 3) Familial: the parents over all children; and
- 4) Material: the masters over all employees.

1st Have you ever stepped back and looked at how UNFAIR life was in the world of the Old Testament? Now let your mind move across the pages of sacred and inspired history. As I read each of these names, what comes to your mind? One common condition, they each felt some type of MISTREATMENT and DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.

Hagar – mistreated by her mistress Sarah;

Joseph – mistreated by his older brothers, by his boss Potiphar's wife, by the higher ranking fellow prisoners;

Jacob – mistreated by his father-in-law.

Hannah – mocked by her closest companions, misunderstood by God's priests.

David – mistreated by his brothers, neglected by his dad,

Daniel – betrayed by his fellow workers, sentenced by his own boss to the lions den.

2nd Have you ever stepped back and looked at how UNFAIR life was in the New Testament world? Think about that as we look again at I Peter 2. The world and the people to which Peter wrote were unfair and hard to get along with, in these early days of the New Testament? The society of the Roman Empire around Christ's church had four layers of power. There were the:

- o ALL POWERFUL MASTERS: Think of the more than 60 million people who had become mere possessions of their masters. They were the slaves of the New Testament world.
- o ALL POWERFUL FATHERS: Then think of the small children. Under the Roman Law of **pater potestis** a father was presented with his newborn children at which time he could accept them or reject them. If rejected they were cast out onto the trash pile to die of exposure, and hunger.
- o ALL POWERFUL HUSBANDS: Then there were the women who were treated just above the slaves and children as workers only.
- o ALL POWERFUL WEALTHY: Finally, there were the poor, the orphans, the handicapped, and the widows who were exploited, mistreated, and allowed to suffer by the greedy wealth seeking powerful ones.

Four groups of weak, endangered and troubled peoples.

And what did God's Word offer them? Interestingly enough, the God of the Universe who does all things well, knows all things and is infinitely wise says the same thing to them all. He said to submit and obey

- your masters if you are a slave,
- your fathers if you are a child,
- your husbands if you are a wife, and
- your boss if you are poor.

Listen to God's Word as we stand and hear Peter's inspired words in I Peter 2:13 and onward.

- o **God says to Weak:** 1 Peter 2:13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; I Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” 13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”

- o **God says to Workers:** 1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.
- o **God says to Wives:** 1 Peter 3:1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,
- o **God says to Children:** Ephesians 6:1-2 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise:

So the Lord says we are to yield ourselves to all levels of authority over us (unless they ask us to disobey a clear command of God's Word). No matter what the conditions, the command was the same. SUBMIT, TRUST, WAIT, and HOPE. The Lord expects the same from us today and that is why we have come to our next area of prayer for our children: **RELATIONAL STABILITY MEANS SEEING THEM LEARNING TO TRUST GOD WITH HARD SITUATIONS AND NOT TO REBEL.**

Is that really possible? Not only possible, it is imperative. As we shall see, anything less becomes the breeding grounds for one of the deadliest of all spiritual conditions – rebellion. Rebellion is an inward choice we make to resist, and go against the will of one in authority over us. Though often unseen at first rebellion grows. The results of rebellion are infinitely more dreadful than ANY mistreatment or hard situation.

So as our children face challenges, hardship, and unfair situations we must pray that they never harden their hearts and rebel against God's ordained authorities in their lives. Prayer is the key to raising, nurturing, and launching children that please the Lord is learning how to pray for our children.

WE MUST PRAY FOR REALITY IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE:

1. **SEEING THEM GENUINELY SAVED.**
2. **SEEING THEM LOVING GOD'S WORD.**
3. **SEEING THEM LIVING IN VICTORY.**
4. **SEEING THEM THINKING OF HEAVEN.**
5. **SEEING THEM FINDING SIN REPULSIVE.**
6. **SEEING THEM STAY TENDER TOWARD GOD.**

WE MUST PRAY FOR INTEGRITY IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE:

1. **SEEING THEM MAINTAINING A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.**
2. **SEEING THEM LEARNING TO STAND ALONE.**
3. **SEEING THEM SEEKING TO STAY PURE.**
4. **SEEING THEM CULTIVATING A SERVANT'S HEART.**
5. **PERSONAL INTEGRITY MEANS SEEING THEM NEVER BECOMING BITTER IN TRIALS.**

WE MUST PRAY FOR STABILITY IN THEIR RELATIONAL LIFE

1. RELATIONAL STABILITY MEANS SEEING THEM CULTIVATING A LOVE FOR THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
2. RELATIONAL STABILITY MEANS SEEING THEM LEARNING TO TRUST GOD WITH HARD SITUATIONS AND NOT TO REBEL.
 - o 1 Samuel 15:22-23 So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."
 - o Proverbs 3:5-6 **Trust** in the LORD with all your heart, And **lean not** on your own understanding; In all **your ways acknowledge Him**, And **He shall direct** your paths. (NKJV);
 - o Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul **be subject to the governing authorities**. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and **those who resist will bring judgment on themselves**. (NKJV)

One of the most sobering lessons on the destructive power of stubbornness, disobedience and the deadliness of rebellion is seen in God's account of the Personal Shipwreck of the Life of King Saul. There are fifteen glaring warning lights blinking of impending disaster in the life of King Saul. As we read the 15 chapters that chronicle his rise and fall, there is a sobering lesson for each of us to glean.

Thoughtfully ask yourself whether as a man you are following this deadly course, or as a young person if you are starting this slide, or as a woman or young lady, if these areas are neglected. For anyone these warnings unheeded spell infinite doom!

Saul lived a life of ignoring the warnings of departure from God's Way! What were those signs? Here they are with the locations from God's Word.

1. Saul's pathway of rebellion started with IMPATIENCE with God's plan. This can be:
 - o Impatience with God's timing for us getting a job,
 - o Impatience with God's timing for us getting married,
 - o Impatience with God's timing for us having children,
 - o Impatience with God's timing for us dealing with sexual desires,
 - o Impatience with God's timing for us dealing with wealth and security, or any of many temptations we face.

Saul was seeking the approval of man before he sought the approval of God. 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and **Saul's men began to scatter.**

1. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved NEGLECTING to provide for those entrusted to your care. In the New Testament such a one is worse than an infidel. Saul had made sure he had what he needed to defend himself, but not that those he cared for were armed for the battle. 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; **only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.**
2. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved LAZY INDIFFERENCE. Saul was unaware of his son, the battle, and even the victory. He missed it all. 1 Samuel 14:2-3 Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah **under a pomegranate tree** in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh. **No one was aware** that Jonathan had left.
3. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved RASH WORDS. Saul spoke with no thought of what the implications were to his family or nation. 1 Samuel 14:24 Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "**Cursed be any man** who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.
4. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved INCOMPLETE OBEDIENCE. Saul used selective, self-serving obedience in place of total and God honoring obedience. 1 Samuel 15:9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were **unwilling to destroy completely**, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.
5. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved NOT CULTIVATING PERSONAL WORSHIP. There was no seeking of God on a personal level or worship offered to God from Saul's heart to Saul's God! 1 Samuel 15:30 Saul replied, "I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that **I may worship the LORD your God.**"
6. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved DOUBTING THE POWER OF GOD in your life. Saul had no concept of the Awesome God who had revealed Himself to him. Saul and those who followed him thought mere mortals (the Philistines) were greater than the Ancient of Days. 1 Samuel 17:11 On hearing the Philistine's words, **Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.**
7. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved allowing the continuation of a SELF FOCUS. Saul measured the worth of his life by what others said rather than by the Lord. 1 Samuel 18:8a Saul was very angry; **this refrain galled him**. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?"
8. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved the entrance of INSECURITY into daily living. Fear is always the realm of Satan. Saul surrenders the care of his future security to himself and took it away from the Lord! 1 Samuel 18:8b Saul was very

angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?"

9. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved JEALOUSY. Saul was driven by the lust for self that manifests itself in a desire to keep others from having something you want for yourself; this is the worst form of jealousy. Jealousy darkens our eyes to anything good about another; David was unable to ever measure up from that moment onward in Saul's mind. 1 Samuel 18:9 And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.
10. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved cultivating a WRONG VALUE SYSTEM. Saul did not treasure nor seek God's blessing, God's favor, God's presence, or even God's involvement in his life. Rather he feared David because God was with him. Saul valued himself, neglected God, and feared David. What a tragic misdirected life! 1 Samuel 18:12 Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul.
11. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved NEGLECTING his MARRIAGE. Saul confessed his failure to nurture and care for his wife. An undisciplined wife breeds many painful days. 1 Samuel 20:30 Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?"
12. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved ONLY SEEING THINGS FROM AN EARTHLY PERSPECTIVE. Saul seemed to only get one channel; he wasn't able to see the eternal, the divine, and the spiritual parts of life. He looked on his family, his future, and their success as only a physical pursuit, not a spiritual heritage. God was always left out of the equation for security, prosperity, and happiness. 1 Samuel 20:31 As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!"
13. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved HAVING NO FEAR OF GOD. Saul did not see God, so he did not fear God. Thus there was no limit to the actions he allowed to proceed from his life. Saul saw no consequence in offending the Lord by his life. 1 Samuel 22:17 Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me." But the king's officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.
14. Saul's pathway of rebellion involved NOT HATING THE ENEMIES OF THE LORD. If we love someone we hurt when they do. We are loyal and reverent of the name of those we cherish. Saul had none of these qualities. 1 Samuel 28:18 Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today.

The end of Saul was a tragedy. He crashed against the rocks of his own disobedient life and sank into the dark waters of sin. He was a disgrace to himself by his ignominious death; to his family he failed to protect; to his country he betrayed and brought to defeat; and to his God he ignored and dishonored.

What a colossal failure and a tragic testimony of neglected warning signs, which led to a personal, infinite shipwreck of a very promising life! Be warned by his failure today!

Pray and live in such a way that these areas don't get solidified in the lives of those we love:

1. IMPATIENCE with God's plan. This can be:
2. NEGLECTING to provide for those entrusted to your care.
3. LAZY INDIFFERENCE.
4. RASH WORDS.
5. INCOMPLETE OBEDIENCE.
6. NOT CULTIVATING PERSONAL WORSHIP.
7. DOUBTING THE POWER OF GOD in your life.
8. SELF FOCUS. Saul measured the worth of his life by what others said rather than by the Lord.
9. INSECURITY into daily living.
10. JEALOUSY. Saul was driven by the lust for self that manifests itself in a desire to keep others from having something you want for yourself;
11. WRONG VALUE SYSTEM. Saul did not treasure nor seek God's blessing, God's favor, God's presence, or even God's involvement in his life.
12. NEGLECTING his MARRIAGE.
13. ONLY SEEING THINGS FROM AN EARTHLY PERSPECTIVE.
14. HAVING NO FEAR OF GOD.
15. NOT HATING THE ENEMIES OF THE LORD.