

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**July 14, 2016**

**1 Samuel 24:1–25:44.** David spares Saul’s life.

**1 Peter 1:20–25.** Fervent love is not manufactured/conduit love.

**Psalms 125:1–127:5.** Unless the LORD builds the house, it is all in vain.

**COMMENTS:**

**1 Samuel 24:1–25:44.** This section begins with **David sparing Saul (1 Sam. 24:1–22)**. Saul pursued David into the region of En Gedi. There he went aside into one of the many caves nearby to relieve himself. David and his men were hidden in the back of the same cave. His men urged him to kill the king, but David chose to trust God’s providence. However, he quietly cut off the hem of Saul’s garment. David later regretted doing it, however, because the hem was symbolic of Saul’s position as the Lord’s anointed. Once the king left, David called out to him and showed the hem as evidence of his innocent intentions toward the king. Saul openly admitted his sin against David and confessed with his own mouth that the Lord had chosen David to be king. Note how sensitive David was to the will of God here as he had the opportunity to kill Saul in these circumstances provided by “hand of the Lord” (**1 Sam. 24:4, 10, 18**). However, David was too wise in the truth of God’s word to interpret this event as a signal for him to kill Saul, for the law says, “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Slaying an enemy on the battlefield or an attacker in self-defense was one thing, but to assassinate an unsuspecting king was quite something else. David reminded his men that Saul was the anointed of the Lord, and that no Jew had the right to attack him. The Jews were not even to curse their rulers, let alone kill them, for cursing a ruler was in the same category as blaspheming the name of the Lord (Exod. 22:28). Consider the extent of disrespect for the police by many today. Without law and order, even unfair law and order, there can be no society; law and order is what separates from the uncivilized. **1 Samuel 25:1-44: David Spares Nabal.** The notice of Samuel’s death is not incidental to the author. He shows how the people’s love for Samuel’s godly leadership continued with David as well. David kindly protected the flocks of a wealthy herdsman named Nabal (*fool*). As a result, none of his flocks were stolen or lost to wild animals. It was not unreasonable then for David to ask Nabal to respond kindly to him. But Nabal angrily refused, and David threatened to kill him. The shepherds of Nabal, who had benefited from David’s protection, entreated Abigail, Nabal’s wife, to intercede. Abigail pleaded with David that the Lord’s anointed had no need to avenge himself since the Lord would do so. David gratefully agreed and resisted the evil deed. Later, God struck Nabal dead. This event exemplifies the Old Testament understanding of God’s sovereignty over all things. Everything that happens is part of the outworking of God’s will. God is the existential cause of everything that exists, animate and inanimate, as there is no such thing as existential inertia. In other words, the Cause of all beings must continue to exist in the effects (beings) and this Cause can actually be seen in the effects of all beings in creation in some way (Rom. 1:20). The famous incident involving Abigail led the author to list David’s wives. He married Abigail from Carmel and Ahinoam from Jezreel. His first wife, Saul’s daughter Michal, was given to another man.

**1 Peter 1:20–25.** In his letter to early churches, Peter speaks about the hope that the prophets had foretold and the things that angels were curious about—the grace prepared through His Son (1 Pet 1:10–12). Peter tells them that our Savior “*was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has been revealed in these last times for you,*” 1 Pet 1:20. This surprise redemption is unlike any other. The hope, Christ’s sure resurrection and the Word of God, give us incredible security: *We have been “born again, not from perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23).* We should be awed by this incredible hope and respond with obedience, praise, and love for our neighbor (1 Pet. 1:22). Note, in **1 Peter 1:23-25**, the basis of our unity: we have experienced the same *new birth* through faith in Jesus Christ. Fellowship among believers cannot be built on our first birth, our natural birth. It really does not matter what our backgrounds are according to the flesh. It is the new spiritual birth that is the basis of our ultimate unity. At Faith Bible church we have people from many different educational and social backgrounds, but we all come together as one family all saved by the same Savior and all headed for the same Destiny: eternal life with Christ. Since we are all in the same family of Christ, note Peter’s command in **1 Peter 1:22** to *love fellow believers with a fervent love.* “Fervent” is the translation of ἐκτενω̅ς, which has the idea of stretching out with great effort. This is the kind of love we should have for each believer. To redefine love into some relaxed mental attitude (conduit spirituality), like just not getting angry at others, is to reveal more of one’s lack of respect for God and His Word than what the Word actually says (see 1 John 3:16 for action of love; see 1 Cor. 13 for the many virtues created by true love). What’s more is that the phrase “love of the brethren” is φιλαδελφίαν (*philadelphian*), a brotherly love, points once again to a special love for the family of God. Note also the word “sincere” which refers to love that is not hypocritical (ἀνυπόκριτον). The truth is that we all need to recognize that in our human fallen nature, we are all selfish; so it took a miracle of God to give us this love: because we “*obeyed the truth through the Spirit,*” and God infused His love into our souls (Rom. 5:5). Love for the brethren is an evidence that we truly have been born of God (1 John 4:7–21). Now we are to be “obedient children” (1 Peter 1:14) who no longer want to live in the selfish desires of the old life. To be sure, this love cannot be manufactured. It is produced in concurrence with the believer’s love that is extended to a supernatural level, which is why the love really is from the believer and from God the Holy Spirit. This love cannot be “manufactured” by various contrived spiritual systems. It exists as the believer becomes partakers of the love of God and actually shares in God’s love for His family as well as everyone else. Our love for fellow believers and all human beings starts with loving God from Whom our love then flows to all others as we fellowship with God—we love others with Godlike love. Again, the love that we share with each other in the Lord is generated by the Spirit of God as we walk in concurrence with God’s Word. It is a superhuman power in us, but it is not something that we turn on and off like a light switch. Our love and our character simply do not work that way, and anyone really looking at reality as such must recognize this and thus the falsity of the many conduit ways of turning on God’s love in them, which are so prevalent throughout contemporary evangelical Christianity and Bible movements. What is needed is a whole new perspective, a whole new way of thinking, an eternal perspective, which is exactly what Peter is telling these believers and us.

**Psalm 125:1–127:5.** In **Psalm 125:4** we have a prayer for those of virtue: *Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, And to those who are upright in their hearts.* As noted above, neither goodness nor uprightness in hearts can be manufactured by some conduit “spiritual” system. True virtue (*those who are good, who **are** uprightness in hearts*) is only possible from actualizing/doing (read James 2:22) of God’s good by a person from his 2<sup>nd</sup> order level reflections (2<sup>nd</sup> order desires and volitions are desires and actions which result from reflection on first order desires and actions/volitions, the latter of which is how a person really feels and is acting). Then and only then can God create virtue without destroying the very free will that makes man truly responsible. When a person wants to be a certain way (2<sup>nd</sup> order) that is different than the way he is (1<sup>st</sup> order), then and only then can God strengthen the 2<sup>nd</sup> order to transform the 1<sup>st</sup> order and in so doing actually strengthen free will rather than override it with a will that does not even belong to the believer. **In Psalm 126** the psalmist describes the joy that God’s people experienced in response to God’s freeing them from their captors. In the past God’s restorative work had cast Israel into a state of surprised shock—they “were like dreamers” (**Psa. 126:1**). They were filled with laughter and praise. His glory was present, and His redemption was a mighty witness to both the Israelites and the surrounding nations (**Psa. 126:2**). Reflect on the beauty as well as the profundity of the first verse in **Psalm 127**, *Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.* So it is with all that we are and all that we do. We all need to be reminded that life as such really is not all about us. We are not here for ourselves. It is all about the Lord from beginning to end. What a blessing to be given life and the privilege of growing in Him daily on a journey that will never end, a journey of eternal peace and eternal happiness with the eternal Lord—a journey is what awaits every child of God. It is far better to look at the Lord and this fantastic journey awaiting us all than to focus on self and think that life is all about us and our temporal needs. We are created for so very much more!

*Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

*Pastor Don*