

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”  
July 17, 2016**

**1 Samuel 30:1–31:13.** David turns to the Lord when he was emotionally overwhelmed.

**1 Peter 2:18–25.** Testifying to the Gospel in the social *order*.

**Psalms 131:1–132:18.** David’s humility (131) and prayer for the return of the Ark (132).

**COMMENTS:**

**1 Samuel 30:1–31:13.** In **1 Samuel 30:1–6**, David returns to the town of Ziklag to find that two of his wives and many of his warriors’ wives have been captured, and the city has been burned down. The text describes the emotional atmosphere of the discovery: “*David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until there was not enough strength in them to weep.*” The text also states that “*it was very pressed for David*”—meaning that David’s men are considering killing him because they view the situation as his fault (**1 Sam 30:4, 6**). Then we’re told, “*But David strengthened himself in Yahweh his God*” (1 Sam 30:6). As we have studied, virtue is all about right thinking, right wishing, and right passions/emotions; in other words, a good intellect, a good will, good affections (qualities of the intellectual being), and good passions/emotions (qualities of our physical beings). At a time when David’s emotions could have taken over, he went to the Lord, which kept him in a rational mode oriented to the good to which his emotions could respond instead of the emotions controlling his intellect and will. His decision to go to the Lord changed everything. By seeking Yahweh, David learns that he will be able to overtake the raiders of Ziklag and recover the captives (**1 Sam 30:7–10**). What happens next is amazing: David and his men show kindness to a stranger, who returns the kindness by showing them where the raiders are camped. David and his men then overcome the raiders and recover the captives (**1 Sam 30:11–20**). This is one of those “God works in mysterious ways” moments. But could God have worked in mysterious ways if David had allowed either hot emotion to rule his intellect and will/volition? No! His prayer made all the difference. We overcome the problems we face because God works in us, through His Spirit, when we seek Him in prayer in our 2<sup>nd</sup> order wills. This is also how we can overcome our weaknesses and become more like Him. Becoming more like Christ is always accompanied by growth in virtue: right thinking, right willing, right affections, and right emotions—and in that order. Of course, as one might expect, there is no way to gain these apart from actualizing God’s Word in our lives. No amount of intellectual determinism (the idea that right thinking always leads to right wishing and affections) is going to transform a person. The key to transformation is the form: the right/good **form** in the intellect, the right/good **form** as the object of will, the right/good **form** in the affections, and the right/good **form** in the emotions. There is no transformation without obtaining a new form in thoughts and actions. We take in forms in the intellect (theoretical knowledge) but reach out with our appetites to create forms with our wills (practical knowledge). One cannot truly be a mature virtuous person regardless of what he knows unless and until his appetites are changed from loving sin and evil to seeing them for the perversion they are. Then and only then will the believer really seek God as the greatest good and His grace, which is stronger than all of his sins and shame. Far from a woe-is-me attitude, this believer lives in celebration of the grace that frees him positionally and experientially from sin by delivering him from a debased appetite, a love for sin, by giving him an appetite for the Lord and the true, good, and beautiful.

**1 Peter 2:18–25.** Regarding various household and societal codes throughout these and previous verses, the best scholars teach that they come directly from Aristotle. While I would accept that the basic ethics in these verses are Aristotelian in nature, there is no proof that they came directly from him. It is just that Aristotle had an ethic and political system that was based on law and order and everyone fulfilling their responsibility in their sphere, which is what we find in these verses. However, God was never the motive for action in Aristotle. Beginning in **verse 18** Peter continued the household code by enjoining slaves to submit to their masters, even if the masters are wicked people. The exhortation is addressed to slaves, but slaves function as examples for all Petrine Christians, and so the principle enunciated applies to all believers. The motivation for the exhortation is given in **verse 19**. Those who endure suffering from masters while doing what is good will be rewarded by God. This reward comes in the next life. Peter also points out that those slaves who endure punishment because they have sinned will not receive any approval or rewards from God. Only those who do what is good and experience suffering as a result will be rewarded by God. Peter began **verse 21** by reminding believers that they have been called to suffer, and he immediately turned to Christ as an example to be imitated. Therefore, the suffering of believers may be like Christ's in that it will lead some unbelievers to conversion. The subsequent verses are richly informed by the Servant Song of Isaiah 53. **Verse 21** also calls attention to the distinctive nature of Christ's suffering, for he suffered "*for you,*" implying his substitutionary work on the cross. The exemplary quality of Christ's suffering is emphasized in **verses 22–23**, while His atonement for sinners is featured in **verse 24–25**. According to **verses 22–23**, Christ did not suffer for wrongdoing since He was sinless. When He was criticized and threatened, He did not retaliate but entrusted Himself and the whole situation into God's hands. **Verses 24–25** advance the argument in that they focus on the unique character of Christ's suffering. His death was on behalf of His people so that He bore their sins on the cross. The purpose was to free people from sin so that they would live righteously. In **verse 25** Peter reminds the readers that previously they were wandering from God like errant sheep, but now, by virtue of Christ's death as the Suffering Servant, they have returned to him as their Shepherd and Overseer.

**Psalms 131:1–132:18.** In **Psalms 131:1** David notes how he was not driven by selfish ambition. He, then, calls for Israel to put its hope in the Lord (**131:3**). **Psalms 132** is a prayer of the congregation that the Lord would remember David's vow concerning the dwelling place for the ark. David had two great ambitions: to bring the ark to Jerusalem and then to build a glorious temple to house it. He even made a vow to the Lord, and the Lord permitted him to fulfill the first desire but not the second (2 Sam. 7). David had gone through much hardship with reference to the building of the temple (1 Chron. 22:14), for the wealth he turned over to Solomon came from the spoils of his many battles. The worship leader called on God to "*remember—pay attention to*" what David had done, for humanly speaking, without David there would have been no temple. The congregation found the answer to this prayer when they resolved to worship at the temple. They were reminded of God's promises that David's line would continue, that Zion would be His dwelling place, and that the Messiah would appear. It must be remembered that the ark represented God's throne on the earth and its rightful place was in the Holy of Holies of God's sanctuary. What a privilege the Jews *had!*

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

*Pastor Don*