

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 9, 2016**

1 Samuel 16:1–23. The choice and anointing of David.

James 4:1–17. Wrath and dissension is created by worldliness.

Psalms 119:137–152. The trustworthiness of God’s Word.

COMMENTS:

1 Samuel 16:1–23. Had an election been held in Israel to choose a replacement for King Saul, it’s not likely that the people would have chosen David, but he was God’s first choice. David was but a young boy taken from the “sheepfolds; from following the ewes” (Ps. 78:70–71). Note the situation in David’s family in **1 Samuel 6:6-10**: Before the guests sat down to enjoy the fellowship feast, Samuel looked over seven of Jesse’s sons, thinking that the whole family was there, as he was judging by physical appearance and not by spiritual discernment. Samuel had already forgotten this mistake he made about Saul (9:2; 10:23–24). Samuel may have looked at their faces and forms, but the Lord examined their hearts. God alone can search the human heart and know what a person’s motives really are. So insignificant was David in the family that Jesse didn’t even call him from the flock to the feast! What God was looking for was a man after His own heart (see 1 Sam. 13:14). In last night’s Bible class, I noted four stages of all human action and the importance of distinguishing means from ends. Let us apply them to David: (1) David’s intellect apprehends God as good and his will desires God as a good on a basic level; (2) David’s intellect understands God as a good is attainable and his will sets its intention on obtaining God; (3) David’s intellect specifies an appropriate means to achieve a relationship with God and his will choose the appropriate means (live in obedience, pray, and study the Word of God); and (4) David’s intellect commands the powers of the soul to understand the chosen acts and his will moves these powers to act (the God-oriented life). Note the distinction between end/goal and means. In David’s case, God is always the object of good pursued; this just is being a man after God’s own heart. Unfortunately, in most cases (Exodus generation, Saul, Judas, Demas, Laodecians), God becomes the means rather than the end or goal. This is evil and has been recognized as a great sin throughout Christian history, precisely because “things” become the greater good, the god, and God becomes the means. Let us look at how the four stages of human action apply to a believer of the prosperity movement, named Fred who falls into the category of mammon (or worldly) lover of Matthew 6:24: (1) Fred’s intellect apprehends mammon (materialism) as his greatest good and his will desires mammon (as life’s greatest love and motivation in life); (2) Fred’s intellect understands that mammon is attainable and his will sets its intention on obtaining mammon (the temporal-centered life); (3) Fred’s intellect specifies God as his appropriate means to gain mammon and his intellect chooses God (and such things as prayer, Bible study, giving to the church, memorizing promises in the Bible) and his will chooses those means; (4) Fred’s intellect commands the powers of the soul to understand the chosen act and his will moves these powers to act: He attends church, studies his Bible, claims promises in the Word of God—all for the *purpose of his greatest good of mammon*. In other words, Fred uses God as a means to his perceived greater goods in the temporal life. This is radically different than the mindset of David who used temporal things of this life for His greater good and final good of God Himself (see Psalm 23). Both Fred and David study their Bibles, pray, and trust God. However, Fred uses God for his goal of his greater goods in the temporal life whereas

David's greatest good was God. Consider how the one difference in goal makes to all of life. God is to be the goal. God, a deeper relationship with God must be the goal and not the means of gaining other things lest we fall into idolatry. The key to David's success in life is stated in 1 Sam. 16:18, "*the Lord was with him.*" This points to concurrence and the fact that David lived before God, with God, and after God—God was the goal in everything he did, of life itself. This was also the secret of the success of Joseph (Gen. 39:2–3, 21, 23), Joshua (Josh. 6:27), and Samuel (1 Sam. 3:19), and it is the basis for success in the Christian life today. David loved the Lord and worshiped Him, and he surrendered himself to do the work God had called him to do. As long as he followed the Lord, God blessed and used him for his glory. As long as God remains our ultimate goal, our ultimate good, we are on the right track and enjoying supernatural sanctification/virtue as He raises us up to Himself concurrently. It is quite the opposite for those who have other goals/motives, as in the case of Saul who went from love of David (16:21) to fear, hate, and attempts to murder David (18:8-9, 12, 15, 19). It is self-evident that had Saul made God his ultimate good and goal in life, he would have grown in his love and appreciation of David instead of hate in that he would have appreciated David's musical abilities in worship of the Lord. What we live for makes all the difference of our whole lives. If one is only interested in the Lord as a means to solve temporal problems, then the only time he will be interested in Bible doctrine and Bible class is when there is a major problem that needs God's solutions. However, if one really is interested in God as the ultimate good, then he is always interested in the serious study of God and His Word with the people of God—for God's own sake, which just is the kind of love David had in "a man after God's own heart." *Quo Vadis?*

James 4:1–17. Keeping with the previous theme of ultimate goals/good in life, note all of the problems with sin and problems (tests?) in this section—again, all from making the world one's ultimate good. The more a person makes this life, and the issues of life, the issue of life, the more frustration and sin a person will be caught up into, culminating in becoming an enemy of God. Note the extremely strong language in verse 4—all from making temporal life issues the greatest good. One must choose the side he is really on, and when one opts for *friendship with the world*, he automatically opts for *enmity with God*. He has chosen the status of an antagonist toward his Maker and Redeemer. This is just like when a married man decides to engage in immorality with a woman to whom he is not married. In that very decision he chooses to reject fidelity to his wife. Thus in their craving for worldly acceptance and standing, James's Christian readers are committing spiritual adultery and renouncing friendship with their Lord. It may have surprised many of them to hear it put this way, but James's aim is to wake them up to the sad depth to which their spirituality and devotion had sunk. However, God always stands by with "greater grace." He never runs out of grace. How does one receive this grace? Humility, "to the humble," which just is what a person is *not* who lives for this world. **4:8:** Note how the injunction to "draw near to God" is coupled with putting away all evil and sin (all caused by materialism to start with). As I pointed out in last evening's Bible class, all sins are acts of perversion and can be traced back to selfishness. So, when we sin we act like perverts and selfish pigs. Such strong language, which of course is the viewpoint of the Bible, has a way of taking the "shine" (good) off of sin. As we have noted, there is no sin that we have ever committed that we did not see as a good and as long as we see sin as a good we will seek it rather than the goodness of God and His grace. Acts of sins are acts of seeing and loving evil as a good, as well as viewing God as a threat to that "good," which precludes an intimate closeness with Him. Loving sin really does undermine our spiritual life and how we think and feel about Him. Recognizing sin for what it is

goes a long way of seeing its filth, to which Scripture abundantly and consistently testifies. **4:9:** Note the attitude in this verse in contrast to the attitude in some “grace” circles that it is arrogant to feel sorry for sins since Christ died for them all. Consider **4:17** in light of our study of the metaphysics of sin where I pointed out that sins of omission are just as serious as sins of commission. More Christians lose Christian virtue (right thinking, right wishing, and right affections) and love for the Lord by sins of omission rather than sins of commission. Consider how many believers are not even part of a local church even though that is the norm and even command for the church age (Heb. 10:25). Sin, whether sins of omission or sins of commission, always deceive the intellect and corrupt the will/appetite, which is why believers always have an excuse (rationalization) for not doing what they know they should be doing. However, they only fool themselves as they continue to corrupt their intellects and appetites regarding the good of God and His plan—as per these horrible believers that James is writing to, who would rather be in bed with the world than to love the Lord. Like I have noted, all sin is irrational as well as perverted acts of selfishness. What else would you call acts that we find in this section of Scripture but perversion? No wonder God uses such hard language in this section! And there is no wonder why modern Christianity does not care for such frank honesty as it tends “not to build people up” and make them “feel good about themselves” in addition to threatening their gods of materialism and goals as expressed in James 4:13 *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit."* Note what they are *not* talking about: Bible doctrine, the grace of God, love, the coming kingdom, truth as such. As I have noted in our study of metaphysics of love: what we love comes to exist as a form in our rational appetites; in other words, what we love we think about often and with delight. What is in our thoughts and delights?

Psalm 119:137–152. The first section (137-144) is the *Tsadhe* section. In this section the trustworthiness of God’s Word is celebrated: **(1) God’s Word is trustworthy no matter what people do (137–139).** The psalmist must have felt that his ministry had failed, but he had been faithful even as the Word is faithful. People may sin and die, but God’s righteousness and righteous Word remains (137, 138, 142, 144). Over many centuries, the Scriptures have been thoroughly tested in the fires of persecution and criticism, the way a goldsmith tests precious metals (12:6–7; 18:30), and the Word has been found pure. One of the joys of the Christian life is how the truths of God perfect the intellect as we have been studying regarding faith. The world may look upon God’s people as “small and despised,” but when you stand on God’s promises, you are a giant. **(2) God’s Word is trustworthy regardless of how you feel (142–143).** The Word of God keeps us oriented to reality when our feeling can lead us astray. **(3) God’s Word is trustworthy no matter how long you live (144).** Word of God is eternal and fixed forever (89, 160). It is not the length of life but the depth of life that counts, and depth comes from laying hold of God’s Word and obeying it. Jesus spent only thirty-three years on this earth, and His public ministry lasted only three years, yet He accomplished a work that is eternal. **In verses 145-152,** we have a beautiful primer on prayer in this *Qoph* section. The writer prayed throughout this entire psalm, but in these verses he concentrated on prayer and cried out to God day and night. From his experience, we receive some basic instructions about successful prayer (145-152): **(1) Pray wholeheartedly (145–146).** We must seek God with our whole heart (2, 10, 58) and obey Him with our whole heart (34, 69). **(2) Pray without ceasing** according to the Word (147–148). We are to constantly cultivate an attitude of prayer. **(3) Pray as an act of love (149).** This verse combines both love and law, for if we love the Lord, we will keep His

commandments. Too often we think of prayer as an emergency measure, rushing into God's presence and crying for help. But what would you think of children who spoke to their parents only when they needed something? Prayer is more than asking; prayer is loving. To tell Him we love Him only because we want to receive something is to practice prayer on a juvenile level. When we share our love with the Lord, we receive new life from Him. **(4) Pray with your eyes open** (150–152). As he prayed, the psalmist saw his enemies drawing near, so he asked for God to draw near to help him.

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

Pastor Don