

Judges 08-06-06b

Okay, let's resume our study now. We're at Judges Chapter 13, and if you've been keeping track, this is now going to be the seventh cycle of oppression and deliverance that we find in the Book of Judges. Jeff, that was number six.

Samson is going to be number seven. For obvious reasons, this has significance. This is a number of completion.

It is going to complete the history of the interval between Joshua's conquest of the land and the events of 1 Samuel, where you have the rise of the first great prophet in Israel after Moses and ultimately the anointing of Saul and then David. And yet at the same time, we know that some of these are actually parallel. The oppression that we see here by the Philistines goes back.

Now, the Philistines had actually come into the land. We know this both from archaeology and from deduction by studying the biblical account. But these Sea Peoples, the Katharim, they have come from somewhere in the vicinity of Greece.

Evidently, there's some dispute about that. But evidently, the Philistines made an incursion about 100 years before this time. And they began to populate the coastal region and move inland.

And they established their five cities that are going to come into such prominence later on in terms of Gath and Ekron and Ashdod and Gaza and Ashkelon, the five cities. So these have been established over the last several decades. And now the Philistines seem to have expansionist ambitions.

They want to move inland. They want to take over the land that is explicitly occupied by the Israelites. So you get the idea that over this 300-year period that Jephthah mentioned, the Israelites have not expanded to the borders of the land like they were supposed to.

And this has left an opportunity for the Philistines to gain a foothold. If Israel had fully occupied their tribal territories, the Philistines would have never been an issue. But this is the kind of issue that we face in our lives.

We're not facing Philistines, but God gives us guidance on how we should live our lives as believers. There are certain kinds of unrighteousness that we should not tolerate, and there are certain kinds of righteousness that we should pursue. It's a twofold life.

It's summed up in the word metanoia, change of mind away from one thing and toward something else. You see that in Hebrews chapter 6, where the author, who I think is the Apostle Paul, says, not laying again the foundation of metanoia, change of mind, away from dead works and faith toward God. You stop putting your faith in dead works, and you start putting it toward God.

Now, the Israelites are supposed to not follow in the footsteps of the Canaanites, not get into their idolatry, not get into their unrighteousness and their evil deeds, and they are to pursue the positive aspects of righteousness in the law. Look out for the widows and orphans, treat each other fairly, love the Lord your God with all your heart, love your neighbor as yourself. It sums up the whole law.

It is not enough to refrain from doing the bad. You could try to argue that the Israelites didn't get into the seriously bad Canaanite practices so much. They dabbled in idolatry, but then there would be an oppression, and they would recover.

In the days of Jephthah, they stopped the idolatry. But what have they failed to do? They have certainly, wherever they are on the negative scale of not refraining from the evil of the Amorites and, in fact, starting to amalgamate with them and starting to incorporate Amorite culture into their own, so much so that even their language changes. But it's a two-part thing.

You refrain from doing what is evil, you do what is good. We see this over and over again in Scripture. You could think about our memory verses, hate the garment defiled by the flesh, touch not the unclean thing.

Flee what is evil, pursue what is good. That's an essential message. And both things have to happen.

It's not enough to refrain from doing. This is the problem, as I've said many times with those who are trying to beat an addiction or a bad habit. You can't just sit there and say, don't smoke, don't smoke, don't smoke, don't smoke.

You can't say, I'm not going to eat a piece of pie. You have to turn your mind in a positive direction. You have to replace old habits with new habits.

You can't just sit there trying to restrain yourself from an old habit. You've got to positively move in a different direction. Retreat from the bad, advance toward the good.

Half of that doesn't work in either sense. If you don't retreat from the bad, you can't pursue the good. So this is what Israel has failed to do.

By not doing the positive part of the command, go into the land, destroy the Amorites, drive them out, occupy, take possession. They haven't done that. And even if they had not fallen into idolatry, even if they had not fallen into evil and materialism and the culture of the Amorites, by not fully expanding into the land, they create the potential for future problems.

It doesn't show up right away. They've been there 200 years when the Philistines first show up. The Philistines build and grow and increase over a century before you reach this point.

But at this point, it's a really big problem. Samson is not going to be the solution to this problem. Samson is going to slow it down.

But this problem will not be solved in the days of Samson. It will not be solved at the Battle of Mizpah under Samuel. It will not be solved at the Stone of Ebenezer.

It will not be solved in the reign of Saul, even though David accomplishes many victories and offers a dowry for his wife and does a lot of other things at the expense of the Philistines. But this thing is not going to be solved until the latter part of David's reign. And that's a hundred years hence.

And it took a hundred years to build this problem. It's going to take a hundred years to get rid of it. And it's Israel's fault by not obeying the positive injunctions, the positive commands, the positive exhortations that God has given them.

It is not enough to not be a bad person. It's not enough to not do bad things. We have to do what is good.

And in this age, as Christians, we can only do that in the power of God's Spirit and in the light of God's Word. And good intentions don't count. It is the active, effectual implementation of God's power.

God's power is available to us in two specific forms, and only two. God's Word and God's Spirit. There is no other place where you can get God's power in your life.

It's very simple. But it does not come by prayer. It does not come by thinking good thoughts.

It doesn't come by watching for signs. It doesn't come by working and having flying elbows and knees trying to get things done. There are only two elements that can bring God's power into our lives.

And it's the Spirit of God, which is a permanent gift at the point of salvation, but we do not access His power and we are not enabled and powered by Him unless we meet the conditions for that. You can think of it, it's been called fellowship, it's been called a lot of different things. But a marriage can devolve into sort of a roommate relationship.

And you're both still there, perhaps, but maybe it's all of the wonderful benefits and the joys and the intimacies and the really fulfillment of that marriage isn't there. You're just roommates. We can end up having sort of a roommate relationship with God the Holy Spirit.

He hasn't left, but we're not getting any of the benefits of His presence because we have decided things and we have embarked on courses of action and on ways of thinking where He is relegated to a non-functional presence. He can be there and not really be doing us any benefit. And it's our fault.

What does our memory verse say? The Lord's arm is not shortened that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear. Your iniquities separate between you and your God. Your sins hide His face so that the relationship with Him is of no benefit.

Well, this is Israel's problem. Not only have they actually gone into the negative realm and they will recover from time to time and put away the idols and say, okay, okay, we're not going to do those bad things anymore. But they've not fulfilled their positive mandate.

We are in the same boat. It is not enough to say, well, when I look at my life, I'm not robbing from anyone. I'm a nice person.

I smile at people and I'm considerate and thoughtful and courteous. That's not enough that we are not active, evil, cross-browed sinners. We have to be pursuing what is good.

Jesus said, strive to enter by the narrow gate. It takes effort, positive, constructive effort. He didn't say, lay down and wait for the moving track like they have at the airport to carry you through the narrow gate.

Calvinists think God isn't working in you to will and to do. Perseverance of the saints, just lay down and the conveyor belt will drop you through the narrow gate. Perseverance of the saints, the effectual grace of God.

I'm not treading on the upward way. I'm just laying on the upward way. A new height I'm gaining every day because God isn't working in me.

He's just lifting me higher and higher. It requires no effort on my part. These people don't read their Bible.

What did Jesus say? Strive to enter by the narrow gate. You either want to be in God's presence, going through that narrow door, or you don't. If you don't, fine.

You won't be there. In the eternal future, you won't be near the presence of God. You're going to be way out in the outskirts of Antarctica somewhere, in the new earth, and the throne of God, and the trees, and the fruit different every month, and the water of life coming out from God's throne, and the healing leaves are going to be far, far away.

You're going to have to wait for an emissary who is a citizen in the new Jerusalem to emerge, carrying those leaves, and bring them all the way out so that you can get healed. Anybody who wants to anticipate that kind of future and that suits them, that's their privilege and that's their choice. As Paul the Apostle says, we are convinced of better things of you, brethren, things that accompany salvation.

Being grateful to God and appreciating the Lord Jesus Christ and all of the wonderful compassions and mercies of God that have been expressed toward us, it is a tragic failure, and it is ingratitude, and it is a complete missing of the point to just lay around and do nothing in this life. We are supposed to strive to enter by the narrow gate. Wide is the way, broad is the gate that leads to destruction, and that's where nearly everybody is going.

Narrow is the way, and straight is the gate that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Why is

that? Look at Israel. Look at the opportunities.

It's a rich land flowing with milk and honey. Look at the business opportunities. Look at the agricultural opportunities.

Look at the social climbing that I can do. I can buy into the Canaanite culture. I can become an artsy, craftsy, wonderfully erudite and sophisticated person of the world here.

I don't want to be associated with the vagabond life and the sojourning in the wilderness and living like a Bedouin out there in raggedy clothing and tents and dusty sandals. Now we're in the land, and we want to be well thought of, and I'm going to wear these cone-shaped caps like the Canaanites wear, and I'm going to change my speech so I can talk like the Canaanites talk, and I want to be accepted in their culture and in their stratosphere because I admire them. I don't look at their morals.

I look at their lifestyle. I don't look at their spiritual status of being under the curse and condemned by God because of hundreds of years of gross evil and immorality. I aspire to their materialistic grandeur.

Well, it happens in this country. It has happened in every generation. It'll happen until the Lord Jesus comes back.

We make a decision every single day. Are we going to be in this world but not of it, or are we going to be in this world and of it? They made the wrong choice. Because of that, quiet, growing, cancerous tumors appear, and the Philistines are quietly growing and establishing themselves and sinking down their roots.

These five cities grow over the course of that century to become strongholds and powerhouses, and they are encroaching ever eastward from the west in the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years. Remember now, this is the seventh and final cycle of discipline in this book.

None of the others have been this long. This is the longest oppression in the book of Judges, and it matches. It's like bookends.

You go back to this wonderful chiastic structure. Israel has tested in the wilderness forty years. Now they're tested in the land forty years.

This is in the main part of the land. This is on the good side of the Jordan, where they ought to be doing better. It's a rebuke.

In the same way that the raising of Deborah as a prophetess was a rebuke to Israel, it's a rebuke that the people who stayed on the wrong side of the Jordan—why did we have that listing of Jephthah and Ibzan and Elon and Abdon? Why did we have those guys listed? If you

add up their time, starting with Jephthah, you get thirty-one years. Thirty-one years of peace. All you have to do is ride around on donkeys and go from city to city over there in Gilead.

And Gilead, the place that is ripe for destruction because those people didn't even want to cross the Jordan, they're doing better than the people who came across the Jordan and initially started to fulfill their divine commission. Remember there's a couple of places in the New Testament where it says it's better not to start at all than to start a thing and wind up doing poorly. The dog returns to its mom and so on.

You almost get the idea that that sixth cycle of oppression and the Gileadites, who are nobodies, fight off the Ammonites and have peace for thirty-one years over there during the time that mainstream Israel, the guys that are supposedly on the good side of the Jordan, are being increasingly oppressed and harassed by the Philistines. And it's a rebuke. Every time they look across the Jordan, look at the Ephraimites.

Their whole tribe got embarrassed by what they considered to be offscourings and escapees from the tribe. Well, you all are just escapees from Ephraim and Manasseh over there on the wrong side of the Jordan. They denigrated them, looked down on them.

They wound up getting defeated by them and massacred by them. And now Gilead has peace. And it's over here on the other side where there's trouble.

Well, it's a reminder to us that we have two obligations in our Christian life, day by day by day. When you get up in the morning, you say your morning prayers, just remember there are two things. It's only two things we have to remember.

God seems to give us a lot of things in twos. Remember that we have the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It takes both.

If you want the Spirit of God to be active, don't let sin crop up in your life. Do the Psalm 51 thing. Against thee and thee only have I sinned.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Lord, I fouled up.

We homo lageo. We claim 1 John 1.9. We confess our sins. He forgives us.

He cleanses us. Now the Holy Spirit can minister God's Word to us. And that's the second part.

I used to always use the example of epoxy. You've got to have the resin and you've got to have the hardener or whatever. But of course that turns into a solid thing and we don't really want solid globs of solidified stuff in our soul.

But it's a good example in that both things have to be present for it to do its job, for it to do its work. I watched a guy put in a windshield in my car a day or two ago and he had this wonderfully great bead of black caulk. They use a huge amount of bead.

It's as big around as a tootsie roll. It's a great big giant bead that they put around there. And I thought, well, once you mash the glass down on that, there's no way that that's going to leak.

But he said, you know what? He said, I've been doing this for a long time, but the first windshield that I put in, I learned a very important lesson because there is a preparation that you have to put on the glass where it is going to touch that bead. It etches the glass and it's kind of like the stuff you use on PVC pipe where you put it in before you put on the glue. Well, they had this kind of stuff and I saw him going around and had the same kind of little shoe polish applicator, wire with a little fuzzy thing on the end.

And he put it on the glass and everywhere it touched the glass, the glass got dull. I thought, boy, you sure don't want to drip that on a new windshield or you've got to start all over. But he very carefully made this thing right in the place where that caulk was going to hit.

Because for that glass to seal properly, you have to have two things. As great as that caulk is, it will not seal unless you also have the etch. You etch the glass and when you bond that to the caulk, now, boy, have you ever watched him take off a windshield? Gracious sakes, it took him four times longer to get the old windshield off than it did to put the new one on because those things are on there.

And you've got to have special tools and pry bars and this cutting thing with a handle and a rope on it. He was working and sweating out there in the boiling afternoon sun. I really felt sorry for him getting the old one off.

Because once it bonds, it is on there. But it's because it's got those two parts. And either one without the other, it's useless.

Well, our lives as believers take two parts. You have to let God's Holy Spirit do His work. He is always there, but He's ineffectual if we don't choose the environment in which He can speak and in which He can work.

It isn't that His arm is shortened or that His ear is heavy, but if we allow sin to crop up in our life, if we allow iniquity to separate us from our God, then the Holy Spirit is just... He's not going to try to talk to somebody who won't listen. We all know that that's a waste of time. If people aren't listening, stop talking.

It's a good rule of thumb. If people aren't listening, shut up. You're wasting your breath and you're wasting their time and you're making yourself a stench.

Be quiet. Wait until someone asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. Wait until someone is receptive.

The Holy Spirit is the greatest example of this in the world. He doesn't talk to people who aren't interested in hearing from Him. So, those two things bring the power of God into our life and they enable us to do two things.

It gives us power over sin. We supernaturally, divinely can resist temptations that would otherwise crush us. There are people who escape the homosexual lifestyle.

There are people who escape drug addiction. A good friend of mine was talking to someone who is beginning a work of ministry here in Dallas who was a crack cocaine addict. Now, some of you have varying degrees of exposure to crack cocaine addiction.

Some of us have a lot more insight into that than others. But I can tell you that that is impossible to escape if you do not have divine help. People don't get over a heavy crack cocaine addiction.

This man was a crack addict for 13 years. He went to his mother one day. She was a believer.

She had been praying for him the whole time. He went to her one day and said, I need some money and she knew why. She said, you've wiped us out.

There is no more money. I don't know how I'm going to pay the bills at the end of the month. Your habit has wiped us out.

There is no more money. She didn't look in her eyes because she wasn't judgmental. She wasn't harsh.

She didn't try to preach at him. She just said, there is no more money. He reached the point of conviction.

He came to Christ on that occasion. She prayed for him. He prayed to be released from that.

His craving disappeared. He never had a problem with it from that day. It just left.

That's a work of God. That isn't something that happens biologically. Talk to anybody who deals with addicts and that's God.

That is the power of God answering prayer. That power is available if we give God's Holy Spirit room and if God's word is available. This lady started to share with her son the truth of the gospel and the truth of God's word.

He was ready for it. He listened and he responded. He never had a problem with it.

The ministry that he wants to start now is to try to share the truth of God with people who have that same problem in this city. Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. The Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines.

Forty years testing in the land just as they had testing in the wilderness. What are they going to do? How are they going to respond? There was a certain man of Zorah of the family of the Danites. Zorah again is one of the cities mentioned back in Joshua.

We get a lot of great geographical information out of Joshua 15.33. This is a lowland town. It

tells us in the lowlands there was Eshtoel and Zorah and Ashnah. It is mentioned again in chapter 19 where we have already seen references to Bethlehem and so on that we saw a little bit earlier.

The Danites are ending up to be the most corrupt tribe in Israel. We have seen this steady downward spiral in how God seems to be trying to embarrass Israel into repentance by the Philistines. Using unusual means of deliverance and using it from unexpected quarters.

He is from the Danites. This man's name is Manoah. Manoah means rest.

You can go all the way back to Genesis for the antecedents of this name. His wife was barren and had born no children. The angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her behold now you are barren and have born no children but you shall conceive and give birth to a son.

Therefore be careful not to drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing for behold you shall conceive and give birth to a son and no razor shall come upon his head for the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines. Notice begin. We know that this is not going to accomplish deliverance as already mentioned.

Now before we even get any further what does this put you in mind of? When was the last time a barren woman was told that she would conceive? Think about your books. You've got Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges. So are there any barren women in Genesis who suddenly conceive? Who would that be? Abraham's wife Sarah.

She's 90 years old and has had no children. So once again we have another sort of bracketing type of thing. The nation of Israel begins with Abraham having his son Isaac through a woman who was thought to be barren and who was thought she would never conceive and God made that promise ahead of time.

Remember she left that's why his name is Yitzhak. So once again the angel of the Lord appears and this final, remember now this is the seventh cycle of oppression and so the oppression of the descendants of Abraham really begins in Abraham's own lifetime. He wanders through the land.

Isaac is going to wander through the land being driven from well to well to well. Remember that? God told Abraham your descendants are going to be oppressed for 400 years and they were and then they're delivered and now they've been in the land for close to 400 years. They've been out of Egypt now for close to 400 years and it's like bookends.

We're back 800 years from the time that the first angel came to Abraham and said your barren wife is going to conceive and have a son. We have the angel of the Lord 800 years later saying barren wife you're going to conceive and have a son. So it's not without significance.

But God didn't tell Abraham or Sarah anything about regulations for the son and this is a new

element. Be careful that she is not to drink wine or strong drink or eat any unclean thing. Now normally this wouldn't have been necessary to say don't eat any unclean thing.

Why does he have to tell the wife of Manoah don't eat any unclean thing? What does this tell you about the common practice in that day and observance of the law by this time? It's gotten sloppy and people eat things that they're not supposed to eat. They've amalgamated, they've syncretized, they've compromised, they have integrated with the pagan culture. So be careful not to drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing.

Now what's the story with wine or strong drink? What makes grape juice into wine? Fermentation. And what is the fermented element? It's sort of a yeast. Same thing with strong drink.

Now they don't have distilleries, they don't know how to distill liquor in these days. So what is a strong drink? This is going to be a grain based alcohol, this is basically beer. No wine or beer, Mrs. Manoah.

Throw out the six packs, get rid of the Mogan David or the Ripple or whatever it is you've got in there. No beer, no wine, and don't eat the clams and the lizards and whatever else, the delicacies of the land that you've been partaking of. No more ham, whatever she might be eating.

Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb. Now what does this tell us? And he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines. He shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb.

Well, we need to review just a little bit about what a Nazarite is and we'll go back to Numbers chapter 6. This is where the Nazarite vow is detailed. The Lord speaks to Moses in Numbers 6, speak to the sons of Israel, say to them when a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite. Now we just got through talking about the best policy is not to make a vow and Jephthah just got in trouble for a vow.

The Nazarite status begins with a vow. It's a voluntary entering into this condition. The word that this comes from in Hebrew, Nazar, Nazar means to consecrate yourself.

The Nazarite is a consecrated one, a separated one. I am committing, I am making a commitment. These people would make a decision to take an oath and it could be for a set amount of time or it could be for a lifetime.

There is some indication, again, when you go to the book of Acts and it says that Paul had a vow and he cut his hair at the completion of the vow that he had taken a Nazarite vow, one of these is for a period of time. But either for time or a lifetime, they would dedicate themselves to separation from the world and dedication to God and they would manifest this by these overt signs. They would make an issue of their appearance so that people would know that they were

set apart.

He will be a Nazir, a separated one from the womb and he will be a Nazir for his lifetime. So he will separate himself to the Lord. Now in Numbers chapter 6 it says he takes a vow as a Nazirite to separate or consecrate himself to the Lord.

This is kind of a doubling of the word. The verb to consecrate is to consecrate himself to the Lord and that's very emphatic. He must separate himself from wine and strong drink.

He must drink neither vinegar made from wine or vinegar made from strong drink, nor may he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he must not eat anything that is produced by the grapevine from seed to skin. All the days of the vow of his separation no razor may be used on his head until the time is fulfilled for which he separated himself to the Lord.

He will be holy and must let the locks of hair on his head grow long. All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he must not contact a dead body. He must not defile himself even for his father or mother or his brother or sister if they die because the separation for his God is on his head.

All the days of his separation he must be holy to the Lord. Now, why would someone take this vow? It does not appear to be something entered into lightly. You're pretty much going to be drinking water because there's only about three kinds of beverage.

You've got water, wine and beer and maybe goat's milk. So, your dietary choices are going to be limited. Specifically, they are to refrain from the juice of grapes, no grapes, no raisins, nothing having to do with the vine.

And why would this be? Grapes are not fermented. Raisins are dried grapes. Why would you not be able to touch those? There is a symbolic message here.

Don't even begin. Don't even allow something that could potentially turn into something. If you're going to truly separate and consecrate yourself to God, you're supposed to separate from wine and strong drinks.

So, therefore, don't even get around grapes. There is a great application there, particularly in our areas of weakness. I remember this story.

The chaplain at Dallas Seminary told us this. We had a class with him and he was talking about personal holiness on the part of pastors. And he mentioned to us that he counseled a young man in his previous location.

He wasn't a Dallas Seminary student. But there was a guy that had a problem with pornography and he kept swinging. At that time there wasn't an internet, so this guy was swinging by adult stores and buying materials.

And he came to the chaplain and he said, I don't know how to escape from this. It's kind of like that addiction. I don't know how to escape from it.

So, the chaplain began to question him. He said, well, how does this happen? And he says, well, when I'm coming home from work, I pass by the adult bookstore and the next thing I know I'm pulling in and the next thing I know I'm walking in and the next thing I know I'm buying something and the next thing I know I'm right back in this thing and I can't seem to break it. And the chaplain was smart enough to say, well, where do you live and where do you work? And he got out a map and he said, now where's the adult bookstore? And come to find out this guy was driving out of his way.

If he followed a normal route between his house and his work, he wouldn't even go by an adult bookstore. But he was making the decision when he left work to take this long route, which took him by the adult bookstore, which took him into the parking lot, which took him into the store, which got him back into the grip of this sort of addiction. And so, you know the old thing that Barney Five always says, nip it, nip it, nip it in the bud.

And that's the essence of the Nazirite vow. Don't even eat a grape. To help you abstain from wine, stay away from the grapes.

Don't put yourself in the way of temptation. Don't put yourself in the way of breaking your vow. If you're not going to drink wine, then just don't let anybody bring the grapes around.

Don't put yourself well, but how, just don't even let it get started. And this guy, to finish the story, the chaplain counseling this guy said, look, you need to commit to taking the same route every day when you go to and from work. Don't put yourself in the way of temptation.

And sure enough, when the guy started driving straight home and straight back, why, he was able to get over this thing. I think, personally, it was a bad example. Can you think why? Why is that a bad example of how to solve a problem? Is there any spiritual component in that at all? Any rank, pagan, godless, reprobate, unbeliever could do that.

Better living through habit forming or self-discipline. Why not think about the status of your soul? Why not think about the opportunity that we have in this life? Why not cycle some of the opportunities that we have in this life? And how do you think about that? How do you think about the opportunity of God through your soul? And when we have issues with our thought life, if you really want to beat, and almost all sin starts in our thinking, right? Well, if your mind starts down a road of worry, if your mind starts down a road of bitterness, if your mind starts down a road of bearing a grudge against someone, if your mind starts down a bad road, if you want to form a habit, form a habit of, well, every time I start going down this road, I'm going to stop and I'm going to review one of my memory verses. Anytime I start feeling that old syndrome coming up, I'm going to stop and say one of my memory verses.

And then I'm going to see if I can say two or three more. Move away from what is evil, head

toward what is good. It's not enough to not drive by the store.

What are you going to do with your soul? The same soul that made those decisions is going to make other bad decisions. And I feel sorry for that guy when the internet came out, because now he, how's he going to get away from that? You can't drive around your computer. And a lot of, lot of, lot of, lot of, lot of, lot of, lot of, lot of, lot of people.

There is evil, there is a source of evil right in your house. And if you haven't got the problem solved in your soul, you can't get away from it now. The information age is here and stuff like that is ubiquitous.

And the issue is not to try to handle the source. The issue is fix your soul. You cannot tempt someone with a big juicy piece of steak if they've already got a full meal.

If you are satisfied, if you are happy, if you have a meaningful, productive life, why would you go for bologna? Why would you go for something that is a cheap, lousy, despicable third-rate substitute? If your soul is healthy, disease can't get you. And the way to solve such problems is improve the health of your soul. Any kind of habitual mental problem like that, and it is a mental problem, it's purely mental.

Dissatisfaction, unfulfilled overall outlook on life drives people into all of these different addictions. If you are a happy, productive, fruitful, fulfilled, growing believer, these things bounce off you like water off of a Rain-X windshield. It just can't stick.

Why would it? What is the point of it? And it has no power. God's Spirit and God's Word break the power of that kind of thing, but they have to be active. So, the Nazirite vow, and these parents are to train their son from the womb.

Notice they don't say from his bar mitzvah. How soon should you start training your children? As soon as the doctor dries them off and hands them to you, you start training them. From the womb.

When he exits and he yells, you start raising him as a Nazirite. That's when you start. Child training begins at birth, and parents grossly underestimate their children if they wait years and years and say, well, gee, I guess we really ought to start training that child now.

You have sowed the seeds of your own whirlwind there from birth. If you're a smart parent, and if you pray, and if you try to do God's will, you will begin to see the old conceived in iniquity, born in sin thing really early, and you will learn to be a parent and do appropriate levels of guidance from the time they are infants. You don't get what you want just because you scream.

You don't get what you want just because you make that angry face at me, little baby. You'll get fed when I say you get fed, and you will learn patience, or you can stay in a room by yourself and just scream your head off, but I am not your slave. I didn't come to live in your house.

You came to live in my house, and you need to learn to adjust yourself and develop a little bit of self-control. It begins at birth and goes all the way until they're about eight, and by then, if you haven't trained them, you're in for a world of hurts, all I can say. So from birth, from the womb, he will be a Nazirite from the womb.

This is the time that the child training begins, and they are to create an environment for him as a Nazirite. He doesn't get to make a vow. This is his fate.

Samson, it is your destiny. You are a Nazirite, whether you like it or not, whether you want it or not, you're a Nazirite. Some cards get dealt to us before we're even born.

Deal with it. God doesn't say, well, Samson, I'm really sorry. I told your parents this, and I know maybe you didn't want to be a Nazirite, and I can tell from your subsequent behavior with these Philistine women that you really kind of chafed under those restrictions.

Look, God decides certain things for us, where we're going to be born, what family, what time in history and so on. Deal with it. God is fair, and God is just.

God will work all things together for good. So people who pine and cry and, woe is me, how did I get dealt this hand of cards? God knows what he's doing, and if we move away from what is evil and move toward what is good, God will turn all of these things into assets and into blessings and into positives in our lives and in his plan. Well, we're going to see the details of how this works out in Samson's life next time, but we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the light that it sheds on our path and the opportunities that it gives us for personal application. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts, help us to live in the light of your word day by day.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.