

## Read 1 Kings 1

**But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, and Solomon his brother. 1 Kings 1:10** A particular troublemaker called a staff member in my church to say that he had called several people to establish who didn't like me as pastor. My staff member defended me and indicated that he saw nothing for which I should fear removal. Later when he was telling me about this phone call, my friend said something I've never forgotten. "As I was listening to him talk, all I could think of was that the Devil operates in secret while the Lord works out in the open." With that simple statement, he truly nailed the problem.

As the record of the kings begins, we see a son of David, Adonijah, who is trying to accomplish some things in secret. He was not in line to the throne, but tried to take it by keeping people away who would know that he was not to be the next king. This thing he did in secret was found out, and eventually Adonijah comes to the point of fearing for his life due to his treason. If he had come directly to David to ask about being king, he would have found out that God, not David, had chosen Solomon to be the next king from his birth. **Evaluate yourself right now; are you doing things in secret to bring someone down? Are you unwilling to address the person and allow them to answer your claims or concerns? Remember that God and his people are not to work in secret, but out in the open, dealing directly with the person who causes us trouble (Matthew 18).**

## Read 1 Kings 2

**Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, 1 Kings 2:3** So it's my new entertainment center. I looked at the pieces, and had a great deal of confidence that I could put it together without reading the instructions. I did notice on the front of the instructions as I pulled it out of the box, the manufacturer encouraged me to look at all the instructions before I began. That seemed like a lot of work, and then about an hour later, I found myself disassembling what I had started, and doing what I had been told to do the first time: read the instructions. I couldn't claim ignorance.

As David is instructing Solomon, he tells his son to obey God by walking in His way, keeping His statutes, commandments, ordinances and testimonies. Each of those words is significant, but for the sake of time, David is telling his Son not to ignore any leading from the Lord. Whether it is a direct leading such as a commandment, or displaying the characteristics of God-like forgiveness. **Is there anything God has said yes to, that you are saying no to? Are you picking areas of obedience and disobedience? God's rules are unchanging. These include the rules of Scripture, and those areas that He has told you yes or no to. When you choose obedience, it's always for your benefit.**

### Read 1 Kings 3

**When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice. 1 Kings 3:28** There are a million television judges out there, but the only one who seems halfway serious is Judge Judy. I got hooked on watching her when I was in seminary. I think what drew me to her was that she always cut through all the unimportant details to get to the truth. So many of her cases are personal loans that one person calls a loan, and the other calls a gift. She'll listen very intently, and then just tear the liar apart. And it's clear she nails it because the offender rarely tries to counter her. They know that she's seen through their lie.

People looked at Solomon in much the same way. We don't know how long after his request for wisdom that this baby situation came before him, but I think it probably wasn't a very long time. It's such a brilliant solution, and it says the people feared Solomon. It's more of a respect than a terror of him. They knew that if they were brought before him, they better be the ones telling the truth. We don't hear anything, but I doubt the woman who tried to switch babies went unpunished. **Do you show wisdom in your life, or do you look at some of your situations with great regret? Many people wish they could have the wisdom of Solomon, but the Bible promises that all of us can have wisdom from God. James 1:5 says that if you lack wisdom, ask for it. Don't just hope to make right decisions, but ask for the wisdom from the throne of an omniscient God.**

### Read 1 Kings 4

**Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. 1 Kings 4:29-30** When I was a little leaguer, my mom bought me a video on how to hit. I watched it numerous times, learning how to keep my elbow up, my eye on the ball, and work to make contact. I still struck out or waited for the walk most times. The video was giving me knowledge of how to hit, but I was still missing something. Later a great baseball player helped me make slight alterations to my swing and suddenly I could hit with regularity. There is certainly a difference between knowing and doing. He knew all the things that video probably taught, but he also had hit a lot of baseballs and learned through experience.

Today we see a new aspect of Solomon. We know that he had wisdom, but now we see that God also gave him discernment. It was a matter of knowing and doing. Wisdom is knowing the right choice; discernment is making the right choice. Solomon didn't just have the ability to know what was right, but also to do what was right. That's an important distinction. It's the distinction that can keep us from sin. **Do you ever commit sin that you know is wrong? Yes, and that's because you have knowledge of what God says in the Bible, but you don't apply discernment in doing it. Discernment is what helps us to realize the consequences that lie on the other side of our actions.**

**Are you trying to live in the moment and ignore the future consequences? Don't just ask for wisdom, but for the discernment to do the wise thing.**

### **Read 1 Kings 5**

**When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the LORD today, who has given to David a wise son over this great people." 1 Kings**

**5:7** Are people thankful for you? That's a question you can answer without tooting your own horn. Do you seek to serve others? Do you help others to feel welcome to a new setting? Do friends know they can count on you when times are tough? There are Christian brothers and sisters I am thankful for today because of the influence they've had on my life. And who deserves the credit for these great friends? God does!

Hiram had been friends with King David, and probably knew of Solomon, but didn't know what kind of ruler he would be. Solomon didn't just have wisdom, but the discernment to make those wise choices. As this young man (usually he's pegged to have been around 30 when he was made king), talks to King Hiram, Hiram is impressed. And whom does he give credit to? The God of David! He speaks of the goodness of God in giving David a wise son who is carrying Israel to the heights that would lead it to build the temple and come into a great time of peace and prosperity. Not bad for a group of slaves that escape Egypt. And the very thing that Hiram points out in Solomon's life, is the wisdom that was clearly given by God. **Do you thank God for your abilities? I was thanking Him the other day while I ran, that I have working legs. I've seen and known some godly people who don't have that, and I'm thankful that God has allowed me to be mobile. Are you good at teaching Sunday school? Are you a person of hospitality or service? These are all from God. Your spouse, church, and friends may commend you for using these gifts, but give all credit and glory to God for giving them to you.**

### **Read 1 Kings 6**

**Now the word of the LORD came to Solomon saying, "Concerning this house which you are building, if you will walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My commandments by walking in them, then I will carry out My word with you which I spoke to David your father. "I will dwell among the sons of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel." 1 Kings 6:11-13** When I was 10 or so, my uncle built a new house. It was really big, and after all the framing was up and the roof was on, my cousin and I went in there and played on several occasions. The cool thing was seeing all the hidden aspects of the house: the wiring, plumbing, ductwork. I obviously knew that wall outlets gave electricity, but I didn't think about the wiring that had to run to them. And I knew that when I washed dishes, the water went down a drain, but I didn't think about the plumbing that carried that water away.

Solomon built this temple for the Lord, and God is telling them not to forget the wiring. They have this beautiful temple up, and everything they would need, but don't forget all the hidden details that aren't as easy to see. They people need to be walking in the

commandments of the Lord, and following the ordinances He had established. A house of God where godliness isn't taking place is like a house with wall outlets, but no wiring. **Are there important parts of your spiritual house that are missing? Are you serving in some sort of ministry? Are you praying for others? Do you seek God's will before your own? When you miss these aspects, you're missing the important components of our faith. Others may not be able to see what you're lacking, but God is fully aware.**

### **Read 1 Kings 7**

**And Solomon brought in the things dedicated by his father David, the silver and the gold and the utensils, and he put them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD. 1 Kings 7:51**I've watched a lot of home improvement shows on tv, and one term I often hear is "dated". The kitchen with the green linoleum is "dated". The purple shag carpet is "dated". I tend to look at a house, and just be happy with the amount of space that is available. It seems that many people who are looking to buy a home, just want the walls, and everything else can be torn out.

In this chapter we see Solomon completing the dream of his father, David. Though David hadn't built the temple, he had dedicated many items to go inside of it. Solomon could have chosen to set those items aside and put only his items inside. After all, he's the one who made the temple come about, not his father. But, Solomon was not one to pitch the past in the trash. Instead, he recognized the importance of the past. **Are there conflicts in your church of old and new things? Don't take sides, but seek that there would be a blending of these traditions and elements. Don't forget those who came before, but don't sit within the repetitive monotony of many religious traditions. I left a church and came back 4 years later to find the welcome songs and many other elements were exactly the same. This is nice for those musicians who are there every week, but it's a bit stale and not intended for the new faces in the crowd.**

### **Read 1 Kings 8**

**hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, to fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name. 1 Kings 8:43** I heard about a white pastor in the South who had a difficult experience. He was not originally from there, and he decided that he would just share the gospel with anyone he could. He met a black woman and shared the gospel with her, and she was saved. He was so excited to see her in his church the next Sunday morning. During the invitation time, she came forward to make her decision public. And there during that time, a white woman stood up in the congregation and said "That's very nice, but she needs to find a church that she can attend." The implication? "It's great you found Jesus, now go find some black people to do church with." How that pastor has remained at that church, I'll never know. I have a great intolerance for racism amongst Christians.

Solomon was definitely ahead of his time when we come to these verses. Solomon is praying to the Lord regarding the different kinds of people and situations that will be prayed for in the temple. Solomon says that there will be foreigners who will hear of Israel's God, and will come to worship Him. Israel was not real high on foreigners being included in their worship, and yet Solomon is making a declaration that God is not just Israel's God. Solomon acknowledges that everyone sins, so everyone needs the forgiveness that comes from the God of Israel. **Do you realize that people who have no relationship with Jesus MUST make that decision?! It's not just choosing church or choosing home. They are choosing Heaven or Hell, purpose or meaningless. You need to be ready to welcome the visitor to your church, the new person to your neighborhood. There is no one that you should be unwilling to welcome on behalf of the Lord. He accepted you. Who do you have a right to reject?**

### Read 1 Kings 9

**And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house? 1 Kings 9:8** Apparently there are no bad kids in school, just bad teachers. In my years of working with teens, conversations will turn to teachers at their school. Whenever I hear a youth at church say they were suspended or get detention I always ask them why, and they just don't know. He was just sitting at his desk and suddenly his teacher came over and started yelling at him for no reason. Then other people start filling in the rest of the story. He was talking non-stop. He ignored the teacher's request for him to stop talking. He tried to blame someone else for talking. The teacher was getting all the bad pub, but clearly it was the student who was at fault.

A lot of times, God is treated like a high school teacher. People think they're just living a good life and suddenly God comes in and messes stuff up. People, lost and saved, are ready to blame God for the bad, but rarely for the good. In this passage, God is taking full credit for the bad. He says that if Israel decides to do their own thing and ignore God, the temple they have put all this time, energy, and money into, will be nothing but a heap of ruins. People will come by and ask why God did this to Israel? God may carry out the punishment, but Israel will be the one the causes it. **Have you given credit to God for the good things that happen in your life? Do you thank Him not just for yesterday, but for the ways He has worked on your behalf as you've walked with Him? If God has to bring difficulty on you for your actions, remember that it was your actions, not His unfairness, that brought the punishment upon you. Simply repent, and ask Him to change your heart and actions. Then, you take the responsibility for your actions. You can ask Him for the strength to do the right thing, but you have to then use that strength and do it.**

### Read 1 Kings 10

**So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. 1 Kings 10:23** I recently picked up a book that outlined the terms of all the American presidents. I realized pretty quickly, that some of these I hadn't heard much

about. Suddenly Taft and Harrison become more familiar to me. But, later that week, I started mixing up details. I couldn't keep them straight. Even as we enter another presidential election, I wonder "How much difference will this next President really make?" Most of them are just footnotes in history, and not major stops for study.

This verse says that Solomon became the greatest king on the earth. He had riches, wisdom, and anything else he could possibly want. And yet he still doesn't compare to Jesus. Jesus is not just the greatest king. He is the King of Kings that all other kings must bow to. They cannot call him an equal, because Jesus has no equal. **Has your relationship with Jesus been distant? Are you finding yourself disobeying Him without much of a fight? Then remember whom you serve! When you fall to sin, and ultimately the kingdom of Satan, you are recognizing the one who tempted you as greater than the One who saved you! The Bible says that God gives us an escape from every temptation, if we'll only take it. Acknowledge Jesus fully as your Lord and the King of your life today. Take stock of when you're saying it and when you're living it.**

### **Read 1 Kings 11**

**from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. 1 Kings 11:2** As a youth minister for many years, I've learned I'm in competition with the local schools. When I first started out, I would plan activities and then get upset when we didn't have a good turnout because of a school activity or ballgame that night. So someone gave me a school calendar to help me avoid those conflicts. Do you know what I found out? It wasn't possible. There were only a handful of open dates in the entire year. I realized the choice wasn't mine, but the students. I couldn't choose a perfect date. The students would have to choose between school stuff or church activities.

Solomon was in a similar situation. He knew God. God had granted him incredible wisdom, and the kingdom had prospered under Solomon. But, as Solomon took more and more foreign wives (he messed up when he took more than 1 at all), they all swayed him towards different gods. Solomon had prayed for foreigners to come to the God of Israel, but His wives worshipped only the false gods of their lands. His attention was distracted, and so God gives this warning about associating with those from outside Israel. God does not intend for us to never associate with foreign people today. This was a special command in order to keep Israel from falling to worship false gods. Solomon knew the right, but chose the wrong. **What is distracting your attention from the Lord? Is it a relationship with someone? A job? Too many commitments? If you're too busy for the Lord, then you're too busy. Prioritize your life today. Put God first, and let Him help you sort out everything else. Figure out if you're planning on Kingdom work in your life, or just trying to fit it in.**

## Read 1 Kings 12

**So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt." 1 Kings 12:28** How inconvenient would church have to be before you'd stop going? What if you had to drive two hours to the church that God wanted you in? What if you had to park a mile away and then walk the rest of the way to church? What if you had to give up your seat for visitors and stand in the back for the entire service? I've heard individuals who were involved in these scenarios in churches around America. While there are some who are willing to make this sacrifice, I imagine there are many others who don't go to church because of these circumstances.

The new king of Israel, Jeroboam, is worried that people will leave his kingdom to go worship in Jerusalem. He knows they are devout, so he sets up two idols and tells the people they can worship there without traveling all the way to Jerusalem. I hope this snare didn't take in everyone, but the majority of people apparently just started worshipping these idols without batting an eye. They chose convenience over truth. **Are you skipping out of church? It's too crowded or too small or too far? Church isn't just for you, but it's for you to acknowledge your God. If you try you'll find an excuse to keep you away. You're not coming to fulfill requirements. You're coming to learn the truth and line your life up with it.**

## Read 1 Kings 13

**He said to him, "I also am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' " But he lied to him. 1 Kings 13:18** My kids have a struggle when we go to someone else's house. We have certain words like dumb, stupid, and others that our kids are not allowed to say. These rules don't apply at every home, and our kids have even corrected teenagers who used the words that are against our rules. I think they finally understand that those words are wrong everywhere, but sometimes other people don't have the same rules. We ask our kids to obey our rules about those words no matter where we are, and they understand it.

This is a sad story about how someone was seeking to serve God, and was misled by others. He delivers his message in a powerful way to the idol-worshipping Jeroboam. Then on his way home another prophet decides to deceive him, possibly out of jealousy. He tells this man of God (isn't that how you'd like to be known) that God wants him to come back and eat. The man of God says that God instructed him not to, but the false prophet says he got a word from God saying it's ok. **Listen, if a command from God changes for your life, HE will let you know. Sometimes others can confirm it, but God deals with us on an individual basis. Is there something God has told you not to do, but someone else has said is ok? Are you looking for someone to soften the commandments of the Lord for your life? James 4:17 says that the one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, commits sin.**

## Read 1 Kings 14

**Then it happened as often as the king entered the house of the LORD, that the guards would carry them and would bring them back into the guards' room. 1 Kings 14:28** Have you ever gotten rid of something because it was a bad reminder? I saw a picture of a friend one time at their house, and as I looked close at the picture, I noticed a small part of another person on the edge of the picture. She admitted it was her ex-boyfriend. She liked how she looked in that picture, and so she just cut him out of it. I guess that worked for her, but I would always remember the other person I tried to cut out. It would be a painful reminder every time I saw it of a relationship that went bad.

Rehoboam has a similar reminder that causes him pain. Because of his disobedience, Egypt came up and defeated Judah. Through a set of circumstances that are recorded elsewhere in the Bible, God spares Judah from total destruction, but one of the consequences is that Egypt takes all the gold items from the temple. So Rehoboam has the gold shields replaced with bronze. This was a poor substitute, but it was the best he could do. And before he arrived at the temple, he had his guards go ahead of him and remove them from the temple completely. He didn't want the reminder of his failure. **Do you have a failure that you have not dealt with or put behind you? Do you hang onto reminders of failure, or hear reminders from others? Remember that if you have straightened out your transgressions with God, He is not going to bring them back. They are separated and buried never to return to you. If you find yourself revisiting old sins and mistakes, remember that is not God's plan for you.**

## Read 1 Kings 15

**But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly devoted to the LORD all his days. 1 Kings 15:14** I think I could be a shrink. All you've gotta do is say, "Tell me about your childhood." Then blame all their problems on mom or dad, depending on how the mood strikes you. While I agree that difficult childhoods affect us (My mom went through three divorces and we lived in probably 15 houses by the time I was 18), we cannot push the blame for our choices off on circumstances.

King Asa served Israel after his brother, Abijam. The Bible tells us they were brothers because they had the same mother, and she was bad news. She worshipped idols and influenced her sons to do the same. However, while Abijam followed her lead, Asa did not. He knew who deserved to be worshipped. And while there were some aspects of Israel's sin that he didn't deal with, he was wholly or fully devoted to the Lord. He certainly had a mother and childhood to blame for bad choices, but he did not use that excuse. **What excuse do you use for your poor behavior? Do you blame your parents or siblings? Remember that when we stand before God one day to give account for our actions, we will stand alone. There will be no one to point to or blame. You can choose to take accountability now or later, but you will take it.**

## Read 1 Kings 16

**for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, which they sinned and which they made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols . 1**

**Kings 16:13** When I moved to a new town in Jr. High, I found myself going from a school of 300 to a 9th grade class that was as large. Making friends in this new environment was tough on me at first, until I met Tommy. We just clicked. We didn't really have to introduce ourselves, but we really got along and found ourselves having the same friends, and we often looked for each other as we got to school. Then I noticed Tommy wasn't his chipper self anymore. He wouldn't talk about it, and I didn't know what was up. Several days later someone told me that Tommy was taken out of class by the police and arrested for drug dealing. He was never charged as he told the police how his dad made him do it, and the details were confirmed. Tommy was never the same. Someone who should have loved and protected him used him to do some terrible things.

Yesterday we saw how we cannot allow our past to be an excuse for our sin. We will always be personally responsible. The other side of that coin is that we need to make sure that we are not leading someone to sin. Baasha and his son Elah are said to have "made" Israel sin. They were the influential ruling family, and when they worshipped idols, many followed after them. We must be aware that people see our lives, and if we call sin ok, there will be someone (lost or saved) who will use our life as an excuse to follow in those actions. While that person will stand alone and answer for their choice, we will also answer for our choices that influenced that person. **Is there a choice for sin in your life that you realize is affecting others? Remember Achan? He thought his sin of theft after Jericho would be no big deal, but Israel lost a battle soon after and many lives as a result of his poor choices. Remember that sin ALWAYS has consequences, and not just for yourself.**

## Read 1 Kings 17

**Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him." 1 Kings**

**17:21** How many times are you willing to pray for something? How long will you wait on God before you move onto a new solution or new option? So many times we pray in such a shallow way to the Lord. We ask for something to happen, and when we don't see it in a day or two, we begin to think God is not moving. The difference between God saying "no" or "wait" can be tough to determine. So if it is a matter of importance to us, we should pray until God releases us of the burden to pray for that matter.

Bible scholars debate about the significance of Elijah laying himself three times on the child. I think he lay on the child and prayed that simple prayer every time. If it had taken ten times, I think Elijah would have done it. He prayed in earnest belief that God was going to answer the prayer to restore this young man. Elijah hadn't brought someone to life before, so it's not like he "knew" what he was doing. But, Elijah was persistent until God answered him one way or the other. **What issue of prayer have you given up on? Did you give up because the Lord said no, or because you became impatient and**

**unwilling to keep praying? Remember God is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and so many other majestic titles. But, for the Christian He is also a friend. He cares about your prayers, so don't hold it inside. Talk to Him about it.**

### **Read 1 Kings 18**

**Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word. 1 Kings 18:21** My daughter made a statement during our family worship time the other night. We were talking about how God is everything we need, and that as a result, that's why He has so many names (King of Kings, Lord of Lords, etc). My daughter said "He's the God of gods". I've never heard this term, and I kept rolling it over in my mind. But, she's correct. The first of the Ten Commandments is that we should not have any other "gods" before Him. We can turn ideas and objects into the god that we worship.

This is probably my favorite account from the Old Testament. It reveals the idiocy of worshipping anything other than the God of gods. Elijah comes to challenge the people of Israel who had been worshipping the false god, Baal. Elijah asks how long the people will hesitate between two opinions. They hadn't really followed either one totally, though they were leaning towards Baal. When Elijah challenges them to make a choice, they were silent. **When attempting to obey God, remember that inaction is still an action. When you choose not to act, you are in fact making a choice. Are you allowing your devotion to be divided between God and something or someone else? If He is not the first object of your devotion, the other things you try to hold onto (your life, your family, your wealth), are in danger of slipping away. You know if God has first priority in your life. Don't hesitate, but give your whole being back to Him.**

### **Read 1 Kings 19**

**So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 1 Kings 19:11** Have you ever seen God do something miraculous? Something that you never thought could happen, and when you saw it, you knew it was Him? We all have these times when we see God move in our life or the life of others and we know that there has been a God-sized impact. Maybe it was a job we were praying for, or a financial need, or a medical problem in our life. At that moment, no one could shake your faith in the God who loves and watches over you. But, then we can later find ourselves living in moments of fear and frustration, wondering if the Lord cares about our situation and is able to act.

Elijah had just seen a miraculous event. The Baal prophets had been defeated when God sent down fire in response to Elijah's prayer. God had displayed Himself as the one true God, and mighty indeed. Now Elijah's life is threatened, and he's scared as if he has no

refuge. So it says in this verse that the Lord was passing by. There was a tornado-like wind, earthquake, and a fire. But, it says that God was not in any of those events, though He clearly caused them. A gentle, almost unnoticeable breeze followed these events, where the presence of God was dwelling. The picture He was painting for Elijah was that God sometimes shows Himself dramatically and sometimes subtly. God is no less there because the event is smaller in human eyes. **Think back to a time that you completely trusted God. It's probably a time that you look back and see the resolution that He brought to the situation. As you sit in your moments of doubt now, remember that you're on the front side. There will be an end to this current dilemma, and you will be able to look back upon it as you do other victories that Lord has placed in your life. Thank Him for the past, and wait on His future for you.**

### **Read 1 Kings 20**

**Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because the Arameans have said, "The LORD is a god of the mountains, but He is not a god of the valleys," therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.' 1 Kings 20:28** What is God's primary purpose? It is for His own name. This may seem difficult for some to understand, but when God's name is glorified, everybody wins. If a great preacher delivers a wonderful sermon, and the people glorify the man, everyone loses. God has not received the glory, the minister has not directed the glory to God, and the people have a false impression that people are sufficient by themselves. But when that minister directs the glory to God, people understand the heartbeat of the message, and can respond to the God of that message, and not simply the deliverer.

In Halley's Bible handbook, it describes every king of Israel and Judah. Next to their names you see "bad", "good", "very bad". Next to Ahab is the title used only once "The Worst". Despite this evil man and his evil reign, God choose to bring the people victory for His name's sake. He was ready to show the Arameans that He had power in every environment of His creation. King Ahab tries to display some measure of control by releasing the enemy king, and in doing so, signed his own death warrant. **Is there an area of your life that you are taking credit that belongs to God? If so, then you are limiting people's ability to see God through you. However, if you direct the praise to Him, you will receive honor from God instead of man. Are you content with that? In what ways are you personally prideful?**

### **Read 1 Kings 21**

**Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him. 1 Kings 21:25** I remember a friend in seminary whose wife suddenly decided she didn't want to be married or in the ministry anymore. He was despondent as he tried to talk to and reason with her. This man saw his family and his opportunity to do ministry slipping away if his wife divorced him. They did manage to reconcile and afterwards seemed to be even more tightly knit than before.

It's a reminder that choosing a spouse is no small thing. You have to evaluate him/her on many different levels.

I'm sure that Jezebel was beautiful, but that's where her list of pros ended. It says that Ahab "sold himself" to do evil, and Jezebel was the cause. So Ahab was responsible for his actions, and for his choice for a spouse. **If you are unmarried, are you seeking a godly spouse? Do you pray for that? If you're in a pre-marriage relationship, are you keeping your eyes wide open for any danger signs? If you're married, do you help your spouse to make poor or sinful choices? Are you motivating him/her towards godliness or worldliness?**

### **Read 1 Kings 22**

**But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak." 1 Kings 22:14** In my first pastorate, we were dealing with major disobedience to the Word of God. More people in the congregation were becoming clearly upset with my preaching. They believed I was taking every opportunity to beat up the congregation with the same message. In fact, I was preaching out of many different areas during a given week: Philippians, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Samuel, and a Wednesday night study on growing close to God. God had led me to everything I preached, and His message was constantly the same: repent of your sin, and be more like Jesus. If I had changed the messages to talk about something else, I would have been disobedient to the things God was leading me to preach on.

Micaiah comes into a similar situation. Did you catch how many "prophets" told Ahab that Israel would win? It says there were 400 men in verse 6. Then when they go to get Micaiah the messenger says "we've already got the message, just say that everything's gonna be cool." Micaiah says that he can only say what God tells him to say. **When you know the right thing to do or say in a situation, do you hesitate? When we are confident of the right thing, it's because the Holy Spirit has made us so to embolden us to do His will. Perhaps you have the gift of prophecy. That's not a gift of telling the future, but of delivering God's messages to people who need to hear them. When you hold back because the words will be difficult, you are not doing anyone any favors. And you are acting disobedient to the Lord. Do you have an area you know you need to speak out about?**