INTRODUCTION
Have you ever sought something with little regard for whether or not it was God's will? I remember counseling a lady who had been married for many years. From all outside appearances she was happy, but in the counseling room I discovered she was not. She had grown up in a Christian home and given her life to the Lord at a young age. When she was in her late teens she began pursuing a relationship with a young man who was not a believer. She knew this was wrong but ignored God's standard and will for her life (2 Cor 6:14 states, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers..."). She married this man-of-her-dreams but lived to regret it when he showed zero interest in spiritual things. These many years later, she felt all alone.

The world is full of glitz and glamour which really is quite appealing. Many Christians are so enthralled with it that they don't particularly care what God wants. They want what they want when they want it: status, power, popularity, a certain mate, a particular job, a cushy lifestyle. And they are willing to sacrifice whatever it takes to get it, even if it means stepping outside God's will. How sad. Because God is loving, He will often allow us to attain what we set our minds on, even if it is not His desire for us. When this happens, the end result may be disastrous.

God has not called us all to the same social status, job, spouse, or possessions. We need to serve God where we are with the gifts He has
given. Yes, we should try to improve our state in life but never at the expense of service to God. If we seek something with little or no regard for whether it is God's will, we are treading on dangerous ground. And the scary thing is, God may allow us to achieve our goal. If so, it may be our undoing. At the least, it will minimize our effectiveness for God's kingdom.

This message is entitled, "BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR, YOU MAY GET IT." It looks at 1 Samuel 8 where the Jews stepped outside God's will and asked for a king. Strangely enough, God let them have one. In their quest, the people refused to consider the long range result of their choice. As the passage is explored, the following will be considered:

THE REBELLION of Samuel's Sons (v1-3)
THE REQUEST of the Jews (v4,5)
THE REACTION of Samuel (v6)
THE RESPONSE of God (v7-9)
THE REALITIES of a King (v10-18)
THE REFUSAL of the People (v19,20)
THE Second RESPONSE of God (v21,22)

In regard to asking for things outside God's will, I pray that we will learn from the Jew's mistakes. Let's begin with:

THE REBELLION Of Samuel's Sons
I invite you to turn in your Bible to 1 Samuel 8:1-3. Listen carefully:

1 And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba. 3 His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but
turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.

What a heartbreak! Samuel's sons did not walk in the ways of their father. One of the great dangers of any busy profession is that parents can neglect training their children. 1 Samuel 7:15,16 states, "Now Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places." There is nothing stated that Samuel was a poor parent but he did have a job that took him away from home a lot. Many people today have similar jobs. If you are one of them, be sure your job does not become the demise of your family.

Having seen many pastors kids rebel, my wife and I determined that we would do whatever it took to invest time and energy into our children. It has not been easy but so far, they both are walking with the Lord and we are very happy. But there is no guarantee that this will always be the case. They could turn away. When I recently wrote a letter to my son, I stated at the end, "I know God will bless whatever you do as long as you walk closely with Him." I want my son to know that God's blessings are not automatic. They comes to those who follow Him closely and can stop if we turn away.

Even when parents invest time in their children, some children still fall away. When this happens it is a tragedy. The good news is that those rebellious children sometimes return to the Lord. For those who haven't come back, we need to keep praying.

I thank God for the book of Proverbs. A proverb is not a strict promise, but it tells us the way things usually are. Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This truth indicates that if we as parents really do our job
right, our children will normally walk with the Lord. Don't play around with this principle, TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN!

How did Samuel's sons rebel? Instead of being honest, trustworthy judges, verse three states that they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes and perverted justice. It sounds a bit like some judges in our society today. I imagine when Samuel's sons rebelled they did not think too much about the far-reaching consequences of their sin. They probably only focused on making extra money on the side. Perhaps they even rationalized their sinful behavior, feeling they deserved more money. But their sin had far-reaching affects. It was instrumental in causing the elders of Israel to turn away from God and ask for a king. Likewise, we may think that our sins are private and only affect us, but sin always has a ripple-effect that touches others, often in a much greater way than we suspect. This brings to:

THE REQUEST of the Jews (v4,5)

Listen to 1 Samuel 8:4,5:

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; 5 and they said to him, “Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.”

The elders felt strongly enough about the desire for a king that they sought out Samuel. They gave three reasons for wanting a king. First, Samuel was getting old. The insinuation was that he could no longer judge effectively. Second, his sons were corrupt. The Jews did not want to be judged by corrupt men. Third, they wanted to be like all the other nations who had a king.
The people had been somewhat content as long as Samuel judged with fairness, but the conduct of Samuel's sons helped convince the elders that the judge-system was no longer viable. Perhaps if Samuel's sons had walked with the Lord, the elders would not have brought up the issue of a king, but I have the sneaking suspicion that their main motivation was to be like all the other nations!

What was the problem in wanting a king? Was a king a bad thing? Listen to Samuel's words in 1 Samuel 12:12,17,

12 When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ although the Lord your God was your king.

17 Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the Lord by asking for yourselves a king.

To ask for a king was a slap in God's face. He was their King! Had He not protected them, delivered them from Egypt, taken them through the Red Sea, given them manna, parted the Jordan River, broken down the walls of Jericho, and brought victory after victory when they followed Him? Yes! But the Jews had short memories. They did not focus on God's faithfulness in the past but only cared about their current situation and future status.

Aren't Christians sometimes like that? Aren't we quick to forget what God has done for us and quick to try to do things our own way at the first sign of trouble? Yes! There is a lesson to be learned here. Don't stray from God no matter what your current situation. Wait on Him!
But why would the Jews want a human king rather than another human judge like Samuel? Kings had wealth and power. Judges did not. Kings were surrounded by pomp-and-circumstance. Judges were not. Kings were mighty rulers! Judges just judged. Kings gave dignity to a nation. A king was a national leader to rally around. A king had authority. A king could create national spirit, unify the twelve tribes, raise an army, and protect the people. A judge just judged. To the Jews, a king was precisely what they needed in order to be recognized as a national power and compete with neighboring nations. They wanted a king who they could see and look up to.

Although all these reasons for having a king may sound noble and good, the fact is, the Jews were really rejecting God's kingship in favor of man's. Having a human king was not God's will for the Jews, it was their will for themselves. God was the perfect King. Any man would be a flawed king. Let's now see:

THE REACTION of Samuel (v6)
Samuel had the right reaction to the elder's sin of wanting a human king. Listen to verse six, "But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed to the Lord."

Sin bothered Samuel. It pushed him to his knees. This should be our reaction as well. If we see a brother or sister sin, we should not say, "Oh, its OK. I understand why you are doing what you are doing." No! We should fall to our knees and ask God how to confront them. God talked to Samuel and God gave Him a surprising answer. How wise it is to talk to God about man before talking to man about man.

Let's now see:
THE RESPONSE of God (v7-9)
Listen to what God said to Samuel in verses 7-9:

7 And the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. 8 “Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 “Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them.”

What an incredible response. God sensed Samuel's frustration and hurt. Samuel obviously took the request for a king as a personal attack on him and His family. God assured Samuel that the people were not rejecting him, they were rejecting God. God always desires to mend our hurt and build us up. His response to Samuel undoubtedly calmed Samuel's heart.

God also told Samuel to listen to the voice of the people. God is not one to force His will upon us. He allows us free choice, even when it can harm us. But notice, God told Samuel to solemnly warn the Jews about the consequences of their choice.

In this regard, I thought about how God might have responded. He had every right to respond differently than He did. First he could have attacked Samuel and said, "Samuel if you had trained those reprobate sons of yours, the people would not be making this outrageous request for a king!" There is truth in this statement but God did not respond this way.
He could have said, "That's it, I've had it with these ungrateful sinners. I've blessed them over and over and over but they just don't get it! I'm sick of their rebellion. I'm going to wipe them off the face of the earth! Samuel, you tell them that tonight at sundown they're all going to die." This response was really what the Jews deserved, but God did not treat them this way, either.

Thirdly, God could have said, "Samuel, let them have what they want. They'll find out soon enough what a foolish decision they have made." He could have let the people go their merry way with no warning, but again, God did not use this approach.

Do you see the incredible love in the approach God used. He allowed the elders to have their request but he warned them, hoping they would change their minds.

God is almighty! He is the Creator of the universe. He is the fount of all wisdom and truth. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Man on the other hand is mortal, sinful, rebellious, weak and ungrateful. And yet the almighty God of the universe treated these men with unwarranted kindness and mercy. What an awesome example to us! Too often when one of us does something worthy of being hammered, another one of us is all too eager to do the hammering. Oh, that we would follow God's example and treat each other with more patience, mercy and grace. God loved the Jewish leaders even in the midst of their rebellion. He wanted to give them another opportunity to renounce their request for an earthly king. He gave them this second chance by having Samuel explain to them:

**THE REALITIES of a King (v10-18)**

In verses 10-18 Samuel solemnly warns the Jews that having a king is not just glitz and glamour. An earthly king will bring great hardship and
sacrifice on the people. Listen carefully to the verses 10-18 as they lay out in plain language what having a king will mean:

10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the Lord to the people who had asked of him a king. 11 And he said, “This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. 12 “And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 “He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 “And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 “And he will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. 16 “He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and use them for his work. 17 “He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. 18 Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.

What was the price of having a king? A king would take the Jews:

- sons
- daughters
- fields, vineyards, olive groves
- a tenth of the seed and vineyards
- male servants, female servants, young men, donkeys
- flocks
And last but certainly not least, the people were warned that they would become the king’s slaves. This was about as solemn a warning as Samuel could give. But the amazing thing was:

THE REFUSAL of the People (v19,20)
Listen to verses 19 and 20:

19 Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, “No, but there shall be a king over us 20 that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

I don't think the people really listened to what Samuel was saying. They had their minds made up. They wanted a king! The glitz, glamour and desire to be like the other nations, and the new stated desire for the king to fight their battles, blinded their eyes to the reality of what the future would bring.

God then had a second response to the Jew's stubbornness:

THE Second RESPONSE of God (v21,22)
Listen to verses 21 and 22.

21 Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the Lord’s hearing. 22 And the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice, and appoint them a king.” So Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”

Basically, God said, "Give them what they want." Evidently Samuel told them they would have a king and he sent them all to their own cities with that understanding.
CONCLUSION
Is it amazing to you that the Jews would ask for a human king when they knew that God was already their King? Why would they make such a request? It has already been stated that Samuel was old, his sons were corrupt, the Jews wanted their nation to have a king like the nations around them, and they wanted a king to fight their battles. But there is another underlying reason. I believe the Jews felt like God had forsaken them. With Samuel's age, his son's corruption, and the apparent failure of God to rectify the situation, it is possible that the Jews felt abandoned by God. They thus decided to take matters into their own hands. Instead of exercising faith and waiting on God, they wanted change and they wanted it now!

Too bad the Jews didn't approach Samuel and say, "Samuel, your sons are corrupt. Things need to change. We don't want a king because we know God is our King, but we do want honest, righteous judges. Either you discipline your sons, fire them or appoint new judges, then we will be happy." But the Jews did not say this. Instead they said, "Give us a king!"

Before we condemn the Jews, however, let's think for a moment about ourselves. Don't we often fail to live by faith in tough situations? Aren't we quick to panic and take matters into our own hands instead of waiting on God? Yes! And we often know full-well that the things we want are outside the will of God.

A jealous person might say, "Why does that person have all those nice things and I don't. I'm going to show them..."

A lonely young man might rationalize, "I can't find any Christian girls to spend time with so I'm going to go out with whoever..."
A struggling student might say, "I can't get the grades my parents want so I'm going to do whatever it takes to get them off my back..."

A frustrated married woman might say, "My marriage has lost its zing, I am going to find someone else who will treat me right."

A floundering businessman might say, "There is this great business opportunity even though my partner would be a non-Christian. I think I need to go for it..."

An isolated teenager might say, "I never have any fun. I'm going to try drugs just once and show my friends that I'm cool..."

A busy person might say, "I don't have time for work and church so I'm going to drop all of my church commitments until things slow down."

A financially strapped person might say, "I can't pay my bills and give to the Lord. I'm going to stop my giving until my finances improve."

A weary person might say, "I know I can't afford a new car, but I'm going to buy one because the one I have is falling apart."

A pressed person might say, "I can't stand the stress at work, I'm going to quit even though I've got nothing else lined up."

A group of unhappy elders might say, "We can't handle anymore corruption in our judges. We want a human king even though we know God is our King."

Are you seeking anything outside of God's will? Don't do it. It may be your undoing when God allows you to have it. Listen to the words of
Psalms 106:13-15, “13 They soon forgot His (God's) works; they waited not for His counsel: 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. 15 And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.” (KJV) Before we ask for or seek anything, we need to ask God if it is what He wants for us. If so, great! Go for it! If not, turn away! Or you may find that God will give you your request but send leanness into your soul. A lean soul is of little use in God's kingdom.

God wants the very best for each of us, but we must trust Him to give it to us in His timing. If times get tough, don't take matters into your own hands. Look to God for His solution to your dilemma.

Remember, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR, you may get it!