

Week 19 Day 1

Readings: Mark 6:30-44; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Psalm 109:1-20; Proverbs 22:1-7; 1 Samuel 3-4.

Focus Verse: "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20)

Key Concept: Your Body is God's Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). In offering practical directions about living as sanctified people, Paul reminds us of some things about our relationship with God. Just as the temple of the Old Testament represented God's presence among Israel (cf. Ezekiel 1; 8; 10; 11; 43; 48), so now Christians enjoy God's relationship with them. Our temples (bodies) are not truly ours, but should be devoted to the One who dwells in us. God paid for us, and rightly expects us to glorify Him with all of our being. His presence allows no room for sin in our lives.

Action: Glorify God today, remembering that He bought you.

Week 19 Day 2

Readings: Mark 6:45-56; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9; Psalm 109:21-31; Proverbs 27:8-14; 1 Samuel 5-7.

Focus Verse: "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished." (Proverbs 27:12)

Key Concept: Dagon vs. Jehovah (1 Samuel 5). The Philistines defeated Israel in battle and stole the ark of the covenant--the most precious piece of furniture in Israel. Thinking that they had defeated Israel's God, they placed His mercy seat next to their god, Dagon. Poor, helpless Dagon lost his head . . . and his hands! Jehovah demonstrated His power and His holiness. Neither the gods nor the people of Philistia could stand in the presence of Jehovah.

Action: Make room for God in your life--Keep sin out!

Week 19 Day 3

Readings: Mark 7:1-13; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; Psalm 110; Proverbs 27:15-21; 1 Samuel 8-10.

Focus Verse: "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7)

Key Concept: Human Loopholes in Divine Law (Mark 7:1-13). Jesus answers the charge of the Pharisees by criticizing their abuse of God's law. On one hand, they wrongfully bound where God did not, even exalting human tradition above Divine law. The curious consequence of their tradition teaching was ultimately to loose where God had not. A man could be freed from major responsibilities (e.g., providing for parents) by using a Pharisaic loop-hole. Man has no right to add loop-holes to God's law!

Action: Carefully obey and teach God's will, not man's tradition.

Week 19 Day 4

Readings: Mark 7:14-23; 1 Corinthians 7:17-24; Psalm 111; Proverbs 27:22-27; 1 Samuel 11-12.

Focus Verse: "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you." (1 Samuel 12:24)

Key Concept: Great Things He Has Done (1 Samuel 12). As Saul was crowned Israel's first king, Samuel made a strong appeal for the fidelity of the nation. There was a danger that they would imitate surrounding nations in more than their style of government. Samuel reminded them of God's great power and providence. If we will dwell on the same things, we will find it easier to serve the Lord faithfully.

Action: Meditate on great things God has done for you.

Week 19 Day 5

Readings: Mark 7:24-30; 1 Corinthians 7:25-35; Psalm 112; Proverbs 28:1-7; 1 Samuel 13-14.

Focus Verse: "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich." (Proverbs 28:6)

Key Concept: "I Felt Compelled" to Sin (1 Samuel 13:12). Saul was guilty. He had acted without God's approval in offering a sacrifice without Samuel. When Samuel arrived and questioned Him, Saul explained the pressures of the circumstance and said he "felt compelled" to do it. God did not accept his excuse, nor does He accept our excuses when we say we "couldn't help it." He knows better (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Action: Accept responsibility for your own actions. When you sin, humbly seek God's forgiveness.

Week 19 Day 6

Readings: Mark 7:31-37; 1 Corinthians 7:36-40; Psalm 113; Proverbs 28:8-14; 1 Samuel 15-16.

Focus Verse: "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

Key Concept: Obedience is Better than Apology (1 Samuel 15:22-23). Saul failed again this time by not fully obeying all of God's instructions. He looked for a way to justify his action, and offered to make a sacrifice. God expected sacrifices when people sinned, but He really wanted them to avoid sin altogether. When we sin, we should humbly apologize, and should work diligently to avoid repeated sin.

Action: Apologize for your sins, and work not to repeat them!

Week 19 Day 7

Readings: Mark 8:1-10; 1 Corinthians 8; Psalm 114; Proverbs 28:15-21; 1 Samuel 17.

Focus Verse: "He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!" (Proverbs 28:19)

Key Concept: God and Goliath (1 Samuel 17). We hear a lot about David and Goliath, one of the great examples of faith in the Old Testament. Lest we miss the application, it might help us to occasionally consider the story from the perspective of God meeting Goliath. Mighty Goliath was powerless against God. David knew that, and allowed God to use him for the victory. We need faith as strong as the faith of young David.

Action: Seek God's help in overcoming your "gigantic" problems.