

The Honor of God: The Rule of Honor

The Honor of God
By Grant Castleberry

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Capital Community Church

1417 Clifton Street
Raleigh, NC 27604

Website: www.capitalcommunitychurch.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/capitalcommchurch

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I invite you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 2. We're continuing our study on "The Honor of God," and I want to show you what's called "The Rule of Honor." The rule of honor, and this rule is found in verse 30 of 1 Samuel 2. 1 Samuel 2:30,

30 Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'

When I was a little boy in grade school, I used to go over to my next door neighbor's house all the time. His name is Mark Gibson. We shared a birthday together. We did everything together and I watched this really great movie over at his house called "Pride of the Yankees." I don't know if you've ever seen that movie "Pride of the Yankees" about Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig and all those people, and I came home and told my mom all about it, and about a week later she told me that she had rented a movie from Blockbuster, remember those days? Anybody remember what a Blockbuster was? It's where you went to a physical location and you checked out a VHS tape. And my mom said, "Hey, I've got a movie for you this Friday. You're gonna love it. It's called 'The Story of Ruth.'" And I assumed that it was about the Babe, Babe Ruth. You know, here I am going on about Lou and Babe and, you know, popped my popcorn, plug in the movie on Friday night, and I see all these people start to go across the screen in Bible attire, you know, wearing head-skirts and all these things, and then the narrator goes, "In the land of Moab," and I realized that this was not about Yankee Stadium and Babe Ruth, this was about the biblical Ruth, and I think I turned it off at that point.

So my mom wanted to find a movie that I would be interested, I love sports, and she got this movie called "Chariots of Fire." I don't know if you've ever seen "Chariots of Fire." It's the story about these two runners named Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, and Eric you see and realize, he's the son of a missionary family, and they're both runners, they're both sprinters, they both run 100 meter dash, and you realize, though, that Eric is motivated by something very different from what the other runners are motivated by. He's motivated by the honor of God, to advance God's name. At one point in the movie, he says, "To run and to win is to honor the Lord, it's to honor God, and when I run," this is a great line, "I feel his pleasure. I feel the Lord's pleasure."

Well, true story, this is what happened. On the way over to the 1924 Olympic games, he found out that the qualifying heats for the 100 meter dash were going to be held on a Sunday and he told the British Olympic Committee, he said, "I will not run because it's the Lord's day, it's a Sunday." They said, "Eric, it's not even a race, it's a heat." He said, "All the same. I cannot run on a Sunday."

So they switched races. They had him, he was supposed to run the 100 meter and they said, "Well, can you run the 400 meter?" I mean, I don't know if you've ever run a 400 meter dash, I mean, that is a brutal race. It is, you know, it's one lap around the track and he hadn't trained for that. So anyway, he goes to the Paris Olympics in 1924, runs the 400 meter, wins Olympic gold and sets a new world record of 45 seconds on a cinder track with leather cleats. It was absolutely remarkable. They asked him what he did, how he did it. He said, "Well, around the first 100 meters as fast as I could, and then I ran the other 300 faster."

Well, in the movie right before he runs that race, an American runner who had heard about his decision came up to him and hands him a note, and on that note is this verse, 1 Samuel 2:30, "He who honors me I will honor." That verse, this rule that is given, is an unalterable, nonnegotiable, set in stone rule in the Bible. "He who honors me I will honor. Those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Now before we flesh that rule out, let me give you the context for this verse. The context is this. Eli is the priest and Eli's sons have been serving as priests alongside him and they have dishonored the Lord in their service and they've dishonored the Lord by doing two things specifically. You can go and read the entire chapter but the first is when people would come to give an offering to God, you were supposed to take the fat from the meat offering and burn it, and instead of doing that, they were saying give us, essentially, the sirloins and the nice meats and they were eating it themselves. So they were supposed to give it as a sacrifice to the Lord, they're having prime rib. Second, it says that they were sleeping with prostitutes in front of the tabernacle. There were prostitutes working there and they were sleeping with them.

And so a man of God comes to Eli, look at verse 27. A man of God in the Old Testament is a prophet, it's a man who speaks for God. That's a prophet. He's unnamed, we don't know who he is and the prophet comes to Eli and says to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject

to the house of Pharaoh?" Who was Eli's father? Aaron. He's from the priesthood of Aaron. He said, "Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people?" He's saying, "Look, you treat your sons heavier than you do God." Do you remember what the meaning of honor is from last week? To honor God means to treat as heavy, as weighty. He's saying, "You treat your sons weightier than you treat the Lord."

Then he comes to the rule, "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,'" he's talking about the priesthood of Aaron, "but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'" Notice what he says, this is the rule: those who honor God, God will honor; those who treat God as weighty, God will treat them as weighty. Do you see that? Now notice the flipside of the coin: those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. You take your job in the tabernacle flippantly, you treat God lightly, what does God say he will do in return? He will lightly esteem you. This is the rule of honor, that you honor God and he will honor you, and you see this rule, if you can grasp this rule, you're going to begin to see it all over the Bible, all over Scripture. Let me give you a few examples.

So this is Daniel. Do you remember when Daniel's in that big banquet hall and God's hand starts writing on the wall in Babylon and everybody doesn't know what's being written? This is what Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar. Daniel says to him, this is Daniel 5:23, he says, "you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored." And then he goes on to give a message of judgment and they're wiped out by the Medes and the Persians.

Malachi 2:1, after Judah has come back from exile Malachi says, "And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings." If you will not honor me, you will be dishonored, says the Lord.

Okay, you say, "Well, that's the old covenant. What about the new covenant? Is this still how God operates?" Yes, it is. Romans 1:21, Paul says, "For although they knew God," that's everybody, "they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened." What's going on there? It's the rule of honor. You see God in creation, you see what he's made, and you fail to honor God? What does God do? He gives you over to judgment. Read the rest of the chapter, he gives you over to an upside down mind. What are we seeing right now in our culture? You fail to honor God, you esteem God lightly, he gives you over. He's going to treat you lightly. It's the rule of honor.

So with this rule, what are the steps to honor God? How do you carry this out? I want you to turn to 1 Samuel 17. 1 Samuel 17 is a case study in this theme of honor. Do you remember those Harvard case studies on leadership? This is a case study on the honor of God. That's the theme, that's the theme of the honor of God goes throughout really these entire books of 1 & 2 Samuel, but this in particular lifts up what it means to honor God and you're going to have to look in your Bibles because I was going to print it out but I was going to have to kill part of a tree to do it for y'all because there's so many verses. So grab your Bibles and look in 1 Samuel 17 and I'm just going to, I'm not going to read every single verse. I'm going to skip some but stay with me, I'll try and give you as much context as we can.

Verse 1, "the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah." Several things. You remember the Philistines, they lived on the coast, they were a seafaring people. If you have a map of Israel in your mind, you know, and you have the Mediterranean Sea right here, they were to the southwest. So think southwest along the coast. They were a pagan people. Do you remember who their god was? It starts with a "D." Dagon, do you remember Dagon was their god? Now the Philistines were similar to the Greeks. They weren't a unified nation, they were five city-states. Gath, where Goliath was from, was one of those city-states. So if they had a common enemy, they would unite together and go fight that common enemy but they had five separate city-states, if you will. Those were the five leading cities of the Philistines. And the Philistines were famous and renowned for their weaponry. They had iron. They had large bronze shields and armor and spears. They were fierce warriors. They would do sadistic things to prisoners to torture them. I mean, these were a very fierce people.

Now I want you to notice in verse 1 there is a blinking red light, especially if you are a Jew reading this verse. Notice where the Philistines go, they go to Socoh which belongs to Judah. Which belongs to Judah, that's very significant if you're a Jewish person. What are the things that God promised the Israelites in Genesis 12 and Genesis 15? He promised them two things to Abraham, do you remember? A people and the land. People and land. Socoh, where they have gone, is part of the Promised Land that God gave to Israel so that the Philistines are marching on the covenant land that God has given. So if you're a Jew, you're immediately, you know, the hair on your neck is standing up, that these people are on the land that God has given.

Verse 2, "And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span." That's about 9 feet tall, 9 feet maybe 6 inches. Think Shawn Bradley, do y'all remember him, played in the NBA with a little bit of girth? Big guy, really big guy. That word "champion" literally in the Hebrew is a middle-man. A middle-man. A middle-man is someone who would go between the lines. It's a man who goes between the lines because here's how nations would sometimes settle their differences: they'd line up one army on one side, another army on the other side, and they'd select someone to go mono to mono, man to man, in

the middle. Goliath was the champion, the middle-man. Do y'all remember in the Iliad Achilles? Achilles was the middle-man for Agamemnon and the Greeks. Achilles was the guy they'd say, "Hey, we're sending you out to go fight in the middle," defeat the other team's champion. That was Achilles. That's Goliath. He's the champion. He's the middle-man.

Verse 5, "He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze." That's roughly 125-150 pounds. This ain't Under Armour. It's bronze. It doesn't breathe when you move. The scales, it's not, you remember the knights and they had the chain-mail? It's not that. It's not the chain mail. It looks like a reptile. It's pieces of bronze that overlap with one another. That's what it looks like. They've actually, archaeologists have found some of their armor, it's pretty interesting to see.

Verse 6, "he had bronze armor on his legs," so he even has armor on his shins apparently, "and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders." So he had some type of rope or hook right here between his shoulders that his javelin was hung on.

Verse 7, "The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron." That's about 17 pounds. So you're basically talking about throwing a bowling ball plus the shaft, so, I mean, this is, you know, with the wood attached easily over 20 pounds what this guy's throwing and he's not, you know, just trying to throw something a few feet and knock over some pins, he's trying to, you know, take somebody out. I mean, this is a warrior's warrior.

So here's his challenge, verse 8, by the way, what's interesting about Goliath, Goliath is quoted in this chapter more than any other pagan in the Old Testament. Really fascinating. These are direct quotes from a pagan obviously translated. "He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, 'Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.'" So there's that middle-man challenge, right? It's one to one. "And the Philistine said, 'I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.'"

Now notice the response from Saul and the army. "When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid." Let me just give you a foretaste of what's going on here. Saul in Israel doesn't see God. All they see is the Philistine line in front of them and this giant. That's all they see. All they see are the circumstances in front of them and not the God who is over them. Not a single person, he says all Israel, remembers God.

And notice how long this goes on, look at verse 16, how long does this take place? "For forty days," for forty days, "the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening." And not a single person goes out to fight Goliath. Not one.

Okay, so what are the steps in honoring God? What are the steps if we are going to implement this rule of honoring the Lord? First, this is the first step, this is so important, it's so easy to miss this: you learn obedience. You learn obedience to God. Look at verse 17, "And Jesse said to David his son, 'Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them.'" So lots of commands there. So he's to take grain to his brothers, 10 loaves. He's supposed to go quickly. He's to take cheeses to the commander. And then he's to bring some token, basically proof that he's done this. David learned from Jesse something that is incredibly important and that is obedience to your parents. Obedience to your parents. There is a direct link between obedience to your parents and obedience to God. That's why it's so important that you teach your child to obey because it's not just you that they're learning to obey, most importantly it's God they're learning to obey.

Jot down, this is the fifth commandment, Exodus 20:12, listen to me read it, "Honor your father and your mother," now notice how the command switches to vertical relationship with God, "that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you." You see, you first learn as a little kid to obey your parents but over time that obedience transitions to obedience to God. If you learn to honor your father and mother, the implication is in the fifth commandment, you're going to learn to honor God, the covenant Lord, Yahweh, and then you'll live long in the land. And I have no doubt that Jesse taught David from an early age with the Proverbs, with the scriptures, with Deuteronomy, to honor his father and his mother and to obey his parents, and over time what that translated to is learned obedience to God, learned obedience to God. I know this sounds just so basic and just so elementary but really this is the foundation of everything and this is why, if you're a parent or thinking about being a parent, you're a grandparent, this is why teaching your children and grandchildren to obey is so important. You demand obedience instantaneously with joy fully, right, no half-obedience, you teach your children to obey so that they'll learn to obey God.

Look at David, look at his response. Verse 20, "David rose early in the morning," do you think this is important to him? Yeah, it is. He "left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him." He obeys his father. When you obey, you put yourself in the place to honor God. There's not a single person who has a track record of honoring the Lord who has walked in disobedience. And learning to honor your parents is the beginning of that but it then manifests itself later in learning to obey your heavenly Father. Now some of you, you might think back to your relationship with your parents, maybe you have a terrible relationship with your parents, maybe you walked in disobedience, maybe you walked in rebellion and then the Lord saved you out of that. Look, it's not too late to begin honoring your parents as best you can, and it's not too late to begin teaching obedience to your children, and most importantly it's not too late to begin obeying your heavenly Father. It's just simple. It's simple. What does God say and am I walking in obedience? It really is.

This is where it starts and because David is obedient in the little things, it puts him in a position to be obedient in the big things. That's important to grasp. So he sees the battle line, he sees the war cry, verse 21, "And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him." David heard him. So there's a difference now. It's the same thing that's gone on for 40 days but this time David hears him and this leads to the second priority in honoring God. So first is learning obedience, second is to see God above every circumstance. To see God above every, through every circumstance, especially when it's difficult, especially when you're facing a trial, right? Not just when it's rose petals and buttercups, right?

But notice the contrast between David and the rest of the army. Verse 24, "All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid." So that's the whole army. "And the men of Israel said, 'Have you seen,'" notice this emphasis on sight, "'Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel.'" To which David says basically, "Yeah, but have you see my God and how great he is?" David sees this for what it really is.

Look at verse 26, "avid said to the men who stood by him, 'What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel?'" What's reproach? Shame. It's the opposite of honor. He sees this for what it really is. This isn't just a giant opposing their army, this is religious realities of the honor of God are at stake and this man has been a reproach to God, to Israel.

He says, second part of verse 26, "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Do you see that? This guy's not in covenant with God. That's what he's saying, he's uncircumcised. Circumcision is the mark of the covenant, right? He's not in covenant with God and he's defying God. How dare somebody defy God? He's the only one who's even mentioned God, right? No one else in the army has even thought about God for 40 something days and he's saying, "Who is this guy who's not in covenant with God, who is defying God?" You see, for David the sovereign God is seen. God's covenant is seen. The attributes of God are seen. The covenant love of God is seen and this leads David to be concerned about what really matters. He's not just concerned about the battle, winning the battle, and the fight in the middle. He's not just concerned about that. What is he concerned about? The reproach to God. The reproach to Israel.

He sees these things with the eyes of faith and you ask how does he do this? It's a question I've been meditating about. How does he show up and see God when nobody else does? David says in Psalm 16:8, "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken." David intentionally in his mind set the Lord always before him. "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken." If you are a covenant child of God, is God with you? Yes, he is. "I will be with you always even to the end of the age." God is with you. If you are a

child of the covenant God is with you. We need to remind ourselves of that, right? And that's what David did as it was a constant, "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken."

How did he remind himself of that? He tells us three chapters later in Psalm 19. I'm not going to have you turn there but you read Psalm 19, just go read it for homework, David says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." In the first six verse, he basically says, "Everywhere I look in creation, I'm reminded of the fact that God is there, that all of creation points to the reality of God." And then beginning in verse 7, he says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple," so on and so forth, talking about the word of God.

What he did is he continually read two books, two books, do you know what those books were? Nature and the Bible. He said, "When I look outside at nature, I remind myself of God. And when I read this book, I remind myself of God." And he did that constantly. "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken." That's how he lived. That takes discipline. That takes preaching to yourself here. That takes when you get up in the morning, reminding yourself to set the Lord before you so that you will not be shaken. It takes discipline to open the word of God and see God, but when you do this and you face the challenges in your life, you face the opposition from Satan, you face suffering, you face persecution, you see above the realities to God.

Listen, this is Psalm 27, listen to what David says, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" You don't need to be afraid of anything else when you have God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If you fear God, you need to fear no man and that's the difference, right, with David? That's the difference. That is the difference between him and Saul and the rest of the army, is he sees God above the circumstances.

Okay, so that's number 2. First was that he learned obedience. Third, courage to persevere through opposition. Courage to persevere through opposition. When you stand for God's honor, you will be opposed. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. We are in a spiritual battle and you have now entered into that spiritual battle. You are enemy number 1 on Satan's list if you are taking a stand for the honor of God, and you will be opposed by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and often the people that are closest to you. You will be opposed by people that you thought were your friends. You will be opposed by people in your inner circle. When you stand for the honor of God, you are in the spiritual battle of our time. The battle of our time. It's not the culture war in America, the battle of our time is the battle for the honor of God. And when you take a stand in that battle, yeah, it has cultural implications, but when you take a stand, you will be opposed and you have to have the courage and the fortitude in your soul to keep moving forward. You have to have the guts and it's the Lord's strength, it's God's grace, but you have to be willing to persevere through that opposition.

I remember watching this documentary on Margaret Thatcher and she had introduced some legislation and there was massive pushback, massive pushback against the policies that she put out, and basically like the first night all the guys in the conservative party came to her and they were like, "We've gotta change. You know, people are pushing back." And she looked at them and she said, "Has your nerve failed already?" You've got to have the nerve if you know something's right to keep pressing through even if people are opposing you.

So look what happens. Verse 28, "Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David." Why was he mad? Well, he's mad because David has shown him up. He should have been the one standing for the honor of God but he sat on the bench for 40 days.

And he says to David, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." Isn't that remarkable? He gets everything wrong. Literally there's nothing he says that is true. Nothing. Why was David there? Did he come to see the battle? No, he was there because his dad told him to go and bring provisions. He says, "I know the presumption of your heart. I know why you're here, that you're evil." He's the one that's actually presuming, right? He's presuming that he knows David's motives. He's the one that hasn't stood for the honor of God. He's the one with evil intentions in his heart.

And notice how David responds. This is the fortitude that we need to have, that you need to have. "And David said, 'What have I done now? Was it not but a word?' Does that stop him? Does he go throw a pity-party? You know, does he say, 'Oh, we need to really reconsider what we're doing here in standing for God's honor'?" No. "And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way." He discounts it.

I didn't have this in the notes but I'm going to just read it to you. Paul says this. You know, Paul was really lambasted by the Corinthians and this is what he says in 1 Corinthians 4, he says, "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." Faithful. Liked? No, faithful. "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you," very small thing, "or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted." Listen, "It is the Lord who judges me." If you know that you're in the right with God and you're right where the Lord wants you to be, doing what the Lord has you to do, then you let that criticism roll right off your back and you keep going. And that's exactly what David does.

So that's the third point is that you must have the courage to persevere through opposition, second, see God above every circumstance, first learn obedience, and then fourth and this is where the battle is ultimately won literally in this chapter, but you put yourself in the stream of God's honor. You put yourself in the stream of God's honor and here's what I mean by this. God is going to honor his own name. This is a fact of reality

that God wins. The last day will be, what? The honor and glory of God. Philippians 2:10, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." That's how history ends. Do you want to be on the right side of history? Be on the side of the honor of God. This is how providence, providence is God's orchestration of history throughout time. This is where providence is going. Do you want to know where providence is going? It's going to the honor of God.

So how do you get yourself in a place where you honor God? Well, you get in God's stream where he's moving and where he's moving is to uplift his name and glorify his name and honor his name. Jesus said, Matthew 16, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not stand against it." Christ is advancing his kingdom and his name will be honored and no one, not the gates of hell itself, can stand against the purposes of God. I want you to hear me very carefully here: God right now is not shaking in heaven because there's been a cultural change here in America. God is moving history exactly according to his plan and on his timetable, and where he's moving it to is the honor of God, where his name will be honored.

And what David is sure of here is that God will honor his name. He steps out into the valley sure of the fact that God will honor his own name. Look what happens. He says to Saul, Saul brings him into his tent, let me give you this background first, and David says to Saul, you know, Saul is unsure of whether he should send David out to fight Goliath. He says, "Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them." Notice his confidence. Why is he confident? "For he has defied the armies of the living God." He's defied the armies of the living God. He sees that this is a fight about God's honor.

"And David said, 'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.'" So he knows that this battle belongs to the Lord, this battle is God's and David is confident that God will, in fact, deliver him.

"And Saul said to David," verse 37, he says, "'Go, and the LORD be with you!'" And he 'clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, 'I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.' So David put them off." Do you see the irony there? That's the armor that Saul was supposed to go wear. Saul was supposed to be the one who opposed Goliath and Saul just says, "The LORD be with you"? Well, he's definitely not with Saul, right?

So David shuns the armor, puts them off. Verse 40, "Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine." People make all sorts of metaphorical references spiritualizing those five smooth stones, you know, that you need to pick up prayer and Bible study and fasting and church attendance and, you know, those

are your five stones but then, you know, what's the stone that actually kills Goliath, right? You know, was it the prayer or the fasting, was it the, anyway, you don't want to go there. Okay, there's five stones. We don't need to symbolize them.

"And he approached the Philistine. And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. And the Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." Notice what Goliath says. "The Philistine said to David, 'Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.' Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.'" Do you see how he sees the battle for what it is? And do you see his confidence that God will vindicate his name? His confidence isn't in himself, it's in the Lord. He knows that the battle belongs to God.

"When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine." So Goliath is hunkered down, weighed down by all this armor. David's tactic is speed. He runs quickly and he's got his slingshot going and verse 49, "David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword," that's Goliath's sword, "and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion," their middle-man, "was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp." Now listen to this, "And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent." And then Saul inquires about who this is and verse 58, I'll skip down, "Saul said to him, 'Whose son are you, young man?' And David answered, 'I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.'" It goes full circle. Remember it started with obedience to his father, goes back to his father.

Okay, so the four steps to honoring God: he learns obedience; he sees God above every circumstance; he has the courage to persevere through opposition; and he puts himself in the stream of God's honor. That is the key to his success in honoring God, then return at the end, he's honored, he's honored by Saul, he's honored by the people of Israel, but most importantly he's honored by God. He becomes the future king.

Now I want to do just some final thoughts here and then I'll pray and open it up to any questions that you have. Did David always honor God like he should have? Did he

always follow these four steps? Were there times when he wasn't where he was supposed to be? Y'all remember when he was on the roof when the kings go out to war and he sees the woman bathing? David didn't always follow these steps. Have you always followed these steps? No. No. We should. We should strive to follow all these steps but we don't. Guess who did? This is where we're going. Think about the Lord Jesus Christ. Did he learn obedience? Let me read you something, Luke 2 after he's leaving the temple, listen to this, this is on the way back. You know the story, he was lost in the temple and they come back and they find him and he says, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" They didn't understand that saying. Luke 2:51, "he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."

He learned obedience. That's what the writer of Hebrews says too. He learned obedience. He obeyed God every step, always where he was supposed to be, always doing what he was supposed to be doing.

Did he see God above every circumstance? Absolutely. Absolutely. Look at his prayer life. Look at how he's praying before he selects the 12. Look at how he's praying in Gethsemane before he goes to the cross. He sees everything in light of who God is and what God desires for him to do.

Did he have the courage to persevere through opposition? Yes, he did. Let me give you a quote. This is just one of many. In John 8 he's accused of doing works by a demon. This is John 8:49, he says, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me." He just keeps going. "You're not stopping me. I know where I stand with God, I know what God wants me to do. I am going to honor my Father."

And did Jesus put himself in the stream of God's honor? Oh yes. Oh yeah. This is the high priestly prayer, John 17:4, Jesus says, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." His whole life was in this stream of the honor and glory of God. That's where he stood. When there were sides, he took the side of God and he stood there and he honored God perfectly, and we're going to see more how he did that and that will be part of our future study.

But for us, look, Christ died so that you could be forgiven of your failure to honor the Lord. All your shame is gone at the cross. But now God calls you to do these things, God calls you to walk in obedience to honor God, he calls you to learn obedience. He calls you to see him above every circumstance. He calls you to courage, to persevere through opposition. And he calls you to put yourself in the stream of his honor. You do that, man, you are going to be a highly effective Christian. "He who honors me I will honor." God will honor you and do you know what? You might not see that until you're standing in heaven because the world will shame you but God will honor you and he will honor you on the last day, he will honor you with heavenly rewards, he will honor you with a great place in his kingdom, but he will honor you. So live for God's honor.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, Lord, just thank you for this rule that he who honors you you will honor, and those who do not honor you will be lightly esteemed. And we just pray, Lord, that we would have the courage to do this, to learn obedience to you, to obey the laws that you've given us that we would be disciplined to see you above and through every circumstance, that we would have the courage to persevere when we face the oppositions in standing for your honor, and that we would put ourselves constantly in the stream of God's honor that we would be your ambassadors for Christ here, marching forward in the kingdom of Christ. We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.

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