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# The God Who Remembers

**Obedience, Fear, & Courage - 1 Samuel 12:19-24**

Men's Ministry Teaching - March 2022

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## Introduction

I often enjoy taking the time to go hiking. Truthfully, I am not the endurance-trained mountain climber who embraces multiple day trips. Doing so would probably cause me more pain than pleasure! However, I often travel to day-trip trails that involve spectacular views of deep valleys, overlooks, and geographical landmarks. There is something about the ruggedness of the trail that causes me to find satisfaction in actively pursuing the goal of the hike. The goal of completing the trail or seeing the view hidden to those below.

Through sweat, perseverance, and a purposeful plan, I am able to commit to making the goal become an accomplishment. Imagine what stories of failure could arise from an unplanned hike into an unknown territory by an unprepared individual. The consequences may become deadly! It is only when the hiker is prepared and commits to following the plan that they are now free to enjoy their surrounding. Why? Because they committed to following the established path made known to them.

**“Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.” (Proverbs 4:25-27)**

## Bible Study

### **“Do not be afraid...” (1 Sam. 12:19-25)**

The book of 1 Samuel covers the transitional period of Israel’s history from the Judges to what is known as the Monarchic Period. In other words, the period of transition that covers Israel’s request for a physical king. In verse 12 we see that Samuel has been stated to have said that during the opposition from the Ammonites, the people of Israel requested a king to “reign over us.” Samuel’s response was that it was “the Lord your God” who was their king. (Vs. 12)

After a call to obedience for both Israel and their future king (Vs. 14-15), Samuel examines their failure. Stating that they “should know and see that (their) wickedness is great, which (they) have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for yourselves a king.” (Vs. 17) The quick request for a king may have implied that Israel was failing to remember God as a faithful covenant God, whose timing, plans, and intent are always good and perfect.

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God's response to the Israelites was a public display of judgment as He sent thunder and rain (heavy enough to shock the people) that is stated to "virtually never fall" this time of the year in Israel. Some scholars believe that the detail about Samuel stating that it was the time of wheat harvest in verse 17, and the following heavy rains caused severe damage to the harvest.

After these events, the people asked Samuel to intercede for them in prayer to God. Samuel's response was to not be afraid but to "turn aside" from their actions and to serve the Lord with all of their heart. (Vs. 20) A second time in the following verse the people are reminded to "turn aside" from "empty things that cannot profit or deliver. (Vs. 21) The verb used in both verses translates to actively "put away." It is not something passively requested, rather Samuel is saying to the people to put away any disobedience and evil from their heart, and to put away their priorities of things that are empty. (Vs. 21)

Ending the chapter is a beautiful and severe reminder given by Samuel to the people of the *God who remembers*. Why should the people listen to Samuel's call to obedience? Because "the Lord will not forsake his people." (Vs. 22) The God of Israel is not a God who forgets, rather he remembers! This is the same God who remembered Noah when he was in the ark (Gen. 8:1), the same God who rescued Lot from the destruction of a wicked city (Gen. 19:29). This is the same God who remembered Rachel by giving her the gift of fertility (Gen. 30:22), as well as Hannah in her request for a son. (1 Sam. 1:19) It is God's remembrance or awareness, that should comfort Israel!

Lastly, Samuel concludes the speech by now bringing the people to their own place of remembrance, stating that if they continue to do wickedly, both the people and their future king will "be swept away." (Vs. 24) It is here where we can recognize the fullness of how God's remembrance honors those who serve him faithfully with all their heart, and in pure justice allows an alternative judgment for those who continue in wickedness and rebellion.

## Devotional

### "Ponder the *path* of your feet" (Prov. 4:25)

When I am hiking towards the top of the mountain I am focused on the path. The end goal of seeing God's vast creation from the peak inspires me to continue. My recognition of the goal and the path that leads me to this goal does not negate that I won't meet challenges along the way. Surely obstacles will arise, my body will feel tired and exhaustion will try to set in. However, as long as I stay within the boundaries of the path, I will reach the end goal.

This is similar to our relationship with the Lord. Our 'hiking adventure' is the life that we are given. A life that is full of paths to take, routes to explore, and opportunities to behold. Our end goal is the Lord Himself, the day that we will join him eternally where "death shall be no more. Neither mourning, nor crying, nor pain.." (Rev. 21:4) Never will there be an adventurous destination as beautiful as the day that we get to see the Lord in His full glory!

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This is what we must ponder when fear comes trying to entrap our minds. We must remember the Lord. Why? Because he remembers us! What power there is in knowing that the God of all creation knows you! (1 Cor. 8:3) It is God who sent his son to die on our behalf so that we may have the opportunity to be redeemed, and the recipients of his eternal covenant relationship. Our strength in overcoming fear is found in taking courage by reminding ourselves that “the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thess. 3:3)

“ONLY FEAR the Lord and serve him FAITHFULLY with all of your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.” (1 Sam. 12:24)

## Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to be adventurers for your glory.

We thank you because you remember us. You are not distant but are always near when we cry out to you. Your word states that when we are in distress, you will protect us. (Ps. 20:1)

So, Lord, I pray that you protect the minds of the men reading this. I pray that you help encourage their hearts to know that you are not a Lord who forsakes his people (Vs. 22) Despite whatever may come against our lives, we can take courage in knowing that you are our deliverer from all forms of fear.

In the authority and name of Jesus, Amen!