

2nd Samuel Chapter 22 – John Karmelich

1. I can summarize this lesson in one word: gratitude.
 - a) If you asked me to play the “word association game”, where I say the first word that pops in my head, and you said, “happiness”, I would respond with “gratitude”.
 - b) Happiness is all about perspective at any given moment. We have the freedom of choice at any given moment to focus on the good or bad things of our lives.
 - c) In the moments when I am having my own pity parties, I am grateful for my wife, who then asks me, “John, give me ten things you are grateful for right now”.
2. Now let’s recap David’s life over the past few years:
 - a) His son Absalom rebelled against him and committed mutiny. He organized an army to find David and to try to kill him. David then had to live with the death of that son.
 - b) Just when David got back in power, there was another rebellion. Most of Israel would not accept David as king again. Another army had to be organized to put down that rebellion.
 - c) Just when that got taken resolved, there was three years of famine. Stop and let that one sink in for a moment: “three years of famine”. After a series of events, that was resolved.
 - d) Then David had a fight a series of wars with the Philistines, the Israelites traditional enemy. In the first one, David was almost killed. The army decided that David could no longer personally lead the battles.
3. My point? David was emotional beat. He’s had a rough go it lately.
 - a) In this chapter, we could have read of David complaining about how miserable his life had been. Instead, what do we get?
 - i) A fifty-one-verse psalm that gives gratitude to God for David’s life.
 - ii) A fifty-one-verse psalm thanking God for getting David through all of this.
 - iii) A fifty-one-verse psalm that gives God all the credit, and not David.
 - iv) A fifty-one-verse psalm where David pours out his fears to God and not on man.
 - v) A fifty-one-verse psalm where David credits God with the strength to move on.
 - b) After the psalm, David then spends the next thirty-nine verses (in the next chapter, in the next lesson) giving credit to those around him.
 - i) David understood that it was “through God” that everything happened.
 - ii) David also understood that God uses people around David to accomplish God’s will for David as well as for His chosen people.
4. So what is the purpose of this chapter? It shows how David reflected on his life. He gave credit to God and He gave credit to those God had used those around him.
 - a) The lesson to us is one of gratitude. God wants us to be happy. Miserable people make those around them miserable. We cannot control many of the things that happen to us in life. We can control our attitude. The secret of a good attitude is to put life in perspective.
 - b) No matter how bad things are, there are always things to be grateful for.
 - i) If you can’t think of any, read some of this psalm and see if it applies to your life.
 - ii) If we are trusting in Christ, we are spending eternity in heaven. That is a lot longer than any pain we have to go through now. David understood that, and it is part of this psalm.
 - iii) Thank God for how much He loves us. In the darkest times of our lives, the remedy is to think about how much God loves us and cares for us. Yes, horrible things happen and they do happen for a reason. One has to have an “eternal perspective” and realize that eternity is a lot longer than our time here on earth.
 - iv) One of the main themes of this lesson is that God has rescued David through all of these trials. Here’s what’s important: God cares and loves us as much as David!
 - v) The mistake is to read this chapter and think, “Well of course God rescued David! David was the king and God wanted him to be king. Of course God rescued him!”

- c) If God is perfect, then God is perfect in His love. If we can comprehend how much God loves us, then we must accept the fact that He cares for us and wants the best for us. What does God expect from us in return? Gratitude.
- i) Gratitude leads to obedience.
 - ii) God wants obedience, not out of compulsion, but out of gratitude.
 - iii) Gratitude leads to love. When we realize how grateful we are to God and those around us, it changes our attitude and makes us want to love those around us.
5. OK, let me give a few technical comments and then we can begin the lesson:
- a) Chapter 22 is essentially the same as Psalm 18.
 - b) If you go through all 150 psalms in the Book of Psalms, almost half of them are credited as being written by David. This is the only one included in the Book of Samuel.
 - c) I think David (with God as His inspiration) choose “this one” as the emphasis is on gratitude. This psalm has verses about God’s love, our gratitude to God and there are even hints of prophesy. We’ll talk about that in the later verses of this lesson.
 - d) Remember that the psalms are Hebrew poetry. Our English translations can’t give the “musical rhythm” of the original text. There is a rhythm so that it could be put to music.
 - e) Because the psalm is poetry, it is “less literal” than the rest of the bible.
 - i) I take the view when studying the bible, that one assumes any passage is literal unless it is specifically designed to be some sort of “poetic” word-picture.
 - ii) For example, there is a reference in this psalm of “the blast of his breath of his (God’s) nostril”. God does not have a big nose. ☺ It is part of a poetic picture that is describing what God’s strength is like. My simple point is much of this poem is designed as word pictures we can relate to, not a literal description of God’s physical appearance.
 - f) I would also encourage you to just read the psalm over once or twice without all of this commentary. The problem with a line-by-line dissection of the poem is one misses the flow and beauty of the psalm as whole.
6. Chapter 22, Verse 1: David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.
- a) Verse 1 of Chapter 22 that is not part of the psalm itself. Verse 1 is the introduction that explains why David sang this psalm at this point in his life.
 - b) All it says is that David “sang” this song after:
 - i) 1) God delivered David from the hand of all his enemies, and
 - ii) 2) God delivered David from the hand of Saul
 - iii) Notice David is giving God the credit for keeping David alive at this point. David is not giving himself credit.
 - c) Next, notice this is a “life-long” series of gratitude:
 - i) Saul died many years ago. Remember that David spent many years of young life being on the run while King Saul tried to kill him.
 - ii) Notice that Saul is in a “separate category” than David’s enemies.
 - iii) David doesn’t list Saul as an enemy despite the fact Saul spent years trying to kill him. Personally, I’d have a little resentment of the guy at this point. ☺
 - iv) David understood that Saul was God’s appointed leader of Israel and never once tried to kill Saul, despite the temptation to do so. David always understood that being King is “God’s decision, and God’s timing”.
 - d) Bible commentators debate over when this psalm is written. You can find all sorts of boring commentary arguing whether or not this was one of David’s “early psalms” and then David recited it here near the end of his life. My reaction? Whatever. ☺
 - i) The point to me is not when this psalm was written, but why this psalm is written and why this psalm is included here near the end of 2nd Samuel. My point is that this psalm is all about having gratitude and the proper perspective on life.

7. Verse 2: He said: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
- a) David begins the poem (i.e., the psalm) with a bunch of adjectives describing who God is.
 - b) Most of these adjectives are "word pictures".
 - i) I'm not going to describe each of them. We'll never make it through the lesson.
 - ii) I'd like to describe a few of the adjectives for God if for no other reason than to give you a flavor of David's thought. Most of these word-pictures are self-explanatory if one simply stops and thinks about them.
 - c) Let's start with "rock". David uses that term three or four times in this psalm, depending upon which English translation you use.
 - i) When you think of a rock, don't think of a rock fits in your hand. Think of the "Rock of Gibraltar". Think of a several-story high rock in the desert. It is the idea of something "unmovable, unshakable, that will always be there." A rock that big is not shaken by the weather. It is a symbol of presence and "always being there".
 - ii) What is David's point? When I'm down, God is "there". When I'm in trouble, God is "there". When I'm hurting, God is "there". It is like a big multi-story rock that can always be found as a central point of reference.
 - d) The next term used is "fortress". That is a little easier. A fort is a place of protection.
 - e) The next one is "deliverer". That is also fairly self-explanatory. David is saying that God is the one who delivered David out of all of his troubles, and not himself.
 - f) The point of all of this is David is giving God the credit, not himself. God is beginning the psalm by showing gratitude to God for who He is!
8. Verse 3: My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior-- from violent men you save me.
- a) The emphasis here is on God's strength for protection:
 - i) We have another "rock" reference, as to God's power.
 - ii) David calls God his "shield" which is a defense-instrument in times of war.
 - b) When you read "horn" in the bible, think of an animal's horn. Animals that have horns use them as their source of power and strength.
 - i) David calls God "the horn of my salvation". It is a colorful way of saying that the power of David's salvation is through God's power.
 - ii) We as Christians tend to think of "salvation" as only referring to heaven. It also refers to God "getting us out of a jam". When we're in trouble, and we're no longer in trouble, we are "saved" from that one particular incident. That is the context of the reference here.
 - c) The application of these verses is to understand the different attributes of God.
 - i) God cares for our lives here and now. All of these attributes that David describes of God can also apply to our lives if we simply ask Him!
9. Verse 4: I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.
- a) In this Verse, David says he calls (prays) to God who is worthy of praise.
 - b) The second part of this verse is an example of why we should praise God.
 - c) Whether or not God actually saved David from his enemies, God is still worthy to be praised! We're here to do His will, and not vice-versa.
 - i) The truth is God usually does rescue us. When we are out of options is usually when God steps in. That way, no one but God gets the credit.
 - d) My point here is that we not only have to show gratitude when things are going well, but also show gratitude when life gets rough. Let me give an example:
 - i) "Lord, I am grateful for the love you have for me right now. I don't know how you plan to get me out of this mess, but I know you will. Whatever happens, let it happen for Your glory and let not this lesson be wasted. Amen!"
 - ii) We cannot always control our circumstances, but we can control our attitude through those circumstances. "Gratitude" is the foundation for proper attitude.

10. Verse 5: "The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. ⁶ The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. ⁷ In my distress I called to the LORD; I called out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears.
- a) In Verse 5 and 6, David is poetically describing his "woes".
 - b) David's saying in a poetic way, "I was dead meat. ☺ I was surrounded by enemies with no viable options. I was truly overwhelmed by the situation around me."
 - c) It has been said that the two greatest words in the bible are, "But God". That is a reference to when Daniel's three friends were about to be thrown in the fiery furnace. Their testimony before their death sentence was in effect, "God may rescue us and God may not. Either way, we still choose to only serve the true God." The idea of "but God" is that God can choose to rescue us out of any situation we are in, no matter how bad it seems. (Reference, Daniel Chapter 3).
 - d) One of my favorite commentators once quipped, "I think God stays up nights thinking of news ways of asking me, "Do you trust me, do you really trust me?"" (Chuck Missler). The point of that expression is that in our life, we get in situations that seem impossible for us to get out of without God's intervening hand.
 - e) With all of that in mind, now re-read these verses. It describes in a colorful way how David was overwhelmed at certain moments in his life and, from David's perspective, God "came out of nowhere" to rescue Him. The point for you and I is to give God the credit for each and every victory in our life. God is always working behind the scenes controlling our life so we can give Him the glory for our victories.
11. Verse 8: "The earth trembled and quaked, the foundations of the heavens shook; they trembled because he was angry. ⁹ Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. ¹⁰ He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. ¹¹ He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind.
- a) First, remember that this is poetry and not a literal description of God.
 - i) David seems to be describing an angry god-like monster that comes out of nowhere, has fire in his mouth and is soaring on wings. God is not Godzilla. ☺
 - b) Imagine being in a situation where you are thinking, "Ok, this is it; I'm going to die here and now." All of sudden, some sort of miracle happens, and you are rescued. It would be as if a loving God "came out of nowhere" to rescue you. That is the poetic idea here.
 - c) So why all the references to anger? Imagine someone hurting your little child. You would want to harm those who are harming the one you love. It is David's way of saying, "God loves me so much he was furiously angry that someone was trying to hurt me!"
 - i) There are several references to God's chosen people as "the apple (pupil) of my eye" (e.g., Deut. 32:10, Psalm 17:8, et.al.). Try touching your pupil and see how sensitive it is to the touch. That is how sensitive God is to those that are His!
 - d) Remember that if God can rescue David, He can and does rescue you and me! Just when things appear at their worst is when God loves to work and get all the credit!
12. Verse 12: He made darkness his canopy around him-- the dark rain clouds of the sky.
- a) We are continuing the idea that God "comes out of nowhere to rescue us". The colorful word-picture of a "dark canopy around God" is the idea that we can't see God and when things are at their worse, it seems as if "God is nowhere to be found".
13. Verse 13: Out of the brightness of his presence bolts of lightning blazed forth. ¹⁴ The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. ¹⁵ He shot arrows and scattered the enemies, bolts of lightning and routed them.

- a) In Verse 12, we had word pictures of “darkness”. In verse 13, we have pictures of “bright light”. The idea of all of these verses is like saying, “Everything was dark all around me because of my troubles. All of sudden, out of nowhere, comes God to rescue me. It was as fast and bright as a bolt of lightning. God wiped out my enemies when I didn’t have the strength to do it all by myself. God alone gets the credit for this victory.”
- b) This is a good prayer for the times when life gets rough. Think about this prayer during the times when you think there is no hope. Remember the words “But God” in times when all is in despair. Those are the word-pictures being painted in these verses.
14. Verse 16: The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of breath from his nostrils. ¹⁷ "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. ¹⁸ He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. ¹⁹ They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. ²⁰ He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.
- a) In these verses, we finish the poetic section of “God rescuing me out of a hopeless situation”. These are colorful ways of saying how much in despair David was and if it weren’t for God, David would be “toast” by now. ☺
- b) OK, why all these verses? Why not just say, “I was in trouble, God rescued me, end of issue.” Why go on and on with all of these colorful clichés?
- c) For starters, I think we have to go real pain in order to appreciate this. If I was in a painful situation for oh say, 43 seconds and then God rescued me, I would give God a quick and sincere thank you, and then go on with my life. When I spent years of suffering and years of dealing with pain and then “out of nowhere” God rescued me, I might be inclined to go on for a bunch of verses describing how God rescued me.
- d) The more we realize God’s goodness, the more time we’re going to spend praising Him. The more we stop and contemplate how God has gotten us through our lives to date, the more we need to stop and give thanks.
- e) We are not each required to write poetry about “God’s nostrils”. ☺ God created each of us with different styles and talents. For some, we can just read David’s psalms and say, “Amen Lord, that’s goes for me too!” Some have the ability to praise God with new poetry, or songs, or musical instruments. Some of us can barely clap in rhythm. ☺ The point is to use whatever talents and abilities and styles God has given us to praise Him.
- i) Again, God expects gratitude. Gratitude leads to obedience and gratitude leads to a good attitude and love toward others around us.
- f) Let’s look at the last line: “He rescued me because he delighted in me.”
- i) Here’s your first memory verse of the lesson.
- ii) “God delighted in me” does not just apply to David, but to us as well!
- a) Yes, God wants obedience, because God wants the best for us. Still, one has to first comprehend how much God loves us and delights in us.
- iii) The secret is to understand that God does not delight in us because of our good deeds or our attitude. God delights in us because God is perfect. If God is perfect, then He is perfect in His love for us, period, period, period.
- iv) The secret is to realize how much God loves us, cares for us and wants to rescue us out of whatever situation we are in to show His love for us!
15. Verse 21: "The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.
- a) Here’s our other memory verse of the week. It goes well with the last sentence.
- b) It is important, no essential, to understand how God sees us: As “perfect, eternal beings”.
- i) We tend to focus on our faults. We read the bible and say, “OK, these are God’s rules for right and wrong. I’ve violated a good chunk of those commandments in my life. I’m in eternal trouble”.

- c) God only asks that we accept by faith that He exists and He is perfect. Since God's in charge, He gets to make the rules over who does and doesn't get to spend eternity with Him. God then judges people based on His standards.
 - i) If God is "perfect" in His judgment on us, then God cannot forgive any of our sins.
 - ii) God must "perfectly punish" us for not living up to His standards.
 - iii) At the same time, God is perfect in love and wants to forgive us.
 - iv) How do you reconcile "perfect in love" and "perfect in judgment"?
 - v) The only solution is that God himself has to pay the price for our sins.
 - vi) If God punishes us as we deserve, then He can't show his perfect love.
 - vii) If God forgives us out of His love, then He isn't being perfect in judgment.
 - viii) If God punishes "someone else" for our sins, then God isn't being fair. This is why Christianity cannot accept the concept of Jesus being any less than God himself.
 - d) Which leads us back to this verse: David calls himself "righteous" in this verse.
 - i) "Righteousness" means, "right living" before God. It is about being blameless.
 - ii) To put it another way, "God sees us through cross-filtered glasses". That's a "cross" reference as in the crucifixion cross. Because Jesus has paid the price for all of our sins, past, present and future, we are now "perfect" in God's eye.
 - iii) I'm convinced David understood the idea that entry in heaven requires perfection. He understood that God "perfectly forgives" David of all of his sins.
 - iv) Some commentators suggest that David must have written this psalm prior to his sin with Bathsheba. I disagree. That is to imply that somehow, David was "more perfect" or sinless prior to that incident. This is about David (and us) understanding how we stand before God. That is, perfect in forgiveness.
 - e) The epilogue of this concept is to understand that God still expects obedience.
 - i) Are we eternally forgiven? Yes. Does that mean we are now free to sin all we want and know that God has forgiven us? No. God desires obedience and there is punishment on earth for that disobedience. David suffered for years because of past disobedience. There is punishment for disobedience.
 - ii) The point of this verse is to understand how God has rewarded David "perfectly, for eternity" based on God's concept of eternally forgiven when we turn to Him.
16. Verse 22: For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God. ²³ All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. ²⁴ I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. ²⁵ The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight.
- a) Here we have David's further commentary on being "perfect" and forgiven by God.
 - i) Is David implying he has never sinned? No.
 - ii) Is David implying he has never turned from God? No.
 - b) It is important for Christians to understand it is acceptable to say we are "perfect" in God's eyes. God sees us in our future, "perfected" state. We are trusting in the fact that God has, does and will forgive us perfectly of all of our sins. This is about David showing gratitude for God because God sees David as "perfect".
 - c) Since I've already beaten this point to death, let's put these verses in context of the psalm:
 - i) David spent verse after verse saying how God has rescued him from death. You can read that as the fate of eternal salvation from hell or you can read that as David's gratitude for specific situations he has been in, in the past. Either way, the psalm "works" in that context.
 - ii) David is expressing his "perfect" state based on God's love. This is David stating his gratitude to God for loving him and considering David "perfect" in God's eye.
 - d) This leads us back to gratitude. We not only need to be grateful for any specific situations of the moment, but the eternal perspective of heaven. This is far longer than our time here on earth.

17. Verse 26: "To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless,²⁷ to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.²⁸ You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.
- a) The idea of these verses is that God helps us become like the attributes God desires of us. God helps us become faithful to him as well as "blameless" as "pure".
 - b) It would help to understand that the most holy name of God (i.e., "Jehovah", a transliteration of the Hebrew) could be translated to mean, "the becoming one".
 - i) I say that because Jehovah is often combined with another Hebrew words to help understand who and what God "is". For example, God can be called "The becoming one of mercy", or "The becoming one of faithfulness".
 - ii) The reason I mention this title, is that it fits into the principal of these verses.
 - iii) God helps us become "like him". Since God is faithful to us, He wants us to be faithful to Him. That is the idea of Verse 26.
 - iv) There is a true principal that we become like what we worship.
 - a) In a negative sense, people who are obsessed with fame or fortune usually end up becoming as shallow and empty as those types of "god's".
 - v) If we devote our time studying God's word and paying homage to God, we develop God-like characteristics. I'm not saying we can part the Red Sea. ☺ I'm saying we become more loving and more faithful as we draw upon God's power.
 - vi) It would be like God saying to us, "OK, you prayed for an increase in your faith? Terrific, I'll grant you that prayer request, because I want you to have more faith. Let me give you the power to have more faith".
 - c) There is a story in the Gospel of Mark where a father of a demon-possessed boy asks Jesus for help to exorcise the demon: "But if you (Jesus) can do anything, take pity on us and help us (father and son)." Jesus responds with "'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." The father then responds with, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:22-24, NIV) Jesus then exorcises the demon.
 - i) My point of these verses is that Jesus did not ignore that father's cry of help for his unbelief. It is acceptable to ask God to increase our faith.
 - ii) There is a similar idea when Jesus walked on the water (Ref.: Matthew 14, John 6). Peter asked Jesus if he could walk on the water too. Peter got out and started walking on the water as well. When Peter realized what he was doing, he was afraid and started to sink. He asked Jesus to help him. Jesus did not let Peter sink when Peter asked to "help his unbelief". That's my point. God answers our prayer requests for more faith.
 - d) Which leads us back to these verses: A point of the verses is that we can pray for "more faith". God answers that prayer as He desires us trust Him more.
 - i) In difficult times, it is an excellent idea to ask God to "increase my faith" to have the strength and trust to get through that situation.
 - e) The verses then go on to say, "With the blameless, you show yourself blameless".
 - i) The same principal of "praying for faith" can also apply to "blameless".
 - ii) This does not mean we can be perfect. It is more about praying "God, help keep me away from temptation." When sinful temptations come, we can pray for a way to escape. God promises that He will always provide a way out if we choose to take that way. (See 1st Corinthians 10:13).
 - iii) Remember that these verses imply we "become" like the God we worship. If we act in obedience to what God commands of us, God will be faithful to respond to make us more obedient. It is like God saying, "You want to be obedient? Terrific, pray for obedience and I will help make you more obedient".
 - iv) My point is faith and obedience don't originate in self-discipline, they originate in God giving us the strength and ability to act as such.

- f) Next, the verse says, “but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd”.
- i) This verse is a bit difficult to comprehend. The best way to explain it is to say, “To the person who turns against God and thinks they can “outsmart God” with their wicked deeds, just know that God, in the end will “outsmart” them. You can’t take on God and win.
 - ii) It would be like a life long thief telling God, “Hey God, I’m going to get away with this the rest of my life. People are too stupid and too slow to catch me. No matter how hard you try God, you’re never going to “get me””. The principal of this bible verse is that God “out smarts” people who make such a claim.
 - iii) “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” (Galatians 6:7, NIV)
- g) Verse 28 says, “You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.
- i) One of the things that God requires of us is that we walk humbly before him:
 - a) “He (God) has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8 NIV)
 - ii) “Humbly” essentially means to realize that God is God, and we are not. It is to constantly realize that God is in charge of our lives and not us.
 - iii) The term “haughty” is a synonym for prideful. It is the opposable of humility. It is one who thinks highly of himself, especially over God at any one moment. Haughtiness is about giving yourself all the credit and none to God.
18. Verse 29: You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light.
- a) The basic purpose of a lamp is light up a dark place.
 - b) David is comparing God to a light as God guides us with discernment for our decisions.
 - c) This verse, and the next set of verses all focus on the power of God working through us. The starting point of God working through us is our free-will desire to let God do such.
19. Verse 30: With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.
- a) We tend to forget that David was a military man. There were situations where he led a charge of soldiers against others. He probably led soldiers up a city wall while arrows were being flung at them. The point is this is scary stuff. David depended upon God’s strength to overcome his fears.
 - b) The point of this verse is not that God turns us into Superman. ☺ The point is that God gives us the strength and power to overcome our fears. With that type of faith, we can then do things that seem impossible to us due to our own fears. God gives us the strength to do things that would seem supernatural to us.
20. Verse 31: "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. ³² For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?
- a) The point of this set of verses is God’s “instructions” for us are perfect. There is no better set of “do’s and don’ts” than God’s commands for our lives.
 - b) The rest of these clauses all flow around how God is perfect and no one else but God himself deserves our worship and our time.
 - c) The bible is full of commands for obedience. The bible is full of word-pictures that give us examples of how to be obedient. Every one of those commands has been tested throughout history. People have learned through the millennia that those laws are the best way to live out our lives.
 - d) Another point of these verses is that there is no true alternative that we can turn to other than God himself in order to live a happy and fulfilled life. Does that mean non-believers in God cannot be happy at any given moment? Of course not. These verses remind us that living the life for God not only has eternal benefits, but is also the “best way” to live our lives here on earth.

- e) This reminds me of something from my past. When I was a young man, I was influenced by a renowned philosopher named Ayn Rand. She developed a whole philosophy that was the basis for “libertarianism”. While her ideas on freedom and capitalism were excellent, she was also an atheist. She believed people should live a moral life simply because it was the logical thing to do.
- i) The problem is without a God for accountability, morality by self-discipline doesn’t work in the long term. Years later, I read how Ayn Rand had a martial affair with a much younger man. She never lived up to her own standards of right and wrong. I’m convinced you can’t live a moral life without acknowledging the existence of God for the sake of accountability. You can in the short term, but in the end, mistakes will be made.
 - ii) There is an old Christian joke that says, “There are two ways to get into heaven. One is to never sin. When you die, you tell Jesus to move over. ☺ The other way is to accept Jesus as payment for your sins.” The point of that joke is that all people have flaws and it is impossible to live a long sinless life on our own.
21. Verse 33: It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. ³⁴ He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. ³⁵ He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. ³⁶ You give me your shield of victory; you stoop down to make me great. ³⁷ You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn.
- a) Verse 30 opened with the phrase, “With your (God’s) help...”
 - i) The rest of Verse 30 was an illustration of things we can do with God’s help.
 - ii) Verses 33-37 are additional illustrations of things we can do with God’s help.
 - b) Sandwiched between Verses 30 and 33 is David declaring just “how” perfect God is.
 - c) We’re also back to David the military leader:
 - i) David is giving God the credit for all his strength in victories.
 - ii) David is giving God the credit for his training for battle.
 - iii) David is giving God the credit for his protection in battle.
 - d) Does this mean that every soldier that prays to God will automatically win? No.
 - i) Does this mean that every Christian athlete will win every contest? No.
 - ii) Remember that life is about God’s will getting accomplished, not ours. If it was God’s will for David to win, then God makes it possible for David to win. That is the idea here. Our “job” is to then turn and give the credit back to God after He has accomplished His will through us.
 - e) I’ve stated in the past that in life, humans are the “pawns and the prizes”.
 - i) We are the “pawns” in that we are used by God.
 - ii) We are the “prizes” in that the purpose of God using us is that he desires men and women to turn to Him so we can spend eternity with Him. We are God’s prizes in life out of His love for us.
 - iii) I mention this because we may be pawns, but we have the potential to be mighty pawns! ☺ If God wants to use us, then we can do great things through God.
 - f) These verses should give us great comfort. If are living to do “God’s will, then we need to have the confidence that God provides the strength and ability to accomplish His will. Sometimes that is “supernatural” strength and ability. Where God leads, God provides.
22. Verse 38: "I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. ³⁹ I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. ⁴⁰ You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. ⁴¹ You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. ⁴² They cried for help, but there was no one to save them-- to the LORD, but he did not answer. ⁴³ I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets.
- a) Now come the “heavy” verses: The ultimate doom of those who turn from God.

- b) First, let's talk about these verses from David's perspective:
- i) One has to understand warfare. It is about killing or being killed. The people David fought wanted Israel's land and possessions. If David did not kill them, they would kill David and his men.
 - ii) David is reciting this poem near the end of his life after he has won victory after victory after victory. He looks back at his life and realize how God was "always there" for him guiding his life.
 - iii) It is often said it is easier to see God's handiwork in hindsight. If it is "obvious" that God has worked in the past in our lives, why do we still doubt He is working the same way in our lives in the present?
- c) Next, we need to expand the scope of these verses. On the surface, these verses are literally about David's lifelong victories. One can easily expand the meaning of these verses to understand it is about the inevitable and complete destruction of those who willfully turn from God.
- i) For example, notice Verse 42: "They cried for help, but there was no one to save them-- to the LORD, but he did not answer." This verse makes one think:
 - a) "Doesn't God love everyone? How can God not answer a cry for help? How can God not save someone who asks for salvation?"
 - ii) There is a biblical principal called "hardening of the heart". It is the idea of God saying, "Ok, you want to turn away from me? Fine, keep going. In fact, if that is what you desire, I'll make it more difficult and eventually impossible for you to turn to me because that is what you want."
 - iii) This idea is that there is a "point of no return". People can spend their lives willfully turning from God to a point when they can't turn back. The problem is we as humans don't know that point. Therefore, we should pray for all. Just know that from God's perspective, that concept does exist.
 - iv) This idea is taught in Isaiah 6:9-10. That verse is quoted three times in the New Testament (Matthew 13:15, John 12:40 and Acts 28:27) as a prophetic warning against achieving a "point of no return".
- d) Getting back to these verses, they all have a tone of permanent and inevitable doom and destruction for those who willfully desire to turn to God.
- i) That should not make us hate people or turn from them. If anything, it should cause us to reach out to others realizing their inevitable destruction. Jesus wants us to have compassion on the lost:
 - a) "But when He (Jesus) saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." (Matthew 9:36 NKJV)
- e) Verse 43 says, "I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets."
- i) In the literal sense, this is a colorful expression of David winning his battles. By Verse 43, I am convinced that David has "expanded the scope" of this prayer to discuss the topic of God's ultimate damnation of those who turn from Him.
 - ii) C.S. Lewis once said, "The gates of hell will be locked from the inside". The idea is that hell is a place for people who willfully choose to not be with God.
23. Verse 44: "You have delivered me from the attacks of my people; you have preserved me as the head of nations. People I did not know are subject to me, ⁴⁵ and foreigners come cringing to me; as soon as they hear me, they obey me. ⁴⁶ They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.
- a) These verses continue to have the "double-reference" to David and God himself.
 - b) On the literal sense, it is a continuation of praise of David's victories.
 - i) He talks about people David never knew are subject to him and have to obey him.

- c) On the “expanded scope”, one can read these verses as being predictive of the future day when the Messiah (i.e., Jesus) will rule and reign over the earth.
 - i) Notice the phrase “you have preserved me as the head of nations”.
 - a) David was the head of only one nation, Israel.
 - b) The word “nations” is deliberately in plural in Verse 44.
 - c) I’m convinced that David was also talking about the future “Son of David” that God promised would rule over all nations.
 - d) With that in mind, think about the next phrase, “People I did not know are subject to me” or the phrase, “as soon as they hear me, they obey me.”
 - i) Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be “a light to the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6). After 2,000 years, Isaiah was right. Jesus is the light to the Gentiles.
 - ii) Consider how billions of non-Jews over the past 2,000 years have sworn allegiance to Jesus as Lord. As “soon as they hear of him” (Verse 45), people have made the decision that Jesus is truly God and worship him as God. There is no logical explanation for that phenomenon other than Jesus actually being God.
 - iii) When Jesus lived, he was an obscure man living in an obscure country. His fame could only spread by word of mouth. The religious leaders rejected him. The Roman Empire made it a death sentence to worship him for the better part of 400 years. Despite that, Christianity spread into the millions in those first few hundred years. Through the centuries, despite government’s attempt in country after country to eliminate Christianity, it still exists.
 - iv) We tend to forget that psalms are prophetic as well as practical and as well as designed for worship. Remember that this psalm is also Psalm 18.
 - v) Jesus himself said that the psalms were prophetic of his coming: “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the psalms.” (Luke 24:44 NIV).
24. Verse 47: "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!
- a) David is now wrapping up the psalm. David stops and contemplates all God has done for him and essentially says, “This is all too much for me to handle! Praise God for who He is! Thank you, Lord!”
 - b) I stated in my opening that this psalm is about gratitude. David reflects on his life and gives gratitude for God for all He has done for him. He exalts God in His gratitude.
 - c) Some of the latter verses of this psalm expand prophetically into future aspects about God and His Messiah. Still, the primary focus of this psalm is gratitude.
 - d) This psalm is purposely included near the end of 2nd Samuel. I believe it is God’s way of saying, “You’ve just read the life of David. David grew, prospered, fell, and grew again all out of My grace. I, the Lord, want to do similar things for your life as well. I want to use you for great things. I want you to look back at your life and praise Me because of your obedience. I want you to realize all the wonderful things I (God) want and have done for you. I want you to be happy and have a fulfilled life. That only comes from obedience. That obedience begins and ends with gratitude.”
 - i) Near the beginning of 1st Samuel, a barren woman named Hannah gave a prayer of gratitude for a son that would be born. When Hannah prayed that “psalm” she was not even pregnant yet. She showed her gratitude to God for a future event.
 - ii) Here, near the end of 2nd Samuel (again, “Samuel” was originally one book) is another psalm of David looking back at his life and giving gratitude to God.
 - iii) I am convinced that these two long prayers of gratitude are purposely placed as “bookends” to show how God works, and how life should “begin and end” with gratitude to God for what He has done, is doing and will do in our lives.”

25. Verse 48: He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me,⁴⁹ who sets me free from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me.
- a) Notice the word “nations” is in plural in Verse 48. I think David “got it” as to the future. David understood that one of his descendants would rule and reign over all nations.
 - b) With that said, now let’s look at the next phrase, “who sets me free from my enemies”.
 - c) Yes, you can read this as a literal victory over David’s enemies, but I’ll argue the scope of that verse is much bigger in its meaning.
 - i) Who is our “enemies”? Peter said, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1st Peter 5:8 NIV)
 - ii) How are we “set free” from our enemies? “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:1-2 NIV)
 - iii) With Peter’s statement about the devil as our enemy and Paul’s statement in Romans how we have been set free from sin, now think about David’s statement of “who sets me free from my enemies”. Again, you can read David’s statement as being literal over his military victories. You can also expand the scope to think of “enemies” as being sin, our temptations, and Satan himself. Through Christ Jesus, we have those victories over our “enemies”.
 - iv) If you think I’m reading too much into this, that’s ok too. You can still read this in context of David’ military victories and giving God the credit. It’s about gratitude.
26. Verse 50: Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name.
- a) There is a saying in bible teaching that goes, “When you see a “therefore”, look for the “wherefore”. What does David mean by “therefore”? To what principal is it connected?
 - i) The answer is David just spent verse after verse thanking God for all of his victories in his life. Therefore, David will praise God “among the nations”.
 - ii) That means David wants to praise God publicly as well as privately.
 - b) Do you ever get shy as far as wanting to praise God publicly? We all do at times. It is the fear of not being popular. How do you overcome that fear? By thinking about all of the great things God has done for you. By David contemplating the good God has done for him, that gave David the boldness to be a public witness for God. The secret to “boldness” for God is not only to pray for boldness, but also to stop and thank God for all of the good that He has done for us.
 - c) David is ending this psalm on a happy note. He is happy because he is grateful.
 - i) Remember I opened this lesson with my wife’s comment about “Give me 10 things you are grateful for right now? Well David gave “ten” and then some.
 - ii) That gratitude led to David’s happiness.
 - iii) That gratitude led to David wanting to praise God all the more.
 - iv) That gratitude led to David wanting to be a public witness for God.
 - v) It “begins and ends with God”. The secret of living a happy, fulfilled life with God begins and ends with praising God for who He is and secondly, the good he has done for us, is doing for us and will do for us. That is the “details” between Hannah’s praising God for the future (1st Samuel Chapter 2) and David praising God for the past in this chapter here.
27. Verse 51: He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever."
- a) If you think that my commentary on the Jesus-prophecy was a stretch of my imagination, I want you to notice the word “anointed” in Verse 51. The Hebrew word for anointed is a used of the coming Messiah. The word Messiah is the Hebrew word for king. The “anointed one” is the king. It is a prophetic reference of the Messiah to come.

28. Let's wrap this up. Let's end with some of our own gratitude: Let's pray: Father, we thank you for choosing us to be with you forever. Every other blessing you give us pales in comparison. Help us to live grateful lives. Help us to live happy lives by being grateful. Help us to be good public witnesses for you through our gratitude. Help us to be obedient by our gratitude. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.
- a) OK, your homework assignment for next week is to write down 10 things you are grateful for. Then tell God how grateful you are for those things!