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1 SAMUEL 28

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we ask that you would give us guidance on the roadmap of life that we're on today now. We know that Jesus is the only way. We know that the Holy Spirit is our teacher who will guide us into all truth. Lord, there are times when we are tempted to take long turns on that path and we need your guidance and leadership, and motivation even, to stay on the right path. Lord, I pray for anyone who is here today that needs to get onto that narrow road, that you would prompt them in their own hearts to make that important decision today. Use the teaching that we see in this passage today to guide us in a significant direction in our own personal lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Please remain standing as I read these two verses of God's word in honor of God's word. *Enter through the narrow gate. Two gates, two roads, two paths, one choice. Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

You may be seated. Young people, I wanted you to be in here because I want to talk to you about these paths, these two roads. I know that young people experience this very important place in their lives when they get to be like twelve or thirteen years old. Certainly by the time they're fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen years old, and even as they get a little older than that, they're making very important decisions about their life. God has given young people, teenagers in their mental development this ability to embrace their own value system. So they're making choices about what they're going to do with their life. They're making decisions about how they're going to live and how they're going to respond and what beliefs they're going to choose.

So because sometimes there are frictions between parents and children, sometimes kids say, "I'm going to abandon the things of my parents. I'm going to do my own thing." Sometimes they even make the decision to abandon their parents' faith, at least for a period of time. Because they want to do their own thing, they want to check things out, they want to look at the broad road, they want to think what's on the broad road.

I just want to encourage you, young people, that your parents are here for a reason today. Your parents are interested in spiritual things for a reason because they know about the narrow road and the broad road. They've learned some very important things. This isn't an old-fashioned concept. This is a true concept that we all need to consider in our lives and I hope today you'll consider in your life the broad path and the narrow path, two roads, two choices that we have.

When I was a teenager I chose the narrow road. I don't know much about the broad road. I didn't study it, I didn't go there, I didn't spend a lot of time looking around at things and finding out what's on the broad road. I chose to stay on the narrow road. And I'm really glad I did. It's just been such a blessing in my life. Because I see friends of mine from the past, or even people that I know now that spend time on the broad road.

The big sign on the broad road is pleasure. That's what gets you down there – pleasure and comfort. Come down the broad road, I'll give you comfort, I'll give you pleasure, and so people choose that. They start going down the broad road. And they find themselves with all kinds of problems because down the broad road, you don't see it at the beginning, but down there, all kinds of bad things. You've got addictions, you've got divorce, you've got broken relationships, you've got financial indebtedness, all because pleasure and comfort are all the signs that lead a person down that path. You just have to be careful.

I would encourage you now to make a decision in your life to choose the narrow road. If you spend some time on the broad road, folks, you know it's not a good place to be. You want to be on the straight and narrow path that God talks about in this passage. So you want to get back on there. You want to make those choices.

We're going to look at the broad road today, one aspect of it, because that's where Saul takes himself. So I want to take you into this passage in 1 Samuel 28 today as we look at this path where Saul ends up visiting a witch because he's uncomfortable. He wants comfort, so he goes in to get some comfort from a witch. That's his goal. Some people go to find comfort in other substances or in illicit relationship or misusing sex or they find their comfort in money. Saul chose to go to this witch to find comfort. He's playing in the broad path, he's in trouble here, and we're going to see more about that as we get into this passage. I think it's an important warning to every one of us.

But let's start in verses 1 and 2 from 1 Samuel 28. *In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army."*

David said, "Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do."

Achish replied, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

Now if you weren't with us last week, this must sound really strange to you. Because David, the hero who killed Philistines for a living, now has gone over to the dark side over here into this place where the Philistines are and he's living with them. So that's the story from last Sunday that's a rather challenging story. David is discouraged, so he makes bad choices, and ends up having to lie about it. Bad things start happening. We're going to learn more about what happens to David and Achish next week in our story. But today the main character is Saul. So let's read on starting in verse 3.

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. He was the prophet, remember, that through whom God spoke. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. He'd done a good thing. He got rid of them all because that's what God had commanded.

The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. So they're getting ready to fight on the plains there. Not an easy place for Saul to be able to fight and it's a problem. They're setting up for battle. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He's afraid.

He goes from fear to terror to panic in this story. He gets so upset about this that what do you think he does. I'm just going to tell you, this is what everybody does. Whether you're a Christian or not a Christian, there's a place in your life when you get to be so afraid because of the situation you're facing, you start praying whether you like it or not. Even if you don't know who the God is you're praying to, you start praying.

So it says *he inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.* God spoke in those times through dreams many times. Urim was the little dice or rocks that were put into the high priest's little pocket. The Urim and the Thummim were brought out often to determine God's will. And of course prophets were a primary way that God spoke to His people. So He spoke through prophets.

So here's Saul coming before God and asking God for something, but he gets no answer. The Lord did not answer him. You might think that's rather cruel. Why does God not answer him? Doesn't God promise to answer us when we talk to Him? I want to say no. He doesn't promise that. And He doesn't listen to the prayers of everyone all the time. You just have to know that. In fact I'm just going to take you to one of David's psalms where David says in Psalm 66:18 – *If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*

God does listen to one prayer all the time and that prayer is, "Lord, I'm sorry for my sin. I need you. Would you forgive me and move me in the right direction." God is listening to that prayer at any point. We can say that prayer to the Lord. But when we're coming to God and saying, "God, I have a problem in my life, would you please solve it," yet we're living in sin, we're asking at the wrong time, or we're not doing the right things in order to move forward. If you want to understand God's will in your life, whether you're going to buy a car, get another job, move to another area, if you want to know God's will, there are a bunch of steps. If you want to know the steps to determine God's will, I've done a Bible study on that. Stop by the information table, ask them, they'll give it to you. There are steps to determine God's will.

Step number one is to ask Jesus Christ to be your Lord and your Savior. That's step number one. If you want God to lead you, you first have to have God controlling you. If you want God to be receptive to your prayers, then you want to have this open relationship and sin creates this problem in the midst.

That's where Saul is now. He has got a problem. He's coming before God, he can't get an answer, he's upset inside, and so what is he going to do. Well it would be great if he would repent and come before the Lord, but he doesn't do that. Instead *Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."*

A medium is a fortuneteller who is demon-possessed, who can create this kind of image of something familiar. So sometimes in the Bible they're called familiar spirits and they appear to have power and insight. That's what a medium is.

I want to talk to you about this world of spiritists and so on. Because I want to talk about things like Ouija boards, the best selling game out there. It's surpassed Monopoly now. Ouija boards are a way that you can figure out the future. A lot of people think it's a fun game. Maybe it is. I don't know. But all I'm saying is it can be used of Satan to create some problems in your life. Horoscopes, Tarot cards, visiting a psychic (who are now called spiritual advisors), mediums, spiritists, fortunetellers. There are all these different words for these things.

I want you to know that these things are real. We have to understand that there's something going on in our world besides us. There's a whole spirit world that's taking place among us. When we understand that spirit world, then we have this bigger picture of what's going on. But I want you to see that the Bible makes a very clear statement about how bad these things are. I want to read you some scripture so you can see how you need to stay away from these things in your own personal life.

Here's an instruction that God gives to his people in Israel as they're getting ready to go into the Promised Land to set up this new spiritual kingdom, this new spiritual community. He gives them these instructions: *When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. That's a pretty extensive list. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God.*

The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

Here's a broad road. It has a lot of different ideas on it and there's a narrow road and God says, "I have a way of communicating with you. I have truth that I want you to understand. I want to give that to you, but there's a way that you receive it. So in Leviticus 20 in the Law it says – *A man or woman who is a medium who has a familiar spirit shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them.*

In the future of the end times it talks about who is going to be in hell. Here's some words: *The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*

One more, just in case you're not convinced. Galatians 5 – these are the acts of the flesh. Notice the list. We're just zeroing in on one particular piece here. *The acts of the flesh are obvious (here's a whole list): sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft;*

hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

There is a lot of danger. This is bad stuff. You don't want to get close to that. It's not where you want to be.

Well let's talk about what's happening in the story. I wanted to remind you of some things that are really important about the world that we live in because it's not just a physical world, the things that we see. There's a spirit world going on around us. There are demons, there are evil spirits, and there are angels, which are God's messengers. Demons are those angels who've decided to rebel against God and their goal is to destroy us, to ruin us, to damage us.

Rose was telling me this story. I was sharing a little bit about the sermon in our prayer group before church. We have a small group that sets up here on Sunday morning and I was sharing about what we're going to talk about this morning and demonic forces. She said that her friend was on a plane and the guy next to her was praying. So when he was done praying her friend Esther asked him, "What are you praying about?" and he says, "I wasn't praying. I'm a Satanist. I was praying for the destruction of Christian marriages." Man alive. Real stuff.

Someone else said, "I have this wrestling sometimes on Sunday morning. It seems like a demonic wrestling about coming to church sometimes. I feel that wrestling going on in my heart." It's a real thing that takes place. There's a spirit world out there.

In fact when it comes to the spirit world, Hebrews 13:2 says – *Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without even knowing it.* I'm sure some of you could tell stories about when you were being hospitable to someone. You were kind to someone, you wonder if they really were an angel.

There are spiritual forces around us. We need to be aware of that. So we need to ask the question, are these mediums real? So a medium is this person who is a fortuneteller who has the ability to take on a persona of someone or to create a familiar situation that seems to have some kind of power. So the answer to that question is real. Is it an important question? Because the answer is yes.

Are you able to tell is what they say true? The answer to that question is it depends. Because if someone is going to predict the future, it's going to come from two sources. It's either going to come from a person, that person is going to have an idea about the future and they're going to say it and they pretend to be a spiritist or not, they have an idea. The other time it's going to be through this demonic activity to predict the future. So it could be that this person is just a fake and it could be that they're real. We don't know. Sometimes they are fakes.

One woman went to a medium because she wanted to ask her grandmother some questions. So that's what she said to the medium, "This is what I want. I want to ask my dead grandmother some questions."

The medium kind of takes on this persona of the grandmother and says, “Yes, granddaughter, what kind of questions do you want to ask?” And the granddaughter says, “Well my first question is, Grandma, when did you learn English?”

I would suggest that sometimes the things that are going on are just fake. People are just trying to dupe us in one way or another. But I also want to suggest that sometimes it’s very real. It seems in this passage today, it’s very real what’s going on in the life of Saul.

Is what they’re saying true? Well we have to ask the question theologically. What does Satan know? We know that God is omnipresent. That means He’s everywhere all the time. But Satan is not omnipresent, but he can give the appearance of being omnipresent because he’s got all these demons that can move rather quickly and they’re all over the place and they’re communicating. So we have this very reality that Satan can appear as if he’s omnipresent. Only God knows everything, every choice that is going to happen, everything that is going to go on. Only God knows that. But because Satan’s demons are prolific, they’re all over the place, and because they move rather quickly and communicate a lot, it can give the impression that they know a lot. And it can give the impression that they know everything.

Sometimes they can predict the future because of what they do know. I suppose that you and I, if we knew as much as we wanted, we could even predict certain things were going to happen. So demons can do that. They can predict the future. Do they know exactly what’s going to happen? No. They do not know all of the future events. But given what they do know, they can make predictions.

Here’s the challenge though. The goal of Satan is to steal, to kill, and destroy. So what he will do is he will love to give you some truth that really is true and then mix it with a little bit of lie. If you went to a spiritual advisor or a psychic today, if you were to get some advice and the things came true that they said, you would say, “Wow. That was really helpful. I really needed that.” Now the next time you need some truth, where are you going to go? You’re going to go back to the psychic. So now you’re dependent on the psychic for information that really can lead you in a wrong direction because you don’t know where the truth is and where the lie is. Because Satan’s goal is to steal, kill, and destroy, and to move us in a direction that destroys us in our lives.

Here’s what happens when you start looking at the horoscope every day. Here’s what happens when you have someone read your palm or look at Tarot cards or one of these other ways of communicating with this extra spiritual world. It starts to form or shape your view of yourself, it starts to shape your view of the future, and it starts to determine how you’re going to live today. It changes you when you go to these places and you find this information. Satan would love to get his tentacles around you and start guiding you in a direction away from the truth, so sometimes truth is shared in the midst of these situations. It’s a scary place to be.

I would suggest the passage is saying today stay away from any of those things. They can ruin your life. You can start down something that seems harmless, like playing a game, and end up in a place you don’t want to be because you opened yourself up to a spirit world that starts to guide you in the wrong direction. There’s only one truth. That’s Jesus Christ. God has given us, as He

says in the passage, the prophets, He's going to give you a prophet. Well God has given us His word, that's where He gives us truth.

If God wanted us to know everything about the future, He would share it. He doesn't share it with you. Do you know what would happen to you if you knew what was going to happen a year from now? It would change the way you live right now. You might become more fearful, all kinds of bad things would happen. So God doesn't do that. He gives us truth and He teaches us how to live right now to face the future, not to find the future and then learn how to live.

Let's look some more at this passage. *Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."*

"There is one in Endor," they said.

You know the world today likes to take things from the broad road and normalize them. Homosexuality for example is normalized. It's a normal thing. But in this case we're talking about demonic activity. So just think about how many movies have information about spirituality, or ghosts, or telling the future, or a romantic movie where the dead wife communicates with the husband, or all kinds of interesting stories that have been brought into the media for us. When I was a kid we grew up with a show called *Casper* (Casper the Friendly Ghost). I don't know if you've ever heard of that, some of you older people.

In fact when I was growing up (you young people won't know anything about this), but some of you grandparents will remember this. There was a show called *Bewitched*. Do you remember that show? What was the name of the girl that could wiggle her nose and something would happen? Samantha. See, I know you're with me here. Now she had a witch of a mother that was like the main witch. Do you remember the mother's name? Wow. Her name was Endora in this Hollywood show. There's a witch in Endor that they're going to go see. Oh interesting. I wonder where Hollywood gets some of its information.

So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. This is about as eerie of a horror show, or I don't know if you call it horror when you watch these kinds of things, but this is like really it. If you created a movie out of this, we'd all be running. This would be a Halloween movie to celebrate the Satanic holiday.

So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."

But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?" So she's hesitant to get involved in this plot and participate in it.

Saul swore to her by the Lord (interesting that he could even try to do that, given his relationship with God), *"As surely as the Lord lives, you will not be punished for this."*

Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"
"Bring up Samuel," he said.

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice (this is where everybody starts running out of the living room watching the movie, this is crazy, you stop eating your popcorn, you're going, "This is terrible!") and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!"

In the midst of this experience that she is having here, she is overpowering herself. She doesn't even realize. She is in touch with something much bigger than herself. This demonic activity takes place and she is shocked by the whole thing and screams, screeches out, and realizes that not only is it Samuel, but this is Saul right in front of her. So now she is afraid herself about this whole experience and what's going on.

I want you to know that this spirit world is a dangerous place. It's very dangerous and it's scary. Should you be afraid of it? Yes. You should be afraid of it. You should stay far away from it. Don't even get close to it. But do you have to live in fear about Satan's attack on you? The answer is no you don't, because God has provided for us some protection so that we don't have to be afraid of Satan. In fact He calls it in Ephesians 6 spiritual armor. Because we're in this battle, this spiritual warfare that exists.

The primary way that you can protect yourself from Satan's power is obedience. That's why you have the breastplate of righteousness, as described in this armor. This breastplate of righteousness. Doing the right thing.

So I want to take you back to the words that Samuel said to Saul back a few chapters ago. you'll remember these words as we read them.

It says – And then Samuel said to Saul, *"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? (Worship versus obedience? No, He wants obedience.) To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed (that is to listen and do it) is better than the fat of rams. Then here comes the key word that kind of blows us away here. You kind of have to be careful about disobedience. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."*

Wow. This is scary because what it says is when you disobey God, you're being like a witch. It's like witchcraft. And I go whoa, how do those things work together? Here's the thing. God provides this umbrella of protection for us. We choose to live under it or not. When you're obeying God, you move under this protective umbrella and God protects you in the midst of that, from the fiery darts of Satan that want to attack you. But as soon as you move out of that and you disobey and you aren't doing what God has said, then you open yourself up to Satanic attack. You're no longer being protected. You're in danger if you're in disobedience.

So the message here isn't just to stay away from these spiritual kinds of things, demonic things. The message is stay away from disobedience because it's so dangerous. You want to be obeying the Lord and doing what God says.

In fact this is a commentary in 1 Chronicles 10:13 on Saul's death. Here's why he died. I want you to see this. "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord. He did not keep the word of the

Lord and he even consulted a medium for guidance. (Wow, that's pretty scary.) It led him even to his death." You have to wonder if Saul wouldn't have gone to the medium, if he would've gone to the Lord and repented, I wonder how the things might have changed. Maybe he wouldn't have fought the battle then. Maybe he would've done something different in this whole situation. We don't know. But because he went to the medium, found out this information, then he proceeds with the battle and he finds himself – well he's going to die in the story. He's going to end up committing suicide as part of being on that dark path, that destructive path, that broad road that's out there. It's just a terrible place to be.

Let's continue in the story. *The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"*
The woman said, "I see a ghostly figure coming up out of the earth." This has got to be eerie.
"What does he look like?" he asked.
"An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said.

Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

"I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do." In other words what he's doing here is he's trying to justify his actions. "Can you please feel sorry for me? I've got so many problems in my life here. I need some help." That's what he's doing and he's trying to justify his actions.

What's going on in the story? There's some disagreement here and I'm not sure if God is using this situation to actually bring up an apparition of Samuel to speak to Saul. I don't know if that's the case or demonic forces are able to do this and they're bringing this before him. I'm not sure exactly how it's happening, but I do know that Satan has a lot of power.

Just think back on the passages that talk about demonic activity in the Bible. If we go back to the time when Pharaoh did not want to let the Israelites go and God had chosen Moses and Aaron as the ones that would release the people of Israel, you can imagine the scene because Moses was not a very confident guy. So Moses and Aaron are having a committee meeting in preparation for the attack and to go and talk to Pharaoh. Aaron and Moses are feeling not a lot of confidence at this point, so what happens is that God says, "Aaron, take your rod and throw it on the ground." So he throws it on the ground and it turns into a snake. Can you imagine? Then He says to him, "Pick it up again." That would be the hard part for me. So he picks up the snake and it turns back into a rod. And now they're developing a little more confidence. "We can do this! Let's go!"

So they go over to Pharaoh and Pharaoh says, "Well who are you guys that you're asking this to happen?" Aaron says, "Let me show you." He throws down the rod, it turns into a snake. Pharaoh goes, "Whoa. That's really cool. I'll be right back." He goes to his magicians and he says, "Hey guys, this guy just turned a rod into a snake in my throne room. Can you guys do that?" They said, "Sure." They come and the magicians duplicate the very same miracle. They have black magic powers to throw their rods down and they turn the snakes too. The interesting thing that happens in the story is that Aaron's rod goes up and swallows up the rest of them before he picks it up. What a fascinating story that must have been.

Then comes the first plague, which is the Nile being turned into blood, water being turned into blood. Pharaoh looks at that and he says, “Wow. Look at what Moses and Aaron can do. Isn’t that something? Hey magicians, look at what these guys can do. Can you do that?” They said, “Sure, we can do that,” and they come in here and they turn the water into blood. Well that was the last of their powers because starting at the next plague and going forward with the one about the gnats, it said the magicians could not duplicate the power that was there.

So Satan does have power, demons do have power, but it’s a limited amount of power. It’s enough to make us afraid of what Satan can do, but also to being obedient to God in the midst of the situation.

Samuel said, “Why do you consult me, now that the Lord has departed from you and become your enemy? The Lord has done what he predicted through me. The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this to you today. The Lord will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.”

Wow. So notice Saul’s response. *Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel’s words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all that night.* I just want to suggest that’s what happens many times. When you start visiting some kind of a wizard or a fortuneteller or whatever, it just starts to breed fear in you. It just cripples you. It’s something that’s on that broad path that leads to destruction that we need to be careful about.

The passage continue and says – *When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was greatly shaken, she said, “Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do. Now please listen to your servant and let me give you some food so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way.”*

He refused and said, “I will not eat.” It’s just so disruptive to his life to experience this is just taking away his desire to eat. *But his men joined the woman in urging him, and he listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the couch.*

The woman had a fattened calf at the house, which she butchered at once. She took some flour, kneaded it and baked bread without yeast. Then she set it before Saul and his men, and they ate. That same night they got up and left.

That’s the end of the chapter. It’s the end of the story. It’s the end of our picture into this spirit world that Saul was involved in. But I want to suggest there are some important lessons for us to consider for our own lives.

One – Satan is real. He is powerful, and he’s dangerous. So don’t let imaginary figures of a pitchfork and a pointed tail somehow lead you to believe that he is just an imaginary character. He is real. He is dangerous.

We also need to know that the greatest thing we can do, if we want to have comfort in our lives, is not go down the broad path to obtain that comfort, but to have a close relationship with Jesus Christ. The close relationship with Jesus Christ is what’s going to provide you with what you want, with what you need. You don’t need to know about the future, you need to know the one who holds the future. We don’t need to know all the details of what’s going to happen later, we need to know how to live right now. God wants to provide that for us and He will walk us through whatever situation is present. Satan uses things to control us.

I remember when I was a child my father for whatever reason had decided that he was going to go through our home and cleanse it. In other words pray for spiritual cleansing. I would encourage you to do that in your home, that you’re just praying that God would sanctify your house. If bad things have happened in your home, I would pray that God would clean it all up and remove memories, remove any bad things that are there.

Well in the course of that, we came into my bedroom where we had an 8-Ball. This 8-Ball was given to me at a birthday party by someone and it just got thrown into the drawer. This 8-Ball was one of those things you shake (you’ve probably seen it), and you turn it over, and the answer to your question pops up. You can ask it any question and then you get an answer from it. It’s a little toy that’s sold at the toy store.

But my dad said, “You know that’s the kind of things we want to avoid in this home.” So he said to me and my brother, “You guys, we want to get rid of anything that would allow Satan a foothold in our home. Anything. So I want you guys to take a couple hammers out to the backyard and smash this thing to bits.” So we did. We smashed it to bits. But something was going on in my heart that left a lasting impression that never ended. Be careful about those things that we think are innocent that are sitting in our drawers sometimes that can get us into serious trouble. Satan uses things to control us.

And lastly I would suggest don’t wander down that broad road. That road has signs plastered on it that are so attractive that say, “Find comfort here. I’ve got this new drug that’s out. Oh it’s so cool. I know you don’t have any money, but a credit card will do you wonders for buying stuff. I know you’re not married, but sex is so great; why don’t you enjoy it here.” So we end up with all kinds of bad things going way down the road then you’ve got a debt and a sin and sexually transmitted diseases and broken relationships and heartache and pain on the inside. You become like Saul, really, who has paranoia and fear and anxiety and depression. All kinds of problems end up on the broad road. It’s not a good place to be.

That’s why Jesus warns us that God designed this world. He’s the one that designed it. There’s a narrow road and there’s a broad road. You get to choose. There’s not a lot of people who choose the narrow road. But it leads to what? It leads to life. You want a quality of life? You go down the narrow road. That’s what God would have for every one of us.

I think there's a lot of stuff here, so I'm just going to take some time and I'm going to pray for us now about what God might have for you. But the Lord might be speaking to you in a special way about your own life and what God wants you to do in your own heart, so let him run with that if He's got something going in your own heart. But let me pray for us in this regard.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I know that there are some folks here that have not gone down the broad road and they're trying to decide what to do. Lord, I pray that you would protect those young people. Help them to have the wisdom to choose the narrow road that produces life. Lord, I pray for those who have gone down the broad road in one point or another and they've experienced some of its pain and pleasure. Lord, I pray that you would do that deep healing that you do with your grace for any situation. Lord, I pray for those who are struggling getting from the broad road to the narrow road, that you would give them the strength and the wisdom, the perseverance and the empowerment of your Spirit to protect them and move them in that right direction. We pray for deep healing in the lives of those people who are experiencing the painful effects of that broad road. That you would prompt in their hearts and in their spirits this need for following you wholeheartedly. That personal relationship with you would be so fulfilling that would help them to move in a direction that you've called them to be. Lord, we all know people who are struggling with the broad road and we ask that you would be working in the lives of our friends. Give us wisdom to know how to speak to them, how to care for them, how to share with friends and family the message that you would have for them. Lord, we're most of all so grateful for the personal relationship that we can enjoy with you. Thank you for who you are, what you continue to do in our lives. We're grateful for it. In Jesus' name, amen.