

WITNESS – Reaching out to others ***(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)***

Heavenly Father we take upon ourselves the mantle of authority that Jesus delegates to us and in His name we speak to every household in Hungerford and say to you:-

1 Relationships

We bless you in the Name of the Lord. We bless your marriages that they may be strong and whole. We bless the relationship between each marriage partner that it may be loving, forgiving, merciful and strong. We bless every intergenerational relationship within each household that there may be peace and love and understanding flowing between each one. In Jesus' name we bless every network of wholesome and supportive friendship.

2 Health

We bless your health that you may be strong and well. In Jesus' name we resist any sickness or disease which seeks to invade this parish and to every person in the parish we say, be well, be strong, be healthy. To any who are sick right now we say we bless you in Jesus' name with a speedy recovery.

3 Wealth

We bless your wealth that you may have plenty to replace poverty. We bless you to have enough to live and enough to give. We bless the work of your hands that whatever you turn your hand to which is wholesome may be profitable. We bless every wholesome enterprise that is conducted by you that it may prosper and be successful. We bless the local businesses that they may be successful and profitable.

4 Education

We bless the local schools that they may be secure, safe places for teachers and pupils alike. We bless the children's capacity to learn and develop relationships and we bless their simple trust in Jesus that their trust may grow and become enriched.

5 Church

We speak to the Church and we say we bless you in the Name of the Lord that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God may flow out from you in power. We bless the hearts of all who live in the parish that they may be quickened to hear and respond to the Voice of the Living God. We bless all who live and work here, that the overflow of the blessings of the presence of the kingdom of God may fall upon you. **Amen**

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1 Samuel 26

9

9 Self control

Purpose: To see how David's example can encourage us in our struggle for self-control.

Self-control is the last of the nine virtues and is set in contrast to the sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery mentioned in Galatians 5:19. However, the Greek word has the wider meaning of “power over oneself” and applies to all categories of life.

WELCOME – Breaking the ice ***(Aim for 10 minutes)***

At a meal, your friends start belittling a common friend. What do you do?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord ***(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)***

What has been the best thing that has happened since our last meeting?

OR

When have you felt closest to God since our last meeting?

Pray your “thank you” to God

WORD – Applying the truth
(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

You're on a diet. As you pick up a magazine, you turn innocently to the food section. “After all,” you say to yourself, “pictures aren't fattening.” As you pore over every page, each dessert looks better than the last one. You decide to read in the kitchen because “the light is better.” After a few minutes, you begin thinking about the ice cream in the freezer. A model of restraint, you decide to get only one spoonful—well, two at the most. Pretty soon you've eaten the whole quart!

Sound familiar? We all struggle with self-control. And temptations often blind our better judgment. In 1 Samuel 26 David faces the powerful temptation of choosing between self-gratification and self-control. His response can encourage us in our struggles.

1. Read 1 Samuel 26. Put yourself in David's position (vv. 1–4). How might you feel toward someone who was trying in every way possible to kill you?

2. Describe the tension and dangers involved in David's plan (vv. 5–7)

3. Abishai tells David to seize this golden opportunity to kill Saul (v. 8). Why would this be a tempting suggestion?

4. Why does David resist the temptation to take matters into his own hands (vv. 9–11)?

5. When we are tempted to sin, how can our attitude toward God's will affect the outcome?

6. David and Abishai both attribute their actions to God. In the moment of temptation, how can we insure that we clearly discern God's will?

7. How does God participate in the drama at this point (v. 12)?

8. If we know God is present to help us in our struggle, how can it be easier to exercise self-control?

9. From a safe distance David calls out to Abner (vv. 13–16). How would his words to Abner make Saul more receptive to him?

10. In what ways can our commitment to doing God's will affect Christians and non-Christians as they observe us?

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