

## 1 Samuel 16

- We've reached the halfway point in the book
  - And appropriately, we also move into Part 2 of Samuel's story
    - The first half of our study has been focused on the rebellious state of the nation
    - Their propensity to follow after idols, their failure to hear and heed the Lord's word
    - And their fleshly desire for a king who will defend them from their enemies
  - They rejected the Lord's rule over them in favor of a king that suited their desires
    - But the Lord never stopped ruling His people
    - He rules through a king no different than a judge
  - But a king has some serious handicaps that judges didn't have
    - First, the king didn't hear directly from the Lord
    - The Lord revealed His word through prophets, not kings
    - Secondly, the king could be easily tempted by his unrivaled power among men
    - Absolute power corrupts absolutely, and so kings are more likely to fall into temptation, pride, arrogance, etc.
    - And when they fall, the people will fall too
- As the first half ended, the king Israel had selected, Saul, had fallen before the Lord
  - He fell victim to exactly the temptations Samuel warned would lead the nation astray
    - So the Lord disqualified Saul's family from continuing in the rule
    - And later the Lord rejected Saul as King
    - Which means the Lord will anoint another in his place

- And that brings us to the second half of the book, a story of the rise of David as the next king
  - But Saul isn't gone yet
  - So really it's a story of David and Saul
  - Or we might say David vs. Saul because the story becomes one of David defending himself from the king who feels the threat of a successor
- But even above these storylines, the main idea running through 1 & 2 Samuel and into the books of Kings is the Lord's sovereignty in raising up Israel's leaders
  - Kings come and go according to the Lord's purposes
    - But these men always live to serve the Lord's purposes
    - Both the good and bad is a part of God's plan
    - So we strive to understand everything that takes place from that perspective
  - As we enter Chapter 16, Saul has been ruling for about 25 years or so
    - He will rule for a total of 40 years
    - So he still has 15 years or so of time remaining
  - Yet the Lord has already rejected him
    - Therefore, Saul's time on the throne is merely a matter of waiting for God's convenience
    - During these fifteen years the Lord prepares the heart and strength of Israel's next king
  - Meanwhile, Saul will weaken as the Lord allows his wandering heart to take the man deeper into destruction
    - As long as he lives, he is the Lord's anointed, because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable
    - Nevertheless, the Lord is already preparing to anoint the next man

**1Sam. 16:1** Now the Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.”

**1Sam. 16:2** But Samuel said, “How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’”

**1Sam. 16:3** “You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.”

**1Sam. 16:4** So Samuel did what the Lord said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in peace?”

**1Sam. 16:5** He said, “In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

- This chapter is framed by Samuel as two parts by itself
  - Notice that v.1 and v.13 both mention a horn of oil while v.14 and v.23 both mention the departing of the Spirit
    - These markers help anchor the beginning and end of the two parts
    - The first part of the chapter emphasizes the rise of David to success and adoration
    - While the second part emphasizes the beginning of Saul’s slide into madness and torment
  - In v.1, we find Samuel having a pity party
    - We’re told he’s grieving because the Lord has rejected Saul
    - Why is Samuel so distraught?
    - Probably because he’s worried for what this change means for him
    - When the time comes to anoint another king, Samuel will be committing an act of treason from Saul’s point of view
    - So Samuel’s concern is at least in part for his own skin
- We see that reflected in his response to the Lord
  - The Lord asks Samuel how long he’s going to delay in his grieving
    - It’s time to go to the family of Jesse to anoint one of his sons

- Samuel's answer confirms he's worried for himself
- He says if people ask why he's come to them and they learn he's arrived to anoint Saul's successor, then word will get back to Saul
- And then Saul will seek to kill Samuel
- So the Lord gives Samuel a fascinating answer
  - The Lord tells Samuel to take a female cow and tell the people he is come to sacrifice to the Lord
  - At first, it sounds like this is a story intended to deceive
  - Could it be the Lord is asking Samuel to lie?
- In case you're struggling to find the answer, let me help you: no
  - Notice the Lord says that Samuel will, in fact, conduct a sacrifice to the Lord
  - And moreover, he will invite Jesse, a man living in Bethlehem, to attend the sacrifice with him
  - Then in the course of conducting the sacrifice, the Lord will reveal the rest of the plan
  - So if someone asks Samuel what he's doing, he can answer absolutely honestly
  - The Lord has told him to come to Bethlehem to sacrifice
- As Samuel enters the city, the elders of the city take note of Samuel's arrival
  - Samuel's reputation preceded him into this small town
    - He had delivered the word of the Lord for decades
    - He had anointed the nation's king
    - And he killed the king of Ammon by his own hand
    - So Samuel always gains attention at his arrival
  - In fact, his killing of Agag apparently gave Samuel the reputation of a warrior or executioner
    - Which is why the elders ask him if he's coming in peace

- They wonder if someone is about to be hacked to death
- They probably frisked Samuel too
- Samuel responds he came in peace to sacrifice to the Lord
  - In the process, Samuel consecrated Jesse and his sons
  - In other words, Samuel calls the family out separately to stand before him at the sacrifice

**1Sam. 16:6** When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him."

**1Sam. 16:7** But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

**1Sam. 16:8** Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either."

**1Sam. 16:9** Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either."

**1Sam. 16:10** Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these."

- By this point Samuel has revealed his mission to the family
  - So proudly, the father, Jesse, brings each of his sons before Samuel for anointing
    - Naturally, he begins with the first born, which is the normal and logical place to start in a patriarchal culture
    - In fact, it was so expected that even Samuel falls victim to this bias
    - He takes one look at Eliab and concludes this must be the guy
  - We can assume that this guy looked similar to Saul as a young man
    - Tall, handsome, strong
    - He must have been another poster child for king candidates
  - But now we see the Lord opposing the course of men, driven by the flesh
    - The Lord is not about to select a warrior that fits the part externally

- It would be spiritually damaging if He were to reinforce the faulty notion that external appearance is a good measure of godliness
- Men do not have insight into the character of a person
- And if when we have indications that a person has bad character, our flesh celebrates the “bad” boys
- Especially if they have movie star good looks
- So the Lord is going to pass over all those sons who do not have the heart to know and follow the Lord
  - And the Lord has already prepared one son in this family to have that kind of heart
    - It won’t be the oldest son
    - It won’t be the next oldest
    - In fact, Samuel proceeds through seven sons without finding the one the Lord desires
    - The number seven certainly tells us that this is a process under the Lord’s providence
  - Samuel sees only seven sons, so he is perplexed by the outcome
    - The Lord sent him here to anoint a son, but there are no more sons!
    - So now what?

**1Sam. 16:11** And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are these all the children?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep.” Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.”

**1Sam. 16:12** So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.”

**1Sam. 16:13** Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

- Samuel asks Jesse the obvious question, “Do you have more sons?”
  - Jesse says there is one more, the youngest, who is tending sheep
    - Children typically were expected to tend sheep

- The work didn't require much strength or maturity
- And it was considered demeaning in any case
- So boys as young as 10 or 12 might be found with the sheep all day and even overnight
- Seeing David as the youngest child and as a shepherd fits two important Biblical themes
  - God is commonly seen selecting men who are the opposite of those the world would select
  - In the days of the patriarchs, the Lord routinely selected the younger son
    - Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Isaac
- God's purpose was always to draw a distinction between the natural way and the redemption of the Lord
  - The natural way of man is sin, rebellion, and death
    - And in the natural way of men, the older is the superior
    - The older son must be given preference over the younger
    - In fact, notice that when Samuel told Jesse to get his sons and bring them to sacrifice, he neglected to include David
    - To Jesse, David was not even a consideration for an anointing as king
    - Similar to the way that Abraham disagreed with the Lord when told that Ishmael wasn't the chosen son
  - By contrast, the mercy of God brings redemption, hope and life to those least likely to expect it
    - As Paul taught, the Lord uses the weak things to shame the wise
    - So He sought to raise up the younger son in each case to make clear He was in control, acting to reverse the natural course
    - And He's doing it again here
  - Secondly, the Bible uses shepherding as a theme to represent the loving care of God's people

- Shepherds spent time with the sheep
- They fed them, kept them from wandering, defended them
- God's people are to be cared for as a shepherd cares for his sheep
- Which is why Jesus is called the Good Shepherd
- And Jesse's youngest son is clearly a type of Christ
  - As we'll see in many instances in this book, David pictures the coming Messiah in details big and small
    - We've already seen that David comes from Bethlehem, the city where Jesus will be born
    - They share this same town because the seed line of the Messiah passes through David
    - And like David, Jesus is called a shepherd of His people
  - As David enters the room, he's not an unattractive young man, but he's not what Samuel was expecting
    - He's probably around the age of 15 or so
    - Not old enough or seasoned enough to even be considered for the role of king, much less assume the throne
    - So Samuel must be wondering how the Lord intended to use this boy to lead an entire nation
  - When the Lord indicates that David is His man, Samuel gets up and anoints David right there before his brothers
    - It was undoubtedly a dramatic moment
    - And it included the coming of the Spirit upon David for the rest of his life
    - We remember that the start of Christ's public ministry is also accompanied by the arrival of the Spirit
    - It represented the start of a time of service to the Lord
- David is the most important biblical character after Christ Himself
  - More is said about David in the Bible than anyone else

- He is the subject of 66 chapters of the Old Testament
- And he is mentioned 59 more times in the New Testament
- To say nothing of his authorship of most of the Psalms
- David's name means roughly beloved of the Lord, and he will be called a man after God's own heart
  - Chuck Swindoll described being a man after God's heart this way:

What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart? Seems to me, it means that you are a person whose life is in harmony with the Lord. What is important to Him is important to you. What burdens Him burdens you. When He says, 'Go to the right,' you go to the right. When He says, 'Stop that in your life,' you stop it. When He says, 'This is wrong and I want you' What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart? Seems to me, it means that you are a person whose life is in harmony with the Lord. What is important to Him is important to you. What burdens Him burdens you. When He says, 'Go to the right,' you go to the right. When He says, 'Stop that in your life,' you stop it. When He says, 'This is wrong and I want you.

- It doesn't mean never sinning
  - For we know David will sin greatly
- It means having a heart that mourns over its own sin as much as the Lord does
- After David is caught with Bathsheba, this is the psalm he writes

**Psa. 51:1** Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;  
According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

**Psa. 51:2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity  
And cleanse me from my sin.

**Psa. 51:3** For I know my transgressions,  
And my sin is ever before me.

**Psa. 51:4** Against You, You only, I have sinned  
And done what is evil in Your sight,  
So that You are justified when You speak  
And blameless when You judge.

**Psa. 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.

**Psa. 51:6** Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,  
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

[Psa. 51:7](#) Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

[Psa. 51:8](#) Make me to hear joy and gladness,  
Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.

[Psa. 51:9](#) Hide Your face from my sins  
And blot out all my iniquities.

[Psa. 51:10](#) Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

[Psa. 51:11](#) Do not cast me away from Your presence  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

[Psa. 51:12](#) Restore to me the joy of Your salvation  
And sustain me with a willing spirit.

[Psa. 51:13](#) Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And sinners will be converted to You.

[Psa. 51:14](#) Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation;  
Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

[Psa. 51:15](#) O Lord, open my lips,  
That my mouth may declare Your praise.

[Psa. 51:16](#) For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;  
You are not pleased with burnt offering.

[Psa. 51:17](#) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

- This is the kind of man the Lord has raised up
- Earlier, I said that the Lord has prepared David's heart to be the man God desired
  - By this I mean, that David was marked out from the womb to know and follow the Lord obediently, which is another picture of Christ
- In the Psalms David describes his own beginning

[Psa. 22:1](#) My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?  
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

[Psa. 22:2](#) O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;  
And by night, but I have no rest.

[Psa. 22:3](#) Yet You are holy,  
O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

[Psa. 22:4](#) In You our fathers trusted;  
They trusted and You delivered them.

[Psa. 22:5](#) To You they cried out and were delivered;  
In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

[Psa. 22:6](#) But I am a worm and not a man,  
A reproach of men and despised by the people.

[Psa. 22:7](#) All who see me sneer at me;  
They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,

[Psa. 22:8](#) "Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him;  
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

[Psa. 22:9](#) Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;  
You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts.

[Psa. 22:10](#) Upon You I was cast from birth;  
You have been my God from my mother's womb.

- Like Jesus, David was made to trust the Lord while upon his mother's breasts
- He was cast from birth upon the Lord
- So David's preparation for service to the Lord began long before this moment
- Now at the midpoint in the chapter, the Spirit of the Lord has come upon David
  - And if the Spirit had come upon David for service to the Lord, then what about the Spirit's work with Saul?
    - The Spirit is moving from one to the other
    - And in His place comes something very different

[1Sam. 16:14](#) Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him.

- The Lord removes His Spirit from Saul
  - The Lord has rejected Saul for his sinful, rebellious heart
  - Saul wasn't willing to serve the Lord by allowing the Lord to rule His people through Saul's leadership
  - Instead, Saul sought to serve only himself
  - So now that the Lord has anointed his successor, the Lord's Spirit departs from Saul
- Remember, the departure of the Spirit from an individual is not unprecedented in the times before the New Covenant

- It doesn't suggest the person has "lost" their salvation
  - But it does mean the Lord has removed His empowerment from the person
  - They no longer work with His supernatural wisdom and favor
  - The Lord can still work through them
  - But they themselves will not have divine enablement
- The even more interesting part is the second half of v.14 where we're told the Lord sends an evil Spirit to Saul
    - So many things about this statement are intriguing to me
      - First, the idea of God using the demonic world for His purposes never fails to fascinate
      - We know the Lord put Satan to use at various times in history including in the Garden, in Job's life and in Judas' actions
      - And here we see that demons can be sent specifically to torment a person
    - How does this actually happen? We know the demons do not desire to do God's bidding, since they rebelled in the first place
      - What does rebellion mean if a demon can be "sent" to do God's will and then seems to gladly complete the mission?
      - The best we can conclude is that demons must act in predictable ways
      - They desire to destroy God's work and seek to undermine his people and never vary in their desire to complete this objective
      - When given a chance to torment a child of God, like Saul, a demon will relish the opportunity and seize upon it every time
      - Therefore, the Lord can employ demons when their evil desires suit His divine purposes
    - Secondly, demons must be blind to how their actions support the Lord's purposes in the end
      - Otherwise, why would Satan have acted to put Jesus to death?
      - Or why would he have played into the Lord's hand with Job?

- Demons are not omniscient, and therefore they can't see the future
- So they can be enticed to act against their own best interests
- Why did the Lord feel it necessary to bring this evil spirit to torment Saul in the first place? Why wasn't taking away His Spirit sufficient response to Saul's sin?
  - While taking away the Spirit would have been sufficient, it didn't suit God's purposes in raising Saul up in the first place
    - Remember, Saul was from the wrong tribe and wasn't God's selection
    - So when the Lord allowed Saul to be the king, we knew it couldn't last
    - Nevertheless, the Lord raised him up for two principle reasons
  - The only reason Saul has been raised up is to serve as a negative example to Israel and to all history
    - Saul's ignominious end will forever testify of what happens when the flesh rules over the Spirit
    - When love of self exceeds love for the Lord
    - When outward man takes precedence over the inner man
  - So for the final fifteen years of Saul's reign, the Lord intends to exhibit Saul's failure
    - The evil Spirit will provoke and tempt Saul's flesh
    - This torment will bring out the worst in Saul
    - So that everyone will understand the folly of depending on the flesh
- Secondly, the king after God's heart, David, is a man the Lord approves
  - And since the Lord loves David, He will reprove David
    - As the writer of Hebrews says

**Heb. 12:5** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,  
 "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
 Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him;

**Heb. 12:6** For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines,  
And He scourges every son whom He receives.”

**Heb. 12:10** For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

**Heb. 12:11** All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- Since the Lord loves David, He will bring David trials to discipline him
- And discipline prepares David to share in the Lord’s holiness
- The David we know from 2 Samuel and the Psalms is the David God molded in adversity
- And who was the source of that adversity? Saul
  - As Saul is tormented by the evil Spirit, he is increasingly prone to bouts of paranoia and rage against David
  - Saul’s pursuits of David will test the young king-in-waiting severely
  - And over 10 years David will be seasoned as God intended
- David’s life is a wonderful reminder that the bad things in our lives are God-directed events intended to mold us into someone better
  - We may not understand how the two are connected
  - But we can be sure that nothing we’ve experienced was outside His control or intended to harm us
  - Nevertheless, the question is are we taking those challenges and tests and turning them into the benefit God intended?
  - Or are we finding ways to escape the trial or test so that we never learn the lesson God intended?
- And right away, we see how the Lord uses this evil Spirit to ensure that a lowly shepherd boy might find an opportunity to associate with the king

**1Sam. 16:15** Saul’s servants then said to him, “Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you.

[1Sam. 16:16](#) "Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well."

[1Sam. 16:17](#) So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me now a man who can play well and bring him to me."

[1Sam. 16:18](#) Then one of the young men said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him."

[1Sam. 16:19](#) So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David who is with the flock."

- As Saul suffers under the affliction of the evil spirit, it causes the servants of Saul to take note
  - We wonder what they saw and how they understood the cause
    - I wonder if we don't see this in our day as well
    - We attribute strange behaviors to other causes, never stopping to consider whether the behavior is the result of demonic influence
    - We need to leave room in our personal theology for supernatural explanations like this when confronting inexplicable and evil behavior
  - And recognize that Saul is a believer, yet God brought this evil spirit
    - So it's possible for the demon world to influence the thinking and behavior of a believer who is living in the flesh
    - According to the New Testament, it's not possible for a believer to be indwelt or possessed by an evil spirit
    - But there is still great potential for an evil spirit to act on our thoughts and emotions if we are not walking closely with the Spirit of God
- In this day, strange behavior was attributed almost universally to one of two causes: alcohol or demons
  - The idea of mental illness as a separate category was not considered
    - Even if a biological cause could be identified, they just assumed that the condition itself was the product of spiritual agents

- In many ways, this thinking is closer to the truth than our enlightened scientific views today
- As Paul said, we don't war against flesh and blood but rather against spiritual forces
- And that war includes the war with our own bodies at times
- The source of many mental, emotional and even physical ailments may be spiritual forces working to weaken us
- And therefore, we must consider the need for spiritual solutions to spiritual problems
- In this case, the cause is correctly diagnosed as demons
  - For this is what the Lord intended
  - By sending Saul this evil spirit, He set in motion circumstances that would ultimately bring David and Saul together
  - He needs them to meet so that David can be prepared to assume the position as king
  - And so He can use the tension between these two men in training up David
- Saul's fits of terror and deteriorating mental state leads the servants to propose to call for a skilled musician to soothe Saul
  - I assume this idea came to them by way of the Spirit of God so that they would ultimately call for David to enter the court
    - Saul likes the idea and one of the young men in the court give a suggestion
    - The man knows David to be skilled musician, a warrior and prudent, not to mention nice looking
    - They call him a warrior despite his youth because David has already gained a reputation for killing lions and bears that attacked his sheep (Chapter 17)
  - And though we often think of David as a warrior, remember he was first a shepherd and a musician – a true renaissance man
    - The Lord gifted David in these ways knowing the work ahead

- The Lord knew David would be called to lead armies
- That he would write songs and poems of praise
- And he would lead the people with wisdom and patience
- Saul calls for David to leave the flocks and serve the royal court

**1Sam. 16:20** Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent them to Saul by David his son.

**1Sam. 16:21** Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer.

**1Sam. 16:22** Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight."

**1Sam. 16:23** So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

- Jesse must have been a man of some means to afford a donkey for transportation
  - But it doesn't mean David's family was prominent, since scripture tells us otherwise later in Chapter 18
  - Rather, it may simply indicate he was upper middle class
  - And when his son is called personally by the king to serve in the court, Jesse wants his sons to arrive in style
  - So he lets David borrow the Cadillac for the evening
- David's arrival bears some resemblance to Christ's arrival at least in terms of the symbols Jesus evokes in describing Himself
  - He rides a donkey
  - He carries bread and wine
  - He has a goat for a sacrifice
- And we're told that Saul takes to David immediately
  - He loves David and for a little while their relationship is quite good

- Though later in Chapter 17 Saul has to ask who David's father was, which suggests Saul's mental state becomes quite debilitated, which ultimately destroys their fellowship
- During this time David also forms a strong relationship with Saul's son, Jonathan, who was considerably older than David
- Yet the two become very close especially as Saul begins to turn on David
- Finally, we see the grace of God at work in the way He grants Saul relief from time to time when David plays music for Saul
  - Is the music the cause of the demon's departure? Do demons just hate classical music?
    - No...we must conclude that the Lord is bringing and removing the demon in keeping with David's presence
    - It appears the Lord is working to give Saul good reason to keep David close as we said earlier
  - This is a measure of grace for Saul and I believe it's a tendency of God to use one person to comfort another for similar reasons
    - He draws together members of His body by placing a need in one that only another can address
    - And in doing so, the Lord causes us to give regard for one another and for the Spirit in each of us
    - He grows us spiritually, teaching us about Himself in the process