

## **LIFE PRINCIPLES SERIES**

### **THE STRUGGLES OF LIFE**

I Samuel 4, we read the story of a crisis that took place in Israel. Tonight we are going to look at the struggle of life. In other words, the areas where every one of us will have to struggle with it are in regards to the principles of this life. One of those areas we have to struggle with is what we call principles and methods and many other areas. But we realize that in life there is such a thing as principles. We all discover the principles of life and then as Christians we discover them in the bible and live as faithful. The grace of God that God bestowed, following His Word and bible. As much as we know now, there are natural principles and there are spiritual principles. We need to operate our lives based on principles. Without principles we cannot live our lives in orderly manner. Now the principles of life that we have touched on in various areas have been major areas that we do not develop in our lives and we will continually have problems. So here is the time when we see in I Samuel 4, when Israel was having a crisis. Now these principles that we draw from the bible apply to all areas of life. As we all grow in life, we all begin to struggle to move into various aspects of life. As we struggle in those areas, one of the first struggles that we have is to develop those principles and then to apply those methods.

Lets divide them clearly before we look at the word and do some definitions. A principle is a truth that is for us based in the scripture and that is true to all aspects of life and when applied will bear its good fruit. It's rewarding. Methods are divided from principles. Without principles the methods may be wrong. Principles come first then methods. Sometimes through the passage of time a method continues but the principle is forgotten. Then the next group tries to keep the method without the principle and they are going to face problems. Now there

are four major areas that we will reckon a person who struggle in life to reach out into. As we keep faithfully applying the principles of God and the principles of life, God Himself guarantee success in our life. Success depends upon our faithfulness to God's principles. It is not just how we begin but it is how we end. As we faithfully apply the principles of God, God leads us into the full realm of that area.

I Samuel 4, see one of the first major areas that faced in God. Here is the crisis. Joshua had died long ago. This is a different generation. They do not know Joshua at all. In fact it was at a low point in Israel. It was one of the nation's lowest points because the bible tells us in chapter 3 that there was no open revelation that seems to be not many prophets around. If they were, many would have retired or died. So in I Samuel it tells us the drab and deadly picture but thanks be to God that there is always hope in God. There is always the word that you lean on. In I Samuel 3 we notice here that there was no open revelation in verse one. It says that the word of the Lord was rare. There were very few people who heard the word. They had a form of godliness. They still continue all their Old Testament commandments where Moses asked them to keep the ordinances and the ceremonies as much as they knew how. But something was happening. Even the priests were corrupted in verse one. We all know the background story of Eli and his family. Eli was a high priest. So that was a very low point in that nation. Moreover the Philistines in the land had risen up to dominate the Israelites. So there was continual war. And here in chapter 4 is the background. A major war occurred within the Philistines and the Israelites.

So lets read the story here in verse 2, *"then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field."*

That was a disaster, so all the Israelites came together in verse 3 and they consulted with one another. Here was the conclusion in verse 3, *"When the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, 'Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.'"*

Now here is what the Israelites say: they did not live in the time of Joshua. Those who lived in the time of Joshua had died long ago. After Joshua came all those judges in the book of Judges. This was toward the close of the Judges time. Samuel was among the last judges that God raised up in Israel. So they remembered the past. They remembered how they use to carry the ark and they have victory. How they carried the ark and they marched round Jericho. How they carried the ark and they would cross into the land of Canaan and cross Jordan. I mean the ark was the symbol of success and victory and power. Now here was a suggestion. After the disaster, they said, let us bring the ark. It was a good suggestion. They remembered how they succeeded in the past. In other words, they remembered the methods that were used. So somebody went all the way to Shiloh where the ark was. When the ark came into the camp where all the people were down and discouraged, deadly and depressed and suppressed and oppressed and really pressed down and at very low point. When the ark came, everyone of the revived. They rejoiced, so great was the joy.

In verse 5, *“When the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook.”* They rejoiced. They had a religious ceremony. I mean there was such thing as rejoicing. There was such joy. Everybody heart was encouraged again. They remembered the method. Joshua did it that way. I mean they had success in the past. They remembered their forefathers. They remembered the method. So they received a method that had been used before. In fact the ark was lying forgotten in Shiloh. But in a time of crisis they remembered the method. That usually happens to many Christians who are not deep in the Word. In a time of crisis they remember the methods, but methods without principle. This will never work. It would be just doing it on the outside without understanding on the inside. Part of the training for a person is not just imparting a method or formula but it is imparting an understanding of how the formula or how the method came about. So here is where there is a struggle in their life. A crisis in their life. When there is no principle but there is a method, there could be an outward rejoicing, there could be an outward celebration, there could be an outward goal and in all these areas but remember it is not based on the outward. It is based on the inward. Unless God changes on the inside, we cannot change the outside.

Here in chapter 4, all the Philistines heard that shout and they are the one who got scared. They panicked. In fact the Philistines remembered all the stories of the past of Moses and Joshua. They remembered all these things. All the Philistines were afraid but something happened. When the battle took place, the Israelites lost the ark. From disaster they went to complete total loss. I mean a disaster is not enough. Now they don't even have the ark. Fat Eli, one of the fattest men in the bible, was sitting at the gate waiting and his heart was afraid what may happen to the ark. When he heard that the ark was gone, he also was gone. He fell down, broke his neck and he died.

So in this first instance, we see how that in modern life today, as we face it in the struggle of life, one of the things people forget to differentiate is the difference between principle and method. Methods are based on principles but methods without principles are empty. For example, sometime people hear or follow certain methods, perhaps certain way that a man of God minister. The man of God could be using a certain way, a certain style of speaking which is all methodology. Or a person's personality flowing out, the way he expresses his understanding and principles. When they copy everything exactly, the only difference is they didn't get the results. A man of God could be ministering in a crusade or some other meetings, saying by the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ and he continues all kinds of commands, so that little disciple who just sat under that person ministry, go back to their own fellowship and on Sunday he goes by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit and because they have heard a lot about Kathryn Khulman, they stretch the word Holy Spirit longer, thinking the longer they stretch, the more powerful. I mean Kathryn Khulman when she called the Holy Spirit it was that long but that was the method they adapted. Something copied without understanding how the method came about. There is a reason for that method. Like for example, one evangelist during a certain time in a crusade, just after he finished his message, he would take out his handkerchief to wipe his sweat. People say that's when the anointing came. So people who began to follow that person began to have handkerchief before they do any other things. At a certain time when they are preaching they also wipe their sweat. The only difference is there is only sweat without anointing. Actually the evangelist did that not because of the anointing, it was a signal for the ushers to get ready.

So there are reasons behind certain things. Sometimes when we have

forgotten a principle or sometimes the principle is forgotten through the years and we just revive the method it is going to be very disastrous. Take another example, sometimes when we have a good meeting or on a Sunday, in the meeting everybody danced unto the Lord and next Sunday there was a tremendous anointing, healing anointing, powerful anointing then the following Sunday they will try to stir up the dancing again. They thought they have found the key: dance equal anointing. So they would dance every time. Everybody get into a certain pattern. So they would dance and really sweat it out. It was not a church. It was an aerobic center. At the end of the time, they found that the only oil that came out was the human oil. You see they try to use a method to get the anointing. Every method has a principle behind it. The principle behind that was not so much because of the dancing. The principle behind it was the people had released themselves to the Lord. They had openly worshipped the Lord. Now that could be expressed in different ways. Dancing was a method and a way by which that principle was released. Now there is a principle in the anointing flowing whenever people are able to release themselves to the Lord in whatever manner. It's easier for the anointing to flow. That is a principle but the method may not be just one. There are many methods but one principle. The application of that principle can be different in each place and in each time but the principle remain the same. Methods change but the principles remain.

So here in I Samuel 4, as they struggle with the method without the principle they had failure. That applies also in the business world and in the ministry realm. In the full time Christian ministry, sometimes people hear a testimony and that person says, he/she gave the car away or sold out the house. He/she gave away and then the Lord blessed him or her with another new car. So when they hear those testimonies, they go back and they did the same thing. The next two weeks they end up in a welfare home. They see a method. Every time you hear a testimony, remember to pick up the principle from the method. Then you could change the method and still apply the same principle. When you hear a testimony of somebody got baptized in the Spirit in his bathroom, then the person began to have a revelation. His friend was also a seeker. First thing he knows what to phone his friend. He said, Hi, I have got the baptism in the Spirit. The other guy said, I want to come over now. How do I receive? First step, get into my bathroom. Step two, turn on the shower. Step three, alleluia. So the person with his full clothes on, in the shower singing alleluia until his voice croaked. He turns around to his friend and say, how long did it take you? I have been soaking here

for two hours. I haven't received it yet. The problem is that they have the method but they did not understand the principle. See the principle behind the shower in the baptism in the Spirit is that possibly the person was relaxed and less tense. Perhaps that's the only time he ever relaxed. The other time he was very tense. The principle behind it is that the person must not have all these distractions. Just relax and hang loose with the Lord. But when he was in the church, he was very tensed. Someone said let loose but he couldn't. How they minister in the baptism in the Spirit. One person says let loose, another person says hang on, the Lord is coming. Hang loose or hang on, which one. Very complicated. This is how Christians are ministered sometimes.

I have watched people ministered in the baptism in the Spirit and I see that there are many methods. I know one evangelist that lay hands on people. They will say, "Say alleluia." I won't use that method but I won't run others down in using that. But the only thing I say is that, some Christians think that is the only way to receive. See what has happened. They have confused a principle and the method. The understanding behind this is, perhaps when the person says alleluia that person is more relaxed and can let go. That method helps the person but that is a method not a principle. There are others who use different methods. When they lay hands, they not only help you to speak in tongues but they shake the tongues out of you. Another evangelist I met, when they baptize people in the Spirit, they say, "Say after me." The person will say in tongues, say something like 'ku lah ba'. What is happening to Christendom? What kind of ministers are we producing? That is why sometimes when we go to bible school, we learn methods and we learn principles but if you don't divide the two it's dangerous. We have to divide between principles and methods.

For example, we have a lot of teaching coming from America, from England and some other places. Remember right here in Asia, we can absorb the principles, change the methods at times. We don't have to do things the same way. We could have the same principles if and when the principle comes from the written Word, but when the application came we have to hear the Holy Spirit to determine the method, which we will see in life, that all these things keep happening in life all the time. You hear it in the financial realm or every other realm. We have to differentiate that methods without principles are total and complete failure. If there are no principles might as well don't do it. A principle comes first before the

method. So here in I Samuel 4 you see failure. That is why some Christians struggle. They don't know the principles of life. All the learning, all the time in life is just methods. They forget to dig into the method to seek out the principles behind the method. Sometimes a method is taught without the principle. We have to seek out the principle behind the method so that we could adapt it. That is one of the struggles that people have in life. Why do some people struggle? Why do some ministers struggle to come out in ministry? They are taking methods wholesale without checking out the principles. If they would find the principle, discover it, understand it and change and adapt the methods, they will begin to take off. But those that just take the methods without the principles, it's always a struggle in every area.

It could be in a business world, perhaps a successful businessman share his testimony and share how he does things. Then we copy the methods wholesale. Just like church growth. It's very common in cell groups, the key that they hold. Keys are supposed to be principles not methods. If you do a survey of Christianity all over the world, you will find that in certain countries, home fellowships are developed differently from the way they are in Korea. There is nothing wrong with cell group but what happen when it comes over to Asia? Every pastor, Tom, Dick and Harry starts his own home cells. It's a different thing in Korea; the home cells are all evangelistic. But here home cells are prison cells. You will hear things like this, 'don't go to that home cell. Is that an official home cell? No it's not. That's not mine. This is the real home cell. The opposite home cells are started to hold on to the flock.' The key is not just the method but the principle behind it. There are some methods that are definitely ordained by God. Like home fellowship. But differentiate it between methods and the principles. See what is actually behind the home fellowship. Don't just copy the whole method. Otherwise you will be struggle in your church copying methods without principles. The principle behind it is this, personal ministry. What is the purpose of home cell? It is to break down into smaller groups. It's a place where you analyze the principle behind it. In a small group there are more personal ministry. People's talent and gift are tapped because they could handle smaller groups. It is a place where people could function. So if you could apply those same principles with different methods, you will still have the same success. So lets understand that all methods are based on principles. Everything we hear has a mixture of method and principle and we must differentiate between principle and method.

The second struggle that people have is in I Samuel 13, talking about the struggle of life. There are four areas in regard to principle and method. Here is a different incident. Saul has now become king. Samuel has gone into retirement and became an intercessor. He was still a prophet and a priest but he has sort of surrendered his ministry as a judge and given it to Saul who will function in his kingly anointing. I Samuel 13, again the Philistines were giving troubles.

*In verse 5 –7 “The Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousands horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes and in pits. And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.”*

He was a leader over a pact of frightened men. Here is another disaster in crisis. It's in time of crisis that our principles are tested. Without the crisis we may not know whether you are a man or woman of principle. When you are given the opportunity and you are tested then we know. Joseph was tested by Potiphar's wife. There was nobody around and Joseph had the opportunity to commit sin but he was a man of principle. He said, 'I shall be a person of principle because people of principle succeed in life.' That is what we want to produce. There is a principle that we hang on to. It does not matter in Joseph's life whether he was framed up and then he was thrown into prison and accused of something that he did not do. That was the story of Joseph. I mean Potiphar's wife had him thrown into prison when she could not bring him to commit a fleshly sin. Remember as long as you hold fast to correct principles, the Lord is with you. If the Lord is with you, who can be against you? It's important to do right. Right in our heart. Right in our mouth and right in our actions.

Now in I Samuel 13, here is a tremendous crisis. Saul was waiting for seven for Samuel in verse 8, *“but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.’ And he offered the burnt offering.”*

Then Samuel came and Saul went out to meet him that he might greet him. Now here Saul did the right thing in the sense that he understood he needed to sacrifice. But there were also wrong in what he did. The wrong that he did was again a similar principle to I Samuel 4. Every time before Israelites went out to battle, they will always offer to God a sacrifice before they went off. So Saul knew the method, he knew what must be done and he knew what ought to be done. In I Samuel 4, you have no principle. The people didn't follow God. Nobody was really after the Word of God. Nobody was following the bible. The Word was rare in those days. When the crisis came they just took a method and followed. Now here in Saul's time is slightly different. They have a certain measure. They had Samuel. Samuel was a mighty prophet and a mighty priest. He was a mighty judge before he turns the area of being a judge over to Saul. So there were a lot of spiritual activities. The people had seen the Lord. The people had seen lots of things. Now they were in an area where there was another crisis and this time Saul did it. He performed the offering but he was moved by the wrong principle. Then you realize here that the method must be applied by the right person. So you have three things flowing together now. You have principle, you have method and you have the person.

Saul was the wrong person to apply the right method and he had the wrong motivation involved. He knew he had to do it but it's all religious. He did it just to get away so that he could quickly fight. He did not do it meaningfully showing dependence on God. So there is something that is not fully right.

Lets read I Samuel 13, when Samuel asked Saul why did you do it? In verse 14, he says, "But now your kingdom shall not continue." I want you to see Saul answer in verse 11-12, *'When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash.'* Verse 12, therefore I felt compelled but that was wrong. That was the duty and the responsibility of a priest not a king. So he had the right thing in the sacrifice but it was the wrong person. Of course, he didn't fully understand the principle behind it. That was not just a religious ceremony and then get on with the fight. You cannot just do it because the people are running away. If I do it too slow there will be nobody else and by the time I go and fight there will be nobody

else. See he didn't understand that there was just a ceremony before they fight. That was really seeking God. That burnt offering was to seek God's blessing, God's approval, and God's victory before they go forth. Sometimes the struggles that we have in our life is because the principles, the methods and the people involved were not correctly tied up.

In I Chron. We are talking about why some people are struggling and what they are doing. Now natural knowledge also operates. For example, you could go to the best school, you could be trained to be an engineer but if all you learned were just methods not principles, when you come out you could not invent new inventions and apply to things. You are just like someone who does the maintaining of engineering. You would not be at the forefront to apply what you have learned and go further and deeper into the field you are supposed to be an expert. To advise even further and further. Make use of everything in the past and learn everything but keep moving forward. In any field you realize you got to learn. Learn as much as you can but differentiate between the methods and principles. That will help us to avoid the struggles of life.

In I Chron. 13: 1, even a man like David, one who love God, who is a worshipper of God needs to learn the difference between principle and method an person. Until he could coordinate all these three areas he would face failure in his life. In verse 1, *"David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader."* Now David had a plan. He wanted to bring the ark from Kirjath Jearim where it is into Jerusalem, which he had built. At that time he was already ruler over the whole nation of Israel. So David made a decision and got all the people.

In verse 2 it says, *"It seems good to you, and if it is of the Lord our God, let us send out our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites who are in their cities and their common lands, that they may gather together to us, and let us bring the ark of our God back to us."*

Now that was good. It was a good desire but as all of us know that there is

sometimes a struggle between good intention and the means to carry it. Now that is repeated in the many lives over and over again. There are a lot of people with good intentions but because they use the wrong means, so they are out and down. Our society today should not have Robin Hoods. There is no such thing. If you do the right thing using the wrong method, it is wrong. Robin Hood must go to jail. See the bible shows us that it is wrong even if it is a right method. If it is a right principle, a right desire and you apply the wrong method, it is wrong. A right principle must be applied to the right method before its right. Now David brought all those people together from all over the place.

*In verse 7, 'so they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the ark.'*

If you notice from I Samuel 6 and chapter 7 verse 1 that the ark when it came back from the Philistine was still in Abinadab's house. It has not moved. In other words, no one seemed to be interested in the ark. For all those years in Saul's life, that is at least over forty years because the ark came back in I Samuel 6 and that was before Saul's reign. Saul reigned forty years. So that tells you one whole generation passed by before they brought the ark because in David's time it was in his first year. He reigned seven years over Judah and then thirty-three years over the whole of Israel. Now this happened after the whole of Israel came. So you add another seven years. That will be at least forty-seven years that the ark had been left in Abinadab's house.

Remember how the ark came to Abinadab's house? That is in I Samuel 6, the Philistines who could not stand the ark, they made a cart drawn by oxen and the cart took the ark back. That was the Philistines' method. Here in I Chron.13 in verse 6 it says when they wanted to bring the ark, in verse 7 they made a new cart. That was not an Israelite method. It had been done before. All you have to do is to read I Samuel 6, by the Philistines; the ark had actually traveled on a cart before. Perhaps that was the story that was circulating for forty-seven years. Now when David turn has come to bring the ark, it was the most logical thing to make a new cart. After all by that time in those days they also had technological improvement. Before that the priests had to carry. So now we will use our new cart but there was symbolism that they could not remove.

So while the ark was in the cart, Uzza and Ahio, as they were carrying and driving the cart, Ahio and Uzza and everyone were singing and dancing. Now look at it, right principle, wrong method and everybody were singing and dancing and rejoicing before the Lord. In verse 9, as the ark on the cart driven by Uzza and Ahio were traveling, they must have come to a bumpy road, on that bumpy road the ark bumped, so did Uzza and Ahio. Uzza put his hands to hold the ark. He had a good intention. He meant well. He didn't want God's ark to fall down but something was wrong. The method. All the singing and the dancing stopped for a moment. There was suddenly a deep silence in the middle of their rejoicing. Uzza died.

In verse 11, David was upset at God. If David were like one of us, David would have said to God, God I don't want to talk to you again. But some of us in a crisis, we struggle in life, we applied what we thought was God's method or God's principle. Our heart was right and we applied it. We react against God. Sometimes we look for a scapegoat. Usually the pastor is a good one to be blamed.

In the early days of the ministry, it was dangerous because you get blamed for a lot of things because you don't have enough people who know you well enough. I remembered being young and just willing to help and so what happened was, we were in the traveling ministry, and we tried to minister to all the various churches in the early days. We have not started any church in Kuala Lumpur yet. So we have a lot of people who called us up for prayer. Usually by the time they call you they have called others, which at that time we didn't know. Usually by the time they call you, the sick person was already about to go home. So here we are young in the ministry, willing to pray with anybody. In fact when you begin in a ministry, you have very few places to preach and very few places to go to. So what do you do? You go to every door that opened. I remembered one thing. We were just there and I was not the only one praying. There were others also praying. There was a top businessman who was praying. He was a Full Gospel man. After prayer we left and the next week the person died. If the person lives we may never hear again. The person will say praise God. But when the person die, they will say because so and so came and pray. There were four of us but I was the one picked

out. I was the one blamed. At that time I don't have any reputation. I was not rich in the world. It's harder to blame those people but it's easy to blame the guy who is just coming up. I realize you can't help it. Sometimes people struggle in life and they want an outlet. God bless their hearts. Sometimes people are frustrated and they find room to throw frustration in.

Any pastor who has been counseling knows that the biggest key is to keep quiet and listen and then pray. It helps the people because it's their outlet. There are many professions that are difficult. One of the most difficult is letting people pour their problems. If you work in a supermarket the worst place to be in is the complaint department. All the other department you could see people are smiling but complaint department is different. When the customers come, they are angry. They are about to throw their cooker at you. It's not an easy department to be. There are certain places where it's harder where people throw their frustration at you. So there are struggles in life.

Now David has gone through his struggles. Moses also went through his struggles. In fact every one of us have our struggles with methods and with principles. We try a method but it didn't work. So what do we do? We got to examine it very carefully; there are more things behind than just that. In the same way, Moses, if you remember the story of how God first sent him. The first time God sent him, he thought that there is instant result. Finally when Pharaoh made the Israelites work harder, the bible tells us in the book of Exodus, Moses came back and he scolded God. It's amazing how God can take it.

Look at Moses' complaint on Exodus 5: 22, *"Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people?"*

Think who he is. Arrogance. I am amazed God didn't strike him. I mean he already knew who God was. He asked God, 'God, why did you make all these troubles.' He actually blamed God. Next thing he says he blamed God for sending him. Verse 22-23, *"Why is it you have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to his people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."*

In other words, he is coming to God and complaining. That was not prayer. I know what God did. God said, Michael could you direct him to the complaint department. Here David he got angry with God but he knew there is no point getting angry with God. So David was very upset that he left the ark where it was. The whole ceremony has to be canceled. Can you imagine, there were thousands of people and whole ceremony has to be cancelled. But at the end of it David finally found himself. He began to search and he realized it has nothing to do with God.

We all go through a stage when we were young Christians or new Christians. We could easily blame God for the first thing that come or happen but we grow out of it like little children. Now my personal attitude is never blame God because there are times when we don't fully understand. There are many situations we don't fully understand. He is never responsible for our failures and our lack of success. The answer always lies with us in regard to our lives. In His patience He teaches us and slowly we gather and discover but here is where the failures were. David failed in two points. He was right in one point. He was right in his principle but he was wrong in his method and in line with the person that was used. Instead of the priests driving the cart, the priests were supposed to carry the cart.

Finally in chapter 15, verse 2, some time past, David now has cooled down. In verse 1 David had built houses for himself. He prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. Some time has passed by, David had learned. He had done some soul searching. In verse 2 David said, *"No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of God to minister before Him forever."* And the wonderful story that we hear in I Chron.15, it says that David finally has the right method. He has the right principle. He has the right people doing it. Finally David was able to do what he was not able to do. I want you to know why he made that choice. What made him make that choice? If you read carefully in II Samuel, it gives us a clue. What made David changed his mind and bring the ark in, the bible gives us a clue here. In II Samuel 6: 12, I want you to see what made David changed his mind to bring the ark in. He had done some soul searching. He knew where his mistake was.

In verse 12, *"Now it was told King David, saying, 'The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom.'"*

Who was Obed-Edom? Obed-Edom was the house, which they left the ark when the ceremony was cancelled. So David in his anger stopped the whole ceremony and left the ark at the nearest house. It happened to be the house of Obed-Edom. I mean so clever of David. Somebody died and David said, Obed-Edom you keep the ark. Obed-Edom did not have much choice. I wonder what was on Obed-Edom's mind when he accepted it. In fact his heart must be thinking it's dangerous. He must have given instruction to his wife, please shift everything out of the room because they want to put the ark there. I don't know how to tell you. Somebody died and now we have to take this dangerous ark. Haven't they heard about what happened to the Philistines? All these things were happening. Finally the ark was there in Obed-Edom's house. They may have put the ark in a certain place. Everybody, when he comes home, he will ask his wife, anything dangerous happen. But strangely, something was happening. Obed-Edom owns much cattle and sheep. He may have a farm. Something strange began to happen. Obed-Edom cows prospered for quite a long time, maybe one year, maybe two years or maybe three years. All his cows were multiplying all the time. All his sheep and all his oxen are multiplying. I mean they are prospering. When Obed-Edom comes to his harvest, his harvest field was always the best. So finally Obed-Edom tell his wife and says, do you think it could be that dangerous ark?

Finally they realized it's because of the ark that they are blessed. Somehow during that time they concluded that it was because of that ark. This time they really love the ark. Finally they all realized that it was a blessing. Words started spreading. Everybody, the whole town started saying, hi Obed-Edom. His cows and every other thing are different from others. News came to David. David started thinking, God still working. This was what made David change his mind. He heard the blessing.

We want to encourage you with the blessings in the principle of life. Somewhere, some place in some corner of this earth, in this place or else where, there are God's people who love the Word. Who apply its principles, who apply the formula and apply the method. Right heart, right method, right people and right attitude and it works and in this bible that we are talking about. There are

many Christians who still struggle today. Struggle to apply in their business, struggle to apply in the ministry, struggle to apply in the church, and struggle to apply to every failure that you hear about. There could be ten successes that you don't hear about. You could talk about so and so tried this and it failed. But there are many others somewhere; there are many Obed-Edom who begin to taste the blessing of God.

So David finally said, get me the ark. David realized something that we all will realize. No matter how you struggle, it's no use getting angry with God. God made this world and He can do without us but we cannot do without Him. No point fighting with the One who created us. It's better to yield and follow His ways. So the order came. David must have sent somebody to Obed-Edom and said king David commanded that his ark be taken away from this house. I tell you, that day, Obed-Edom and his whole family nearly fainted. They have come to love this strange looking ark, which they had received reluctantly. But now they have come to love this ark and they can't do without it. I mean although it had its danger but they had come to realize that God's presence was there. I could see while the whole of Israel was celebrating in Chron.15, all of Israel was rejoicing and dancing and David, if you read the bible, he was dancing like a mad man. He was so happy that he didn't take care of his dress properly, that's in the bible, and I didn't make up the story. II Samuel 6, in those days, the men don't wear trousers, they wear skirts. I mean he danced and danced until his shirt flew all over the place. His wife was angry. Everybody was dancing but you could see there was one family where their tears were just rolling down from the eyes. That is Obed-Edom. They have come to love God's presence.

I have found out long ago that the only way to have God's presence is right principle, right method and right people. No short cut for this. You could have the method but you don't have the right principle there is no God. It's better to be a gatekeeper in God's house, a day in God's house, is better than thousand days.

My friends, the most important thing in the principles of life is that Jesus is God with us. How can you fail in His presence? Even though at times you felt like Joseph in the prison. Discarded, thrown away, nobody knows you. The question is not where you are, what you are going through and not how difficult the task you

face, but it is God with us, it's His presence in your life. Obed-Edom love God's presence so much that although the scholars don't fully agree, but Obed-Edom could possibly be the one mentioned in I Chronicle where he has come to love God's presence so much that in I Chronicle 16: 37-38 "So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required. Look at verse 38, *"and Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, to be gatekeepers."*

I don't know how long the ark was with Obed-Edom. Obed-Edom has come to realize that the ark means everything. When the ark left, he left with the ark to serve the ark. Obed-Edom has come to realize that he can still have the presence of God. He may not have it in his house anymore, but he has come to love that strange looking ark. So that when it was taken and when David was organizing the worship around the ark, Obed-Edom will be the first to say: "King David, I can't live without the ark. I have become so attached to the ark. I know the Lord's presence is there and I want to be there." He was one of the worshippers. That will help us to realize that we would hunger, to know that whatever we are struggling in our lives, God is not at fault but examine our principles, examine our methods and examine where we are in God.