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## Daily Rice 2024 January 18

YouTube Prayer Link

Pray for God's protection, first break the idols in our heart

1 Samuel 7

7:3 Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are determined to submit to Yahweh, you must put away the gods of the land and Ashtaroath from among you, and set your heart on Jehovah, and serve him alone. He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

7:4 And the Israelites got rid of Baal, and Ashtar, and served Yahovah alone.

Summary of 1 Samuel 7

Samuel told the Israelites to change their minds and get rid of the Gentile gods among them and devote themselves to serving Jehovah. So the Israelites listened to Samuel and got rid of the Gentile gods such as Baal and Ashtaroath.

In the Christian faith, we are taught to put God above everything. However, life is often full of troubles and challenges, and we are often in a hurry to seek God's protection, but we neglect a crucial step – breaking the idols in our hearts.

What is an idol? Idol is not only a statue or image made of them, but also an over-dependence on power, wealth, fame, relationships, etc. When we regard these worldly things as supreme beings, our hearts become an altar for idols.

In the Bible, God tells us clearly, "Thou shalt not make yourselves idols, nor slag images or pillars, nor set up stone statues in your land for worship." I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 26:1). God asks us not to put anything else above Him, because He is the only one who is truly worthy of our worship.

Therefore, in order to seek God's protection, we first need to break the idols in our hearts. This is not an easy task, as we tend to put our desires and pursuits first and foremost. However, it is only in this process that we can truly receive God's protection and guidance.

First, let's look inside ourselves and be honest about what we may be overly dependent on. Is it money that makes us feel safe, is it fame that makes us feel worthy, is it relationships that make us all about our lives? These can be our idols.

Then, we need to have the determination, courage, and faith to break these idols. This may take a long process and require us to constantly rely on God's strength. Through prayer, meditation on the Bible, and seeking the help of spiritual teachers, we can gradually take idols out of our hearts and allow God's Word and truth to fill our hearts.

When we truly let go of our idols and put God at the center of our lives, His protection will come naturally. The Bible says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Matthew 22:37). When we genuinely love the Lord and put Him first, His protection will be manifested in every aspect of our lives.

So let's take this important step to let go of the idols in our hearts and seek God with all our hearts. In the process, we will find that His protection is more abundant than we would have hoped, because He is our true protector and guide.

### We pray together

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for giving us life every day, and thank you for preparing us with abundant grace and love. Today, we gather before you to humbly ask for your help and protection.

Lord, you know that there are many idols in our hearts, idols that we may not be aware of, but that are quietly taking root in all corners of our lives. Give us the revelation of the Holy Spirit so that we can discern and resolutely break these idols.

Lord, there are times when we rely too much on material security and neglect that you are our true provider. Please help us to let go of our excessive pursuit of money and let our hearts depend entirely on your provision and guidance.

Lord, sometimes we value relationships more than you do, and make them the center of our lives. Please help us to let go of our over-dependence on people, so that we can first build strong relationships with you and then fellowship with others in your love.

Lord, there are times when we seek fame and status in the hope of gaining our own value through them. Teach us to let go of these vain pursuits and let us find our true identity in your eyes.

Dear Lord, we seek your presence more deeply in prayer. As we break the idols in our hearts, may Your Holy Spirit guide and shape our hearts so that we can truly know and fear You.

Lord, we have not come to seek Your protection, but to Your face. May your will be manifested in our lives, and may your name be glorified. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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## CHAPTER 7

1Sa. 7:1 So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD. They took it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD.

1Sa. 7:2 It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD.

1Sa. 7:3 And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

1Sa. 7:4 So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

1Sa. 7:5 Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the LORD for you."

1Sa. 7:6 When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader [Traditionally judge] of Israel at Mizpah.

1Sa. 7:7 When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. And when the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines.

1Sa. 7:8 They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines."

1Sa. 7:9 Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

1Sa. 7:10 While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

1Sa. 7:11 The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car.

1Sa. 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, [Ebenezer means stone of help.] saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

1Sa. 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite

territory again. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines.

1Sa. 7:14 The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to her, and Israel delivered the neighbouring territory from the power of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

1Sa. 7:15 Samuel continued as judge over Israel all the days of his life.

1Sa. 7:16 From year to year he went on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel in all those places.

1Sa. 7:17 But he always went back to Ramah, where his home was, and there he also judged Israel. And he built an altar there to the LORD.

Chapter 7 begins with the Israelites returning to the Lord under the leadership of Samuel. They gather at Mizpah, where they confess their sins and offer sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel serves as their leader and judge, and the people turn to him for guidance.

The Philistines hear that the Israelites have gathered at Mizpah, and they send their armies to attack them. The Israelites are afraid and plead with Samuel to intercede for them. Samuel offers a burnt offering to the Lord and prays for his help.

The Lord answers Samuel's prayer by sending a thunderstorm that confuses the Philistine army, causing them to flee in disarray. The Israelites pursue them and achieve a great victory, driving them out of their territory and regaining control of several towns.

After the battle, Samuel sets up a stone as a monument to the Lord's help, calling it Ebenezer ("stone of help"). He also travels around the region, serving as a judge and leader and bringing the people back to the Lord.

Chapter 7 emphasizes the importance of repentance, prayer, and obedience to God in achieving victory and success. It also shows the importance of a strong leader like Samuel in guiding the people and inspiring them to trust in God. The chapter highlights the continuing conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines, and the role of the Lord in delivering his people from their enemies.

Chapter 7 of 1 Samuel marks the turning point in Israel's history, where they return to the Lord and defeat the Philistines. The following verses are important in this chapter:

1 Samuel 7:3 - "Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

1 Samuel 7:10-11 - "Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car."

1 Samuel 7:12 - "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us.""

These verses show the importance of repentance, faith, and obedience to the Lord, as well as the power of God to deliver His people from their enemies. The setting up of the stone Ebenezer serves as a reminder to the Israelites of the Lord's faithfulness and deliverance

Chapter 8 begins with Samuel growing old and appointing his sons as judges over Israel, but they do not follow in his footsteps and are corrupt. The elders of Israel approach Samuel and demand a king to rule over them like the other nations, despite Samuel warning them of the consequences of having a king.

Samuel is distressed by the request, and he consults with the Lord, who tells him to listen to the people but warn them about the dangers of having a king. Samuel relays the Lord's warning to the people, explaining that a king will take their sons for his army and their daughters as servants, and will take their crops and livestock for his own use. Nevertheless, the people insist on having a king to rule over them.

The Lord tells Samuel to listen to the people and give them a king, but to warn them again about the consequences. Samuel anoints Saul, a handsome and tall man from the tribe of Benjamin, as the first king of Israel.

Chapter 8 shows the Israelites rejecting God as their true king and demanding a human king instead. This decision will have far-reaching consequences for the nation of Israel. It also introduces Saul as the first king of Israel and sets the stage for the rest of the book, which will explore the reigns of Saul and his successor, David.

1 Samuel chapter 7 portrays a significant turning point in the narrative as the Israelites repent and turn back to God under the leadership of Samuel. This chapter highlights themes of repentance, prayer, and the faithfulness of God.

One of the key themes that emerges from this chapter is the importance of repentance and returning to God. The Israelites, recognizing their sinful behavior and idolatry, gather together to seek the Lord with all their hearts. They confess their sins and commit to turning away from their false gods and idols. Samuel, acting as their spiritual leader, encourages them to put away their foreign gods and direct their hearts toward the Lord alone.

This chapter serves as a powerful reminder that repentance is a necessary step towards restoring our relationship with God. It requires acknowledging our sins, turning away from them, and seeking God's forgiveness and guidance. The example of the Israelites teaches us the significance of genuine repentance and the restoration it brings.

Furthermore, 1 Samuel chapter 7 highlights the power of prayer and the faithfulness of God in response to genuine repentance. As the Israelites gather at Mizpah, Samuel intercedes for them, offering a burnt offering and crying out to the Lord on their behalf. God responds by thundering against the Philistines and causing confusion among them. The Israelites are granted victory over their enemies and regain the cities that were previously lost.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of prayer as a means of seeking God's intervention and guidance in our lives. It demonstrates that when we humble ourselves before God, confess our

sins, and earnestly seek His help, He hears and responds to our prayers. It reminds us that God is faithful to His promises and that He actively works on behalf of those who trust in Him.

Additionally, 1 Samuel chapter 7 highlights the faithfulness of God in delivering His people. Throughout the book of Samuel, we see God's faithfulness in raising up leaders and intervening on behalf of His chosen people. In this chapter, God demonstrates His faithfulness once again by granting the Israelites victory over their enemies and protecting them.

This chapter encourages us to trust in God's faithfulness in our own lives. It reminds us that even in times of difficulty, when we turn to God with repentant hearts, He remains faithful to His promises. It calls us to place our trust in Him, knowing that He is able to deliver us from our enemies and provide for our needs.

In conclusion, 1 Samuel chapter 7 highlights the themes of repentance, prayer, and the faithfulness of God. It reminds us of the importance of genuine repentance in restoring our relationship with God, the power of prayer in seeking His intervention, and the faithfulness of God to His people. May we follow the example of the Israelites, turning our hearts towards God, seeking His forgiveness, and trusting in His faithfulness to guide and protect us.