

Though we advertised the 2 Samuel reading as our text today, we are not going to begin with it.

This 2 Samuel text is pertinent to our comments, but we need to start with another Scripture.

Last week, we saw what Jesus emphasized:

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”**

**Matthew 22:37-40 NIV**

Jesus’ enemies tried to catch him with what they considered “Gotcha” questions.

Jesus usually answered their tests with questions of his own.

Yet when foes probed about the most important law, Jesus didn’t follow his usual pattern.

He answered directly from **Deuteronomy 6:5**.

**No argument about the greatest commandment:**

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”**

Good life choices keep this first commandment in mind.

Years ago, “The Merv Griffin Show,” featured a body builder. **Griffin asked him, “Why do you develop those particular muscles?”**

“The body builder stepped forward and flexed a series of well-defined muscles from chest to calf.”



This is Arnold Schwarzenegger.  
I don’t know the name of Merv Griffin’s guest.

**The audience applauded.**

**“What do you use all those muscles for?”**

**Merv asked.**

Again, the muscular specimen flexed; biceps and triceps sprouted to impressive proportions.

**“But what do you use those muscles for?”**

**Merv persisted.**

**The question bewildered the body builder.**

**Those huge biceps and triceps served no other than to display his well-developed frame.**

**God gave us all certain gifts and abilities.**

**Did he give them so we can display our knowledge, skills, and prowess?**

**Does God intend us to use them only to serve our pride, vanity, and desires?**

**An Illinois Christian observed:**

**“I was reminded that our spiritual exercises - Bible study, prayer, reading Christian books, listening to Christian radio and CDs are also for a**

**purpose. They're meant to strengthen our ability to build God's kingdom, not simply to improve our pose before an admiring audience.”<sup>1</sup>**

**How many men and women stop to ask:**

- **How did I get here?**
- **What is life's meaning?**
- **What do I owe God, my Creator?**
- **Do you wonder how many people even credit God for giving them life?**
  - **As he chug-a lugs the last drop of Bud-lite, does the average Joe ever look past the bottom of his bottle?**
- **Does he look up only while watching a football game and the punter boots the ball extraordinarily high and far and it has five seconds of hang-time?**

Scientists genetically alter various life forms, e.g. the corn and beans around us and some of the viruses that besiege us.

They look for evidence of life on Mars or in outer space.



FreeStockPhoto of outerspace

The fact that they look for life's origins in outer space seems to be an admission that they do not see it beginning here; it must have come from elsewhere.

**The Bible doesn't tell us that life came from outer space; it says life originated beyond space from God, who created space and time.**

**God gives life and He takes it away.**

**Those facts being evident, shouldn't we honor and serve God, above all else; not deny his existence, or ignore Him.**

The Bible informs us that God created us and hold us accountable for what we do.

**He also warns us not to try to make Him into our image of what we think He is.**

**We act dangerously when we don't honor Him as the Bible reveals Him.**

**God's most important law is to love him completely—heart, soul and mind.**

**Do you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind?**

**Whether I love God with all my being greatly concerns me.**

- **My pride gets in the way.**
- **Some habits affect me.**
- **A few possessions popup like idols.**

<sup>1</sup> Gary Gulbranson, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Whether I appear to do more than others for the kingdom means nothing.

Comparing me with others is pointless.

What matters most is that basic life command—  
“Love God with all your being?”

**The German mystic Meister Eckhart said:**

“Some people love God as they love a cow, which you love for the milk and cheese and your own profit from it.”

I confess that much of my professed love for God matches Meister Eckhart’s definition.



My love pales in comparison to Jesus.

One of the hardest things for me is coming to terms with the demands each text makes on me as I prepare weekly sermons.

**How can I ask other people to do what I haven’t done myself?**

**I have to ask, “Do I love God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind?”**

**The Apostle John:**

“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

**If we list our actions over the past week, including the way we spent our time and money, would that accounting show that we love God?**

When Satan tempted Jesus, he first tried to get Jesus to utilize his gifts for his own comfort.

Jesus had not eaten anything for 40 days.

**I did a one day fast and couldn’t wait for that day to be over.**

Imagine eating your next meal on August 20.  
**How hungry would you become?**

Also imagine that at your slightest whim, you could speak something into existence.

Years ago a doctor friend and I agreed to lose weight together.

We would radically restrict our meal intake.  
It was tough, but I was keeping my promise.

One evening after a few weeks, we were scheduled to eat with the doctor and his family.

The doctor’s wife asked me how I was doing.

I told her that her doctor husband was inspiring me to stay on our diet.

“Bob,” she said frankly, “don’t believe him. Every evening he stops by the Hot Diggity Dog stand before he comes home to eat.”

Jesus would not have needed to cheat that way.

He could have instantly converted solid river rock into delicious fresh-baked bread.

**By one command, he could have oven-fresh rolls with butter and strawberry jam.**

And a perfect latte in the other hand.

**Except for the Father, no one else would know.**  
But that didn't fit God's plan and wouldn't have shown perfect love for God.

**So Jesus told Satan, “a person doesn't live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God.”**

**If God gave us life, shouldn't our number one effort be to find out how he wants to live?  
And to do our best to get it done?**

**Some may protest that their parents gave them life at conception.**

**Your parents conjoined life already in them.**

**They didn't create your life.**

**The seeds we plant might be genetically altered but they all came from living plants.**

**Only God begets life.**

So we must ask again:

**If God gave us life, shouldn't job number one be to find out how he wants to live?**

**That's why God's Word—Scripture is so vital.**

**God's Word leads to life.**

**When I get up in the AM and watch news, read news, or listen to someone report the news, I'm usually upset within minutes.**

When I read Scripture,  
think about God's Creation,  
the marvelous things He has done,  
and still does,

praise Him,  
confess my mistakes to Him,  
ask His guidance,

think how Jesus died for us  
and was raised from the dead.

thank Him,

and appreciate the loving people around me,  
my days go much better.



**We don't go by political party, union bosses, denominational tradition, family tradition, or society's prevailing standards.**

**We go by God's word.**

**We can't alter or change God's Word.**

**We can't add our ideas to it or eliminate anything from His Word.**

The Lectionary reading for many churches today includes 2 Samuel 6:1-5, then jumps to 12b and continues through 19.

A page with the full text of 2 Samuel 6 accompanies this lesson.

May I suggest that you read the entire chapter and note the sections not included in the Lectionary?

Reflect on why they were eliminated.

- Does the info not included change your views about God?
- Why do you suppose the Lectionary planners excluded these parts?

Let's return to loving God.

Consider what the Apostle John wrote:

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins,” (1 John 4:8-10 NIV).

Love for God drove Albert Schweitzer into the jungles of Africa.

Schweitzer was a man of dazzling intellect and enormous accomplishments.

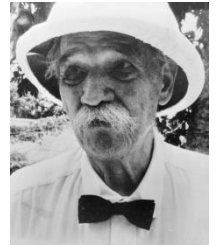
How many people earn doctor's degrees in such diverse fields as religion, music, and medicine?

Schweitzer wrote a book entitled *THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS*.

His research for that book brought him face to face with God's claims on his life.

Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus and touched his heart.

Schweitzer gave up his academic degrees and distinguished posts and went to Africa to serve as a missionary physician.



When his patients awakened from the anesthetic in that little hospital in Lambarene the first words they heard were the doctor's:

"The reason you have no more pain is because the Lord Jesus told me to come to the banks of the Ogowe."

Albert Schweitzer began to understand God's greatest commandment and began practicing it.

I pray that we can all see how it applies to us.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Bob Blair  
PO Box 176  
Cleghorn IA 51014

We welcome your comments.

[www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)

## 2 Samuel 6 NIV

### Included in Lectionary, Verses 1-5

David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

### Not included in Lectionary, Verses 6-12a

When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God. Then David was angry because the LORD’s wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah. David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, “How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?” He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household. Now King David was told, “The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God.”

### The following included in Lectionary, Verses 12b-19:

So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets. As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart. They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

### Not included, Verses 20-23,

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, “How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!” David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD’s people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you

spoke of, I will be held in honor.” And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.



Artist's conception of how the Ark of the Covenant may have looked, with priest's bowing before it. The Lord ordered that the Ark be carried with poles placed through rings at its four corners. Four chosen men were to carry it.



Kiriath Jearim, location of incident described in 2 Samuel 6. This is a 1980 photo Bob took of the area, which is a few miles west and down the hill from Jerusalem.