

Accuracy Matters When Souls are at Stake:

Interpreting the Word with care and precision



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INTRODUCTION



- **How does the preacher prepare for exposition?**
- **How can he study with accuracy and care?**
- **He must saturate himself with the text.**
- **Rushing into exposition produces shallowness, irrelevance, and hypocrisy.**
- **Lack of preparation spiritually, mentally, and emotionally will produce inaccuracy.**

Get It Right from the Start



- Unless the heart and mind are right with God,
the expositor cannot be right with the text.
- Preaching without prayer is presumption.

Psalm 19:14

Psalm 119:18

Get It Right from the Start



- **Exegesis starts with the text and views it within its syntactical, lexical, literary, historical, social/cultural, geographical, and theological contexts.**
- **Resist the temptation to merely catalogue, collate, and arrange information.**
- **Examine, evaluate, assimilate, and interact with the biblical text.**
- **Synthesize the interpretation and its theological and pragmatic implications.**

The Exegetical Process

1. Read / Translate



Judges 16:1–3

¹ Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. ² *When* the Gazites *were told*, “Samson has come here!” they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, “In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him.”



Judges 16:1–3

³ And Samson lay *low* till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put *them* on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.



The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

- ▶ Compose a preliminary summary statement:

Samson visited a harlot and got trapped, but he miraculously escaped.

The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

How?

Why?

The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

- ▶ ***Who?*—Samson**
- ▶ ***When?*—Early date for the exodus: early 11th century B.C.**
- ▶ ***Where?*—The Philistine city of Gaza and then moves to Hebron.**
- ▶ ***Passage's overall tone:* Samson's problem with women continues.**

The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

▶ **Revise preliminary summary statement:**

Samson's victory over 1,000 Philistine warriors in chapter 15 contrasts greatly with his moral defeat at the hands of one Philistine woman. His loose living gets him into a tight place. He escapes trouble by using the physical strength God gave him, but did not escape the temptation by using the spiritual strength God could give him.

The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

3. Identify

- ▶ **Analyze the text word by word and phrase by phrase.**

Commentary Series



Baker Commentary on the Old Testament	BCOT
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Evangelical Exegetical Commentary	EEC
<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>	<i>EBC</i>
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New International Commentary on the OT	NICOT
New International Commentary on the NT	NICNT
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The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

3. Identify

▶ Analyze the text word by word and phrase by phrase.

3.1 Grammar and syntax

3.1.1 To what does each word, phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph relate?

Syntax



- v. 1 – “Now,” “Once,” “One day”
- v. 1 – “to Gaza”
- v. 2 – Literally, “to Gazites saying”
- v. 2 – Hithpael: “they kept themselves silent”
- v. 2 – Literally, “unto the light of the morning, when we will kill him”
- v. 3 – “in front of Hebron” or “in the direction of Hebron”

The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

3. Identify

▶ **Analyze the text word by word and phrase by phrase.**

3.1 Grammar and syntax

3.1.1 To what does each word, phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph relate?

3.1.2 Where is the prominence or emphasis?

Logical Diagramming



1a	Now Samson went to Gaza		
1ba	and saw a harlot there		
1bb	and went in to her.		
2aa	<i>When the Gazites were told</i>		A
		"Samson has come here!"	
2ab	they surrounded <i>the place</i>		B
2ag	and lay in wait		
	for him		
	all night		
	at the gate of the city.		

Logical Diagramming



2ba	They were quiet		B'
	all night		
	saying,		A'
2aa	“In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him.”		
3aa	And Samson lay low		
	till midnight;		
3ab	then he arose		
	at midnight,		
3ag	took hold of the doors of the gate of the city		
	and the two gateposts,		

Logical Diagramming



3ad	pulled them up,		
	bar and all,		
3ae	put <i>them</i>		
	on his shoulders,		
3b	and carried them		
	to the top of the hill		
	that faces Hebron.		

Prepare an Exegetical Outline



- I. Samson's fleshly desires take him to Gaza where he gets involved with a prostitute (Judg 16:1).**
- II. The Gazites' plot to kill Samson (Judg 16:2).**
- III. Samson escapes the Gazites' trap (Judg 16:3).**

Prepare an Exegetical Outline



- I. Samson's fleshly desires take him to Gaza where he gets involved with a prostitute (Judg 16:1).**
 - A. Samson travels to Gaza (v. 1a).**
 - B. Samson gets involved with a prostitute (v. 1b).**
 - 1. He sees a prostitute (v. 1ba).**
 - 2. He lies with that prostitute (v. 1bb).**

Prepare an Exegetical Outline



- I. Samson's fleshly desires take him to Gaza where he gets involved with a prostitute (Judg 16:1).
- II. The Gazites' plot to kill Samson (Judg 16:2).
 - A. Someone **speaks** to the Gazites about Samson's presence in Gaza (v. 2aa).
 - B. The Gazites set an **all-night** trap for Samson (v. 2ab).
 - C. The Gazites keep silence **all night** (v. 2ba).
 - D. The Gazites **speak** about their plan to kill Samson in the morning (v. 2bb).

Prepare an Exegetical Outline



- I. Samson's fleshly desires take him to Gaza where he gets involved with a prostitute (Judg 16:1).
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 - A. Someone **speaks** to the Gazites about Samson's presence in Gaza (v. 2aa).
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 - B'. The Gazites keep silence **all night** (v. 2ba).
 - A'. The Gazites **speak** about their plan to kill Samson **in the morning** (v. 2bb).

Prepare an Exegetical Outline



- I. Samson's fleshly desires take him to Gaza where he gets involved with a prostitute (Judg 16:1).
- II. The Gazites' plot to kill Samson (Judg 16:2).
- III. Samson escapes the Gazites' trap (Judg 16:3).
 - A. At **midnight** Samson breaks free from the Gazites' trap (v. 3a).
 - B. Samson carries **the gates of Gaza** to a hill near Hebron (v. 3b).

Prepare an Exegetical Outline



III. Samson escapes the Gazites' trap (Judg 16:3).

A. At **midnight** Samson breaks free from the Gazites' trap (v. 3a).

1. Samson lays in bed until **midnight** (v. 3aa).
2. Samson rises at **midnight** (v. 3ab).
3. Samson seizes **the city gates** (v. 3ag).
4. Samson pulls up **the city gates** with the bar in place (v. 3ad).
5. Samson sets **the city gates** on his shoulders (v. 3ae).

B. Samson carries **the gates of Gaza** to a hill near Hebron (v. 3b).

The Exegetical Process



1. Read / Translate

2. Observe

3. Identify

▶ **Analyze the text word by word and phrase by phrase.**

3.1 Grammar and syntax

3.2 Expression

Expression



3.2.1 What idioms does the author employ?

- Judges 16:1, “and went in to her”
- Judges 16:2, “In the morning when it is daylight” (NKJV)
- Judges 16:3, “the top of the hill”
- Judges 16:3, “that faces Hebron” (NKJV)

Expression



3.2.2 What is the type of literature?

Resource: Sandy & Giese, *Cracking Old Testament Codes*

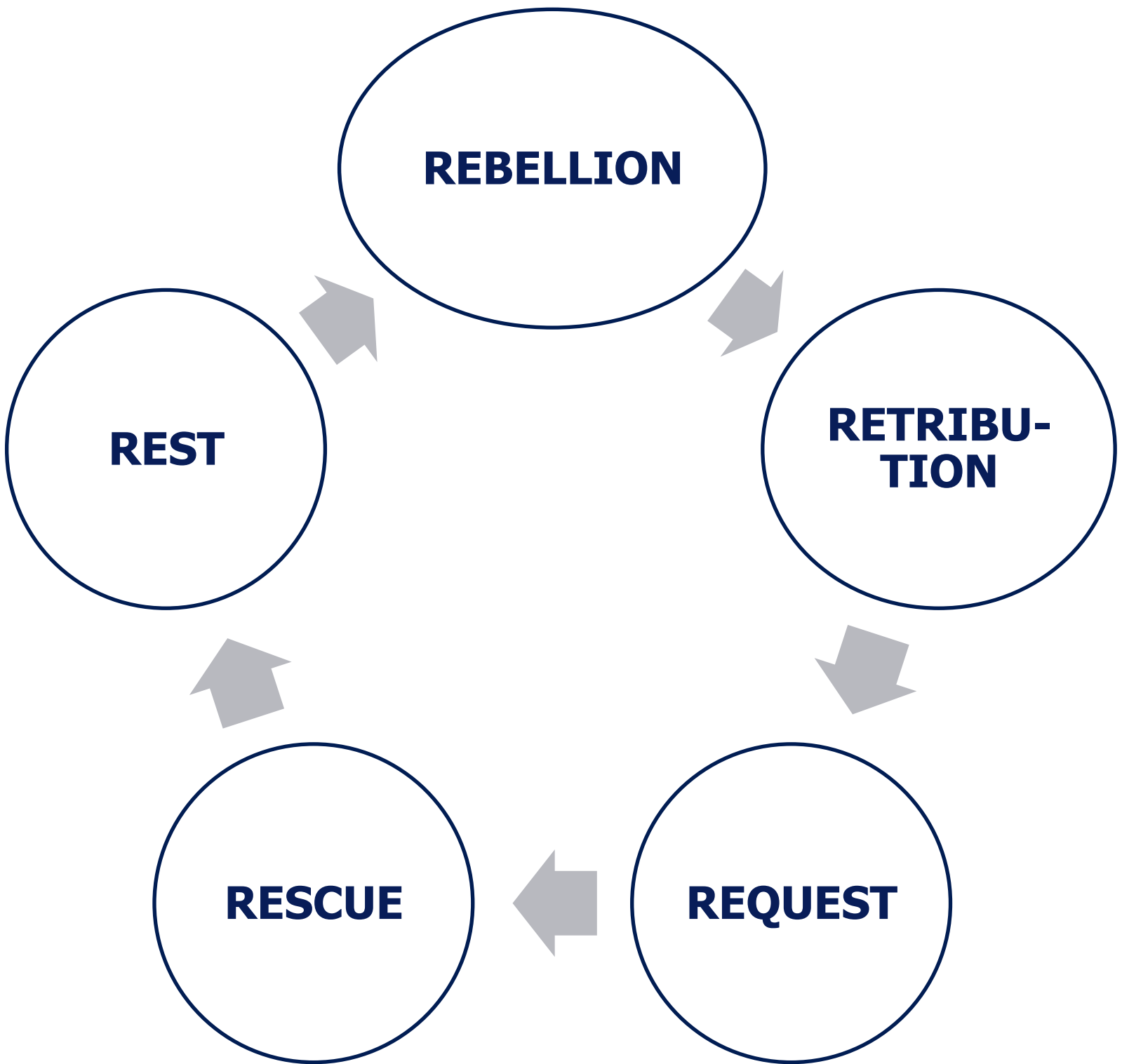
- Judges 16:1–3 is narrative.
 - ✓ Scene
 - ✓ Dialogue
 - ✓ Plot
 - ✓ Key Word(s)
 - ✓ Point of View
 - ✓ Structure
 - ✓ Characterization
 - ✓ Rhetorical Devices
 - ✓ Setting

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Identify the limits of the text unit.

- **The cycles in the Book of Judges.**



Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Look closely at the larger Samson account.

- **Rebellion: 13:1a “Israel did evil”**
- **Retribution: 13:1b “delivered them into the hand of the Philistines”**
- **Request: cp. 13:8 (Manoah’s prayer)**
- **Rescue: 13:5 “he shall begin to deliver”**
- **Rest: 16:31 “He had judged Israel twenty years”**

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Identify the structure of the Samson account.

- 1) Masoretic section breaks (פ and ו).**
- 2) Macrosyntactic 'וַיְהִי' (*wayyehî*, “Now there was” NKJV).**
- 3) Observe the repetitions of these markers.**
- 4) Develop an outline of the Samson account observing these markers.**

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Identify the scenes in the Samson account.

- 1. 13:2–24 (the messenger of Yahweh, Manoah and his wife)**
- 2. 13:25–15:20 (Samson's Timnite affairs)**
- 3. 16:1–31 (Samson's Gazite affairs)**

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Determine the point of view.

- Ultimately, this is God's Word from His perspective.
- The human author of Judges is anonymous.
- Could be Samuel—a prophet (seer).

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



List the characters in the immediate text unit (Judg 16:1–3).

- **16:1—Samson and the Gazite prostitute.**
- **16:2—The Gazites.**
- **16:3—Samson.**

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Analyze the plot of Judges 16:1–3.

- Samson is attracted to a prostitute and fulfills his desire/lust (16:1).
- Parenthetical information—Samson's presence in the city is exposed (16:2a).
- The Gazites conceive a plot against Samson's life and take steps to see it through to completion (16:2b).
- Tension: Will he escape? If so, how?
- Resolution: Samson escapes (16:3).

Analyzing Hebrew Narrative



Research the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of the setting.



- 1. Gaza's gates probably weighed over 5 tons.**
- 2. Distance from Gaza to Hebron: 36–40 miles as the crow flies.**
 - 3,200 feet difference in elevation.**
- 3. Only a miracle by God can explain Samson's performance.**

The Miracle at Gaza



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Expression



3.2.3 What literary devices are employed?

- **Inclusio:** Gaza (v. 1), Hebron (v. 3).
- **Repetition:** “saying” (2x), “all the night” (2x), “midnight” (2x), “the gate of the city” (2x).
- **Ellipsis:** “*Let us wait* until the morning light” (NASU, ESV, HCSB).
- **Chiasm:** Arrangement of speech and the Gazites’ actions; arrangement of the phrases for time.

Expression



3.2.4 Word studies?

ʾrb

• ארב (

**ambush” or “lie in wait”—used of animals
lying in wait for their prey**

ḥrš

• חרש (

**“keep still,” “become silent.” Hithpael
(reflexive factitive): silence, stillness, or
inactivity comes as the result of self-
constraint**

The Expositional Process



1. Biblical Theology and Practical Implications

- ✓ Being proud and arrogant, Samson depends upon his strength and enters the chief city of his enemies, the Philistines (Judg 16:1; cp. 1 John 2:16).
- ✓ Samson yields to the lust of the eyes and the lust of his flesh when he sees the prostitute (Judg 16:1; cp. 1 John 2:16). See Judges 21:10.
- ✓ Arrogant actions and attitude together with sinful lusts will bring a person into danger (Judg 16:2; cp. Prov 1:8–19; 5:1–23; Rom 6:23).

The Expositional Process

1. Biblical Theology and Practical Implications

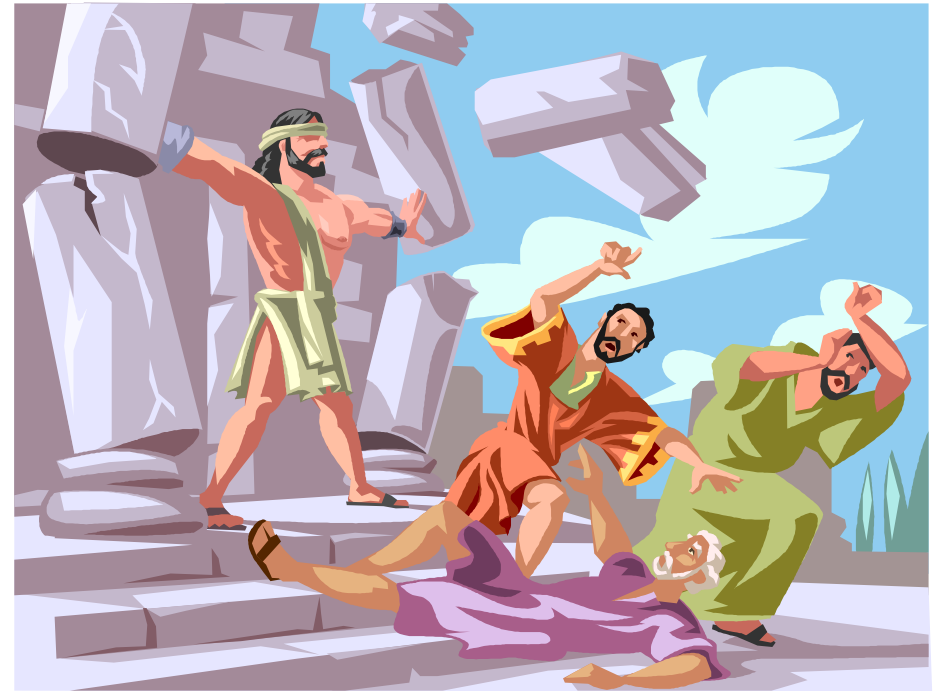
- ✓ Failure to obey God and to live a holy life can only lead to trouble and a fall. Even God-given physical strength eventually will fail to be sufficient to deliver Samson from the dangers he encounters due to his sinful behavior.



The Expositional Process

1. Biblical Theology and Practical Implications

- ✓ The cycles of the Book of Judges will also play out in Samson's life as an individual:
 - ▶ Rebellion (16:1–20)
 - ▶ Retribution (16:21–27)
 - ▶ Request (16:28)
 - ▶ Rescue (16:29–30)
 - ▶ Rest (16:31)



The Expositional Process



1. Biblical Theology and Practical Implications

- ✓ In God's grace, Samson becomes God's instrument to deliver His people Israel from the Philistines. Flawed as he is, Samson appears in the roll call of faith in Hebrews 11:32.



The Expositional Process



1. Biblical Theology and Practical Implications

- ❖ ***The Lord remains faithful to His covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants regardless of the seemingly contradictory circumstances that have fallen upon the Israelites and their leaders. For blessing to take place, individuals and the nation must exercise faith and obedience.***

The Expositional Process



1. Biblical Theology and Practical Implications

- ✓ Biblical justification for applying OT narrative to NT saints:

Romans 15:4

1 Corinthians 10:6–13

2 Timothy 3:16–17

The Expositional Process



2. Sermon Proposition

- ❖ ***We must obey God and His Word, rather than yielding to sinful pride or to the lust of our eyes and of our flesh.***

The Expository Process

3. Homiletical Outline



- I. We must turn from our fleshly desires that take us into places where we should not go or to get us involved with the wrong people (Judg 16:1; cp. 1 John 2:15–17; James 1:14; 4:4–10).**
 - A. We should turn from “the pride of life,” so that we go to places unlike those where we used to go (v. 1a).**
 - B. We should abandon fellowship with those who lead us into temptation and disobedience to God (v. 1b).**
 - 1. We should love the Father, rather than the lust of our eyes (v. 1ba).**
 - 2. We should submit to the Father, rather than to the lust of our flesh (v. 1bb).**

- II. We must understand that our enemies, chief among whom is Satan, seek to trap us by means of our own sins (Judg 16:2; cp. John 15:19; 1 Pet 5:8; James 1:15).**
 - A. Our enemies will learn of our disobedience (v. 2aa; cp. Num 32:23).**
 - B. We should behave like “children of the day” rather than like children of the night and darkness (v. 2ab–bb; cp. Rom 13:12; Eph 5:11; 1 Thess 5:5).**

III. We should depend upon God to deliver us, rather than depending upon our own strength or wisdom (Judg 16:3; cp. James 4:10).

A. We must use the gifts of God for His service and praise, rather than for personal gain or comfort (v. 3a; cp. 1 Tim 6:5; 1 Pet 5:2).

B. We must avoid displaying the trophies of our own strength and wisdom, rather than allowing God's deeds to be the focus (v. 3b; cp. John 3:30).