

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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We are looking at the contrast of the relationship between Jonathan and David and the relationship between Saul and David; Jonathan, a man after the Spirit; Saul, a man after the flesh. Last week we finished in I Samuel chapter 20, roughly about verse 32. We saw Saul run the gamut downward that you see in Romans 1:18-32. He began with a suspicion and fear of David, the "impulsive" stage. Then, as he began to make bad choices, he developed a dread of David and entered the "compulsive" stage where he was no longer in the saddle. Finally, with more bad choices, he reached what I call the "consumed" stage. He knew God had appointed David to be King and David's line to become the reigning line of Israel, but Saul did not care. He could not care. He was literally driven to oppose God and became David's enemy "continually." He had reached the stage expressed in verse 32, of Chapter 1 of Romans, "although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." They become perniciously evil. The tragedy of Saul was that of a godly man gone wrong. He would go to be with the Lord when he died, but all the way to his death he fought God and ultimately God had him killed.

On the other hand we have seen Jonathan's handling of the same situation, the contrasting side of the "snowball rolling down the hill." Saul's loss of his kingdom and his line was also a loss for Jonathan, the crown prince. But even though he and his family would not reign in Israel, Jonathan fell in love with his rival David. Their souls were knit together. David was rejected by Saul but accepted by Jonathan, and rather than fear David or have suspicions about him, Jonathan loved him with very godly emotions. He took off his own armor, his own cloak and his own weapons and garbed his rival as a prince of Israel. He was willing to accept God's ruling. He took his rival David and made him a prince.

Next step was a righteous choice to intercede for David with Saul on a very open, honest, godly basis, and it turned Saul around. True, only temporarily, but it did turn Saul around so that Saul and Jonathan and David were all at peace with one another.

Then Jonathan made another choice. The intent was godly, but the method was not. David, with his terror of Saul and his eyes off of YHWH, cast himself on the mercy of Jonathan. The tyranny of the urgent caused Jonathan's emotions to be swayed, and he made a godly choice to preserve David's life. The problem was he used very ungodly methodology. He went along with David's deceit of his father, and he practiced a little deceit of his own. The result was disaster. Your desire does not sanctify your methodology. You may have the world's greatest desires, but if they are not founded on Scripture, you are in trouble. Because of his choices, that is where we find Jonathan now.

Picking up from last week, Saul has seen right through Jonathan's deception and also through David's deception. He has literally called Jonathan a bastard in front of the whole court. He has greatly insulted him and caused him to "lose face," a grievous humiliation in an Oriental culture. You would think that would generate a deep resentment in Jonathan, but it does not. Jonathan is a very godly man, and he loves his father. He loves him no matter what he is or what he does. He accepts him and loves him as he is. We will see shortly that this has a tremendous effect on David.

We pick up at I Samuel 20, verse 32. Because Saul has become so enraged at the deceit, Jonathan attempts to return to the righteous method by telling Saul, "Let's face up to the facts of life." Instead of becoming angry at the painful insult delivered by Saul, he appeals to Saul's conscience, which had worked before, but Saul is so enraged now that Jonathan's godly method is too late, and it does not work.

Verse 32:

But Jonathan answered Saul his father and said to him, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" [He is appealing to Saul's conscience again] Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him down; so Jonathan knew that his father had decided to put David to death. Then Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger [He gets enraged. He has been called a bastard. He has been struck at by his father and for once he gets his eyes off of God. He gets his eyes off his love for his father and acceptance of his father, and he gets mad. The flesh is still the flesh even in Jonathan. He walks out on a holy feast and insults and dishonors his father] and did not eat food on the second day of the new moon, for he was grieved over David because his father had dishonored him.

Jonathan, while enraged at his own dishonor, is even more enraged at David's dishonor, which leads to his demeaning his father. Who started this dishonoring process? David! Who was next? Jonathan! David started it by deceiving Saul. Jonathan continued it by going along with David. And then he wondered why he and David were dishonored by Saul. Dishonor breeds dishonor. The moment you get your eyes off of Jesus Christ, [or YHWH of the Old Testament, the same Person] you are just as fleshly as any fleshly man. Your spirituality lasts only as long as Christ is your life. The flesh is totally unconverted.

I had a horrifying experience this week. I was privileged to see myself as I really am. It was a very healthy, but humbling, experience. I have this strange idea that my flesh is getting a little sanctified. But it is not! God drew the veil aside this week and let me have a good whiff of me, and the aroma was not pleasant. I have been a Christian for 25 years, and in 25 years my flesh has not improved one iota.

Likewise, Jonathan's flesh, even though he is a mighty man of God, is incurably evil. It "cannot please God" [Romans 8:8]. Notice! It is not an issue of the will. Many times the flesh longs to please God, to look good in His sight, but the Scriptures state it is totally incapable of pleasing Him. The flesh simply does not have the power to do so no matter how sincere and dedicated it may be.

Do you see the tragedy here? When we left Chapter 19, harmony had been restored between Saul, David and Jonathan. David was back in court and everyone was honoring everyone. Now what do we have? Saul is angry with both Jonathan and David, and he is not just angry, he is enraged. Who is Jonathan angry with? His father, and he also is enraged. How about David? He is angry with Saul and probably a little put out with Jonathan because he didn't pull off this beautiful scheme. So now how does Saul feel toward David in contrast to Chapter 19 when he welcomed him back into court? He is hardened now. He is really hardened against David. This little trick to con Saul into bringing David back into court has had exactly the opposite effect, and Saul is now irrevocably committed to slaying David.

Contrary to how it may look, Saul is not a monster. Later on in his pursuit of David, when David twice has an opportunity to kill him but does not, he responds with great remorse and guilt. He confesses his wrong attitude, calls David righteous, tells him he will be king of Israel and then goes on home. Now, the remorse does not last because he is driven by his paranoia, but he is not a monster.

What kind of a night do you think Saul had [quoting the first phrase of verse 35], "Now it came about in the morning?" He had just called his beloved son a bastard in front of the whole court and had even tried to kill him. This was the son whose love and acceptance he desperately needed because he had rejected his God? He must have had one agonizing night of guilt and remorse and was not about to put a tail on Jonathan. All he undoubtedly wanted was to regain Jonathan's love and acceptance.

But what was Jonathan's attitude toward his father? He had just been publicly dishonored, his beloved brother

of the covenant dishonored and his mother insulted with the worst of Oriental insults and all without reason? His attitude was one of rebellion, but it was also one of suspicion. Twice Saul had used his daughters to try to eliminate David. Why not his son? So Jonathan succumbs to more deceit. He persuades David to hide in the field as he shoots arrows. If he says to the lad with him, "Come here get the arrows in front of you," his signal would mean, "Come back, David. There is safety for you." But if he shoots his arrows past the lad and says, "Go get the arrows." That means, "Go, David. Get out of town." This way he planned to fool the lad with him, thinking he was Saul's informant. Since no one else would be in the field, they would not have had to go through all this to hide their plot from anyone but the little child. Jonathan's mind was so mixed up that he did not trust his father nor did he have any concern for guilt or remorse his father might be experiencing.

Verses 35-39.

Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad was with him. And he said to his lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot." As the lad was running, he shot an arrow past him. When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad, and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" [The sign to David "Get out of Town."] And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, be quick, do not stay!" And Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and came to his master. But the lad was not aware of anything; only Jonathan and David knew about the matter.

Saul had not planted the lad out there. Saul was full of remorse and guilt and longed for fellowship with his son. He had not done anything tricky, but David and Jonathan [particularly Jonathan] had. Jonathan saw his father as he saw himself, at the moment, hostile, angry and embittered and imputed to his father his own feelings. He thought this young boy was his father's spy, so he wanted him absent so he and David could have a meeting.

Verse 40:

Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and said to him, "Go, bring them to the city."

The Spirit of God makes very clear that only Jonathan and David knew anything about this whole matter.

When you are out of fellowship with your Lord, you are out of fellowship with your loved ones, and you impute to them your own hostility, suspicions and anger. This, of course, is what breeds anger and hostility. Your loved ones can feel your hostility, and pretty soon you have a dog fight on your hands, and, unfortunately, when you are out of fellowship with your Lord, you almost always impute dishonorable things.

Have you ever noticed when you get upset with someone and are bitter and resentful toward them, you actually impute that bitterness and resentment to them. Then, as you harbor it within yourself, it festers away? Eventually when the Lord takes you out to the woodshed and straightens you out, you discover the fellow you held so much resentment against was totally oblivious to it all. You had just churned yourself into an ulcer while he was out playing golf with a totally clear conscience, maybe even wondering what was wrong with you. This was exactly where Jonathan and David were.

But God is a redemptive God and he begins to move. Verse 41:

When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David [wept] more. And Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" Then he [David] rose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.

Why do you think David wept so bitterly? For once in his life he had an older brother who really loved him, who was committed to him and had put him first, even before his own interests. He had clothed David in the

clothes of the crown prince and had made a covenant with him acknowledging he would become king. David saw Jonathan as a man who was loyal when loyalty really counted. But he knew Jonathan would stick by his father. Saul was fighting YHWH and had trapped himself into a destructive situation from which there was no escape. Jonathan would accompany his father down the path to destruction hoping he might be able to help.

We have discussed before why Jonathan did not fight Goliath. He did not fight because he would not fight, not because he could not fight. The champion of Israel, Saul, was head and shoulders above all Israelites, just as Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistines, was head and shoulders above all the Philistines. Jonathan, obviously filled with the Spirit of God, could very readily have taken on Goliath. He, alone with his armor-bearer, had just taken on the whole Philistine army at Michmash. Remember what he said, "The Lord can save by many or by few," and indeed God gave them total victory over the Philistines. So, if Jonathan was not afraid of the armies of the Philistines, where he could have gotten hit from any angle, why would he be afraid of Goliath who could only throw in one direction. No, he was committed to making his father face up to the fact that he was in rebellion against God, that the Spirit of God had departed from him, and that Saul was without courage. Up to then, Saul had a magnificent record as God's king. He took care of the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Moabites and the Syrian coalition. He was an extraordinary king, a superb fighter, a wonderful general and a brilliant battlefield tactician. But now he stood trembling before one man. Jonathan knew for his father to really become a man of God, he must face the fact that he had lost the Spirit of God. So Jonathan would not pull his father's chestnuts out of the fire.

It has been suggested that possibly Jonathan did not want to hurt his father's pride by taking on Goliath and doing what Saul would not do. But, I do not think he would ever have tried to save his father's pride. Jonathan was a very godly man. I think he wanted to make his father face the fact that the Spirit of God had departed from him, and that he had better get right with his Lord. Now, I cannot quote Scripture on this, but why would a godly man like Jonathan, who was filled with the Spirit and had just had a rousing victory at Michmash, not take on the enemy? Sure the enemy was 9 feet tall, but Jonathan was a fighter, a killer, a skilled warrior. So I feel very strongly, although I cannot support it by Scripture but only by the character of Jonathan, his prior actions and his loyalty to Saul, that he wanted to make Saul face the fact that he was fighting the Lord

Saul may have been a very carnal man, but he built godly principles into Jonathan's life and Jonathan never changed. Neither did his other sons. They all died alongside Saul. They were loyal to their father to death, and even though he was destroying himself, they would not leave him.

David, on the other hand, was a terrible father, and he lost all his sons, including Solomon, his chosen successor. Although Solomon began his kingship as the wisest man in the world, he ended it as a tyrant who departed from his God. He took numerous foreign wives in direct violation of Deuteronomy and even built temples right in Jerusalem to the gods of those wives. He multiplied horses and had a multitude of chariot warriors. He taxed his people unmercifully, making silver and gold just like dust when Deuteronomy admonished against putting silver and gold into your own pockets. He violated everything God had decreed for a king and ended up estranged from the God he had once so fervently loved.

I think we can take a lesson from this. We need to begin right now building into our children. It starts right here with each one of us. It does not start with the schools. It does not start with the government. It starts with me. It starts with you. You can be a "man after God's own heart" and still wind up in trouble if you do not practice God's truth. As we have just seen, Jonathan's beautiful intent of reuniting Saul and David wound up with them hating each other when ungodly methods were used. Intent is not enough. It is the practice that counts!

So, here we have Jonathan going back to his father, and down to destruction with him because he loves Saul, and, I think, because he loves David. How else is he going to keep David from being killed and Saul from killing him.

Why do you think God took this special relationship from David at this particular time? Do you remember what God did to Abraham when he wanted him to become a man of God? "Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you." (Genesis 12:1). Additionally

what does He say to a husband and wife about marriage? "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) There is no possibility, in the Hebrew, of having a "cleaving" relationship without a "leaving" relationship first. It does not mean to abandon, but it certainly does mean to leave behind any prior dependencies. And God is about to put David through "boot camp."

When I went through boot camp in the service, the first thing they did was take me from Southern California, where all my ties were, and ship me clear across the country. They totally isolated me from any prior dependency because they wanted me to depend entirely on them, so they could mold me into a man who would obey instantly without question. They deliberately uprooted all of us, took from us everything we could cling to, threw us into the great cauldron and began to turn up the fire-- and it worked!

What did the Assyrian and Babylonian kings do when they conquered a people? They took a whole nation, uprooted them and took them 1,000 miles away. Why? Because you do not fight for foreign soil, you fight for your own land. [When you rent a house, how well do you care for the lawn? When you own the house, how well do you care for the lawn?]

The Babylonians were very smart. The Romans were not so smart. They did not move people bodily around, and, therefore, their legionnaires were stretched very thin. Since the captive people were always on their own turf, they were always rebelling. Caesar should have moved all the Jews right out of Palestine, 1,000 miles away, but he did not. He left them there and the Jewish Zealots caused trouble year after year after year. Still Caesar did not move the Jews. Instead he stationed legions all over to keep and restore order. But the only way the Romans knew how to restore order was to butcher the people revolting, which only led to more rebellion and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem.

Do you remember when Saul sent three different sets of messengers after David and, instead of harming David, they began to prophesy? Then Saul, himself, went to find David, and he, too, began to prophesy. God was saying, "Saul cannot lay a hand on you, David, because I will take even the enemies of God and make them do my bidding." God made a prophet of Saul, in his disobedience, the same as he had when Saul was obedient. Remember the saying, "Is Saul among the prophets?" Well, that saying came from obedience, but then God took Saul in disobedience and made him do exactly the same thing, and the saying was repeated. "Is Saul among the prophets?" That should have told David, "No matter what Saul is like, he is going to do my bidding." Did David get the message? No. He ran to Jonathan and said, "My life is only one step ahead of death." David had gotten his eyes off YHWH and was depending on Jonathan. He ran to Jonathan, not to YHWH. So, God had to get Jonathan out of the picture. David was going to have to get all alone with God with no other dependencies

As an illustration of how beautifully God operates, what memory of Jonathan was David left with when he and Jonathan parted? The memory of a man returning to his father in a loving, accepting manner when his father deserved nothing except hatred, bitterness and resentment. What did David learn from Jonathan's relationship with Saul concerning the love God had for David; that it is never ending and not based on performance; that God loves the unworthy and the undeserving even in the midst of their unworthiness. He learned God had an irrevocable love for him.

While, at this point, Saul, in his madness, was trying to kill David, his friend, David himself later on, when king of Israel, actually killed his own friend. Scripture says nothing about Saul having sexual problems, but David took and, for all intents and purposes, raped [even though it appears she did not try very hard to resist him] Bathsheba, the daughter of one of his best friends, Eliam, and the wife of another of his best friends, Uriah the Hittite, both men of the "thirty", the great warriors of the inner circle, his key bodyguard. Then, having taken her, he killed her husband to cover himself when she became pregnant. Saul, as mad as he was, never did that.

David learned God had an irrevocable love for him even when he committed murder and adultery; crimes that, according to the Law of God, were punishable only by death. David, however, when confronted by Nathan the prophet, offered [in Psalm 51] the only "sacrifice" he could, "a broken and contrite spirit and a broken heart you will not despise." I think Jonathan was the one who modeled for David this amazing grace of God.

David understood that brokenness was all that God required. In God's love for David, 1000 years later He would sacrifice His Son to pay the penalty of death for David. While David, of course, did not understand all of the theology involved, he had an amazing grasp of the love and grace of God.

I think David also learned from Jonathan to "love your enemies and be good to those who spitefully use you," a requirement to be a "man after God's own heart."

I would like to skip ahead a little and take a look at God's redemption. Turn to Chapter 23, verses 16 through 18, the last meeting that David had with Jonathan. Saul is relentlessly pursuing David now. He is determined to kill him. He plans to trap and kill him, and David knows it. At this time David is delivering people from their troubles and helping them, but, in spite of that, they are betraying him for Saul's benefit, (part of David's "boot camp.") In the midst of all this, Chap. 23, verse 16, Jonathan, goes to David and encourages him in the Lord.

I Samuel, Chapter 23, Verse 16:

And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh [in the wilderness], and encouraged him in God. Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, [YHWH won't let it happen] and you will be king over Israel [God has anointed you as king. "Get your eyes off your circumstances and onto your God, David"] and I will be next to you [I am relinquishing my rights to the throne. I will be your counselor, your Chief of Staff. I will be second to you.] and Saul my father knows that also [David, you are fighting a battle already won. Don't act like you are a loser. (Jonathan draws him right back to YHWH and the faithfulness of his God.) You have been anointed king over Israel and so you shall be king over Israel]

You will remember, the choices Saul made finally resulted in a "depraved mind," a trialess mind, a mind that could not see things in proper perspective. He could only see things from the way they affected Saul. Jonathan, on the other hand, by his choices, wound up with the mind of Christ. He gave up his temporal kingship, which would have been his the moment David died. He saw things from God's perspective, not looking at the temporal things of this life but at the eternal things of God.

It is intriguing to me the repetition here, verse 18:

So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD; and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house.

"Went to his house," is essentially the same phrase as was used in Chapter 20:42, the previous time Jonathan left David to return to Saul. Thus Jonathan went back to his father, and died alongside him.

I am fascinated that some of Jonathan's last words to David were, "I will be next to you." This is a real prophecy, but how could it be? In a real sense, Jonathan was next to David as his counselor, his Chief-of-Staff, but in the spirit. Jonathan was a model of what a king ought to be. He was a model of a person who gave up his life for someone else. He gave it up out of love for his father. He gave it up out of love for David. I am sure one of his motivations in returning to Saul was to see that David did not get trapped, that during his father's more rational moments, he could plead the cause of David and he could be an advocate in court for his covenanted brother. Wherever David went, "next to him" was the model of a man after whom David could pattern his life.

Jonathan is a beautiful picture of the Spirit of God, while David is a type of Christ in the Old Testament. What is the Holy Spirit's job in relation to Christ? Is it to plead the cause of the Holy Spirit? No! It is to convict the world of sin and unbelief in Jesus Christ; to convict the world of its unrighteousness because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which He modeled before the world during His earthly life and which He continues to manifest through His disciples by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and to convict the world of the accomplished judgement of Satan because of Jesus Christ's conquering of Satan at the cross [Col. 2:13-15]. Since the Holy Spirit is God Himself, He is the equal of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet he puts himself in

subordination to Christ and points people to Christ and away from himself.

That is exactly what Jonathan did. So because Jonathan chose the "right snowball," he ended up a spiritual man with the mind of Christ. He saw things from God's perspective. He gave his life for the love of his father and the hope that he might return Saul to a right relationship with YHWH and that he might also protect David.

As we have seen, Saul, on the other hand, because of his choices, wound up with a "depraved mind," a trialess mind. He could only see things from his own perspective. He got worse and worse. Finally he hunted down a witch at Endor, [the only one he missed when, in the name of God, he had killed all the witches in Israel] to seek counsel from the occult. He was in direct opposition to God and he knew it, and God rebuked him for it.

It was mentioned that it was interesting to see God exercise his prerogatives by removing the honorable heir to the throne and replacing him with a seemingly lesser man. Not only was Jonathan the rightful heir before God took the throne away from his father Saul, but he seemed to be a much better, more righteous man than David at this time.

That is one of the beautiful things about the Scriptures. God does not look at the outward man, the outer performance. He looks at the heart, and David's heart, he says, is equal to or better than Jonathan's. "There is a man after my own heart," God says about David; yet David did everything wrong in the book. We are going to see that. But every time he got cited by God for his sinning, he ran straight to God and confessed. He took his lumps. He did not do what Saul did and rationalize his sin. We are going to see that when he gets in real trouble and is offered three options, one of which is to fall into the hands of the living God, he says, "I want that one. Don't let me fall into the hands of my enemies. Let me fall into your hands." He had a relationship with God that was beautiful and deep. His lifestyle left much to be desired, but not his relationship with God.

This is what God is trying to tell us. It is not our lifestyle; it is not our performance; it is our relationship with Him. It is not whether we conquer sin in our lives; it is whether we want to conquer sin in our lives that counts. God is looking for a deep yearning on our part to be God's man or woman. He will take care of how far and how soon and what sin and in what order--those are God's prerogatives--but He will begin to sanctify your life, and make it righteous, the moment you get serious before Him about dealing with your sin.

In chapters 21 and 22, next time, we will see the high cost of situational ethics. If you are ever tempted to do something you know is wrong because the situation seems to demand it, and you think you can probably get away with it, Chapter 21 and 22 will tell you what it is going to cost you in the end. It is David's first real lesson in his spiritual "Boot Camp."

Prayer:

Father, we thank you so much for the Word of God, for the way it speaks to our hearts, for the way it shows people as they really are, and shows us how we can be such fallible people even though we may be "a man after your own heart." Our motivation may be entirely right and totally holy and yet the moment we put ourselves in the act, we can foul it up in the most ugly way and come out totally ungodly having butchered the whole works. Father, teach us to be smart enough to realize that both the desire and the operation have to be of You. You have told us in Philippians 2:12-13 to "exploit" our salvation because you are the one who is in us both to give us the desire and to put into action what you want us to do, that you do both things for us, Father. The godly intent and the godly power are both from you, never from us. God, help us to be that smart. Help us to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Help us to be Christians. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

[Lesson #10](#)

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