

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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You recall last week in Chapter 23, God taught David not to leave back doors open as a means of escape instead of wholly trusting God. He was giving David, what we call in the Navy, our standard cold salt water bath. He was teaching him how to become a man of God, and it was a pretty rough process. Remember David left a back door to the Philistines open in case he needed to flee there, but God instructed him go up and recapture Keilah from the Philistines which made him odious in their eyes; therefore, that back door was slammed shut. Neither could he go back into the land of Israel without being pursued by Saul. Last week we saw him caught on that somewhat conical hill in the wilderness of Maon with Saul surrounding him. He could not flee into the desert because he would be very visible. At this time, the Philistines, taking advantage of Saul's absence, mounted an attack, which drove Saul away from David to them. So, at this time, the very enemy that David was afraid of making was used of God to save him salvation from Saul.

Now God is going to deal some more with David. Saul has fled back to fight the Philistines and to save Israel, while David has fled to the wilderness of Engedi, which is about half way up the Dead Sea and west of it. It is a very wild area, but that particular location has a water supply and is pockmarked with limestone caves, which are ideal for hiding. David has 600 men, possibly families too. However, tradition tells us that one cave is big enough that 30,000 people hid in it during a violent storm. So we are talking about mammoth caves even if that number has been exaggerated over time.

Here in Chapter 24, we have David safe in Engedi, away from Saul and everything under control. You might think, "Now God will leave him alone." Well, look what happens.

I Samuel, Chapter 24, verse 1:

Now it came about when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

This time Saul is going to get David for sure. He does not just send down troops. He gets together, what we call in the Navy, a special task force: 3,000 hand picked men. His fighting men outnumber David's 5 to 1, and this time he means to wipe him out. If Saul does not get David fairly soon, he will lose his kingdom to the Philistines. They are infesting the area. So he comes right back to pursue David and to relentlessly hunt him down.

Why is God so relentless? You would think David had had enough. What is God after? What has been the experience in your life when God, in his relentlessness, will not let you go? Have you every thought what God is preparing you for? Why is he doing this? What is His perspective compared with our perspective? How do we view this time, this life? This life is only a temporary thing, and God is determined down here in "Boot Camp," or if you are an Army veteran, "Basic Training," to perfect us, to bring us to completion for the goal he has for us for all eternity. A true lover never lets his beloved fall short of what the true lover wants for her. That is true in a marriage. It is true in the parent and child relationship. If you are a proper parent you will not

let up in teaching your children right from wrong. You will hang in there and hang in there and discipline them as often as you have to so they will learn the things you do not want them to forget. You love your children relentlessly, as God loves us and by this very relentlessness with which he pursues us, God is preparing for us an "eternal weight of glory," and he will pursue us right to the grave. The Apostle Paul says, "I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." [Philippians 1:6]

There is a second reason God relentlessly pursues us. When you successfully handle something difficult, it not only makes you stronger but also a good counselor. Why? Because you now have experience in that area of life. If you are having struggles in your marriage, what can a Catholic priest do for you? He has never been married. If you are having a struggle with your kids, what can he do for you if he has never had children? To whom do you want to go when you are hurting? If you are an alcoholic, you want to go to an alcoholic who has made it back to sobriety. If you are on drugs, you want a former addict who has been there and come out of it and is now clean. If you are having emotional struggles, you want somebody who has been in the pits. You need someone who has been where you are. So God will do to us exactly what He did to his Son, Jesus Christ, whom he loved with all the infinite love of his heart. What was that? Ultimately He crucified Him, but before that look at the life He gave Him. Right off, He was probably considered an illegitimate child in Nazareth because his mother conceived him out of wedlock. He was born into a poor family. In His teaching He would have been considered an upstart by the rabbis of his day because he had no background, no education other than some synagogue schooling. Additionally He spoke with that peculiar Galilean accent rather than a pure Judean one. His father apparently died quite early, and he became the carpenter of Nazareth. In Nazareth the soil conditions were such that it was necessary many times to dig down many feet to build a house on bed rock. [Remember the parable about building your house on a rock and not on sand?] Jesus must have sweat through many hours of hard manual labor and become darkened by the sun to reach that bed rock and to build houses that would stand firm. Then his public ministry of healing the sick, raising the dead, always, doing good, teaching truth, exhibiting a sinless life while befriending sinners, from prostitutes to greedy tax collectors, produced for Him what? Hatred, relentless persecution by the Jewish religious authorities, eventual desertion by his disciples, and finally the worst kind of death the Romans could inflict. As the Scriptures point out, the Son of God learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

But what about now? What does Hebrews 4:14-16 say about the high priesthood of Jesus Christ with reference to us? How is it we can run to our High Priest with a sense that he will understand us? Because he has been where we are. We do not have a High Priest who cannot be reached by the feelings of our weaknesses since He is "One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Therefore, we are to draw near to Him with confidence [literally the word has the idea of "with freedom of speech"] to the throne of grace, [undeserved favor] that we might receive mercy [even if we have already fallen flat on our faces in the gutter] and may find grace to help in time of need [Just when we are about to give in to temptation]. How is this possible? Because He knows our feelings; He knows what we are going through; He knows all our struggles. Thus He wants us to come to Him with confidence. Don't play games with him; He has been there. In the same way, God is determined to make David a "priest," as well as a king; Someone who can reach out and empathize with sinners.

From a human standpoint, if you had to pick the worst situation you could think of in your Christian ministry, who of all the people in your life would you think would be the worst person to minister to? Your enemy, of course. Here is David being relentlessly pursued by Saul who has now become a usurper on the throne, who is someone who hates him, who is trying to kill him, who has drafted a special task force to do the job. David meanwhile is righteous and has been anointed by God as rightful king of Israel. Here he is a hot-headed Jew, runt of the litter, obliged to fight his brothers and sisters all his early life to get his fair share, but now anointed king of Israel and what does he get; Saul on his tail everywhere he goes. He is undoubtedly thinking, "How come God is letting this happen to me? What did I do to deserve this?" The red hair starts standing on end, and he needs another cold salt water bath because God wants to use him to minister to his enemy Saul. God loves Saul with all his heart and wants him to repent. He does not want him to founder as he is now doing. And God wants to use David as His instrument to bring Saul back to Himself.

So let us see what happens.

First let me read this poem which appears in Chapter 2 of Ray Stedman's book "The Servant Who Rules, Mark 1-8". It is anonymous:

When God wants to drill a man,
And thrill a man,
And skill a man;
When God wants to mold a man
To play the noblest part,
When he yearns with all his heart
To create so great and bold a man
That all the world shall be amazed,
Watch his methods, watch his ways--

How he ruthlessly perfects
Whom he royally elects.
How he hammers him and hurts him,
And with mighty blows, converts him
Into trial shapes of clay

Which only God understands,
While his tortured heart is crying,
And he lifts beseeching hands.
How he bends but never breaks
When his good he undertakes.
How he uses
Whom he chooses,

And with every purpose, fuses him,
By every act, induces him
To try his splendor out.
God knows what he's about.
This is exactly what God is doing with David now.

I Samuel, Chapter 24, verse 3:

And he [Saul] came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. And the men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. And it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe.

As Saul comes out of bright sunlight, which reflects off the limestone cave, into a dark cavern, David is sitting in the back of the cave with his 600 men, or at least a good number of them. Saul sits down, facing out, minding his own business. To the oriental mind, this is a God given opportunity. Saul who has been pursuing David and his men, making their life a living hell, is sitting in the light at the front of the cave while they, who outnumber him maybe 100 to 1, are in the dark at the back of the cave. Saul is theirs! So David's men put the pressure on. Don't bother to check with God. "Look at the circumstances! They must be from God. God has delivered Saul into your hands." Unfortunately David listens to them. "Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly."

Why did he do that? Have you ever done this? You can't do what you really want to do so you do a symbolic act, in this case a token slaying. Have you ever had the boss chew you up one side and down the other, while

you sit and say, "Yes, Sir" and "No, Sir" in the proper order? You have to because you have a mortgage, kids with teeth being straightened or kids in college, and you need the job. So you suffer unjustly as he chews on you all day long. By day's end, you are really angry. You can't talk back to your boss or you will lose your job, but you have a wife at home, and since you are both Christians, she has to stay with you. So, you go home and snarl at her. Who are you really snarling at? Your boss! You are symbolically saying, "Stick it in your ear, boss."

Well, Saul has been trying to kill David for sometime, and David would love to kill Saul to get even, but Saul is the Lord's anointed, so David's hands are tied. But he can't resist sneaking up and symbolically killing Saul by cutting off the edge of his robe. Boy, it feels good! But who is David really cutting off? God! Who has allowed that nasty boss to unjustly chew you up one side and down the other? God! So who are you really angry at? God!

David is no more given to resisting temptation than we are. Here is his opportunity to kill Saul, and he cannot resist. In his heart he indeed killed Saul. Remember what the Lord said about adultery in Matthew 5:27? He says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." If you savor the lust in your mind, you have already committed adultery or fornication, and you need to confess it before God, repent and put it away. You do not congratulate yourself that you refrained from the physical act.

This is where David is. David wanted to kill Saul, and in his own mind, he did kill Saul, and it tasted delicious. That is why verse 5 says, "...it came about afterward [after he had cut off the edge of Saul's garment] that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe."

I Samuel 24, verse 6:

So he said to his men, [David now realizes he has sinned against God. He knows in his heart that Saul is God's anointed, and that God has allowed him to stay on the throne this long because God chose to do so.] "Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed."

He is convicted about "stretching out his hand" against Saul.

I Samuel 24, verse 7:

And David persuaded his men [literally "tore apart" his men. These men really want to kill Saul. Remember they were people "in distress," literally "bitter of soul," people who were being hounded by Saul now and previously people who were misfits in Saul's kingdom. They were not nice people, and they all had something against Saul.] with these words [It must have taken quite a bit of persuasion and it must have been done in very whispered tones] and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.

What did David do here? By cutting off Saul's robe he did kill Saul in his mind. Then, when conscience smote him, he did what? "For the Lord's sake," he essentially said, "I can't do this," and he took a positive step of repentance. Mind you it was not just a little confession, "Sorry, Lord." It was a positive step of repentance. Do not ever kid yourself that when I John 1:9 says, "Confess your sins," that it means just a little, "Sorry, Lord," and then it's O.K. to repeat the offense. "Confess" literally means "To say with God;" to see it exactly as God sees it and to call it what God calls it. Then God forgives you and you are cleansed. As we saw, the process may possibly involve a salt water bath, but it requires true repentance, a change of mind. David made a positive step of repentance here.

Now, when you have confessed your sin and have truly repented of it, and have claimed the forgiveness and cleansing of God, how useable are you of God? Well, Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose?" Having sinned, which has eternal

consequences, since you have lost some reward at the judgement seat of Christ, what does a redemptive God do with that act of sin? He makes it work for good. He takes the very person who did the sinning and makes him available to be used with other people with the same problem. That is exactly what he does here with David. The sin was wrong. God does not condone it and there is an eternal loss of reward on David's part, but God does open up a ministry.

Now, why would David's ministry to Saul be so effective in Saul's life? If I have been through what the people I am ministering to are going through, I do not have to play games with them. I have been where they are, and this gives me a freedom and authority in talking to them which I would not otherwise have. I have been there. I have been freed. I know what works. I know that if they will face up to the same thing that I faced up to, if they will call it what it is and take a true step of positive repentance, it will be freeing for them too.

So look at what God does with David now that he has been through the steps. What was David's sin? Murder! What is Saul's sin? Murder! They are both murderers. They both want to kill each other. But now that David has mastered that desire, he is the ideal person to use in the life of Saul. Watch how God uses him.

I Samuel 24, verse 8:

Now afterward [After this process of committing the sin, of repenting when he saw it was actually against God and of taking a positive step of repentance] David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, [Apparently there is now some distance between David and Saul] "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself.

What is the first step in dealing with a person who has the same sin you have, particularly if they are older? As Paul tells Timothy, in I Timothy 5, "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as a father." The fact that you have become victorious over this particular sin does not make you superior. You were saved by the grace of God and but for the grace of God you would still be a Saul. It was only by the grace of God that you were able to appropriate the life of Christ and become victor. You are not better than the victim, and, therefore, you are to treat that person as an equal or in the case of an older man, as a father. It should not give you a judgmental perspective but a brother's perspective. You are both victims of the same problem. "One of us happens to have been able to appropriate the life of Christ, and I would like to tell you how you can do it also and have the same freedom I have." David does not denigrate Saul, he bows to the earth and calls him, "My lord, the king."

I Samuel 24, verse 9:

And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'? Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.'"

What does David recognize about Saul and his position as king? David has been anointed king of Israel by God, but Saul is still on the throne? Saul is determined to stay there by his own might, but he is still there because God has allowed it. He is still God's anointed king of Israel. David is not yet ready. David now, having repented, gets God's perspective on the situation; he no longer sees it from his own perspective that says, "I was anointed king years ago, but Saul is still sitting on that throne." No, he is a kid yet compared to Saul, and God has a whole training program for him. Saul is on the throne by God's permission not by Saul's wisdom or purity. So David now sees Saul from God's perspective.

I Samuel, verse 11:

"Now, my father, [that is exactly what I Timothy says to call him, your father] see!"

What does the word "my father" say about David's attitude toward Saul? What has happened to David now

that he looks at Saul from God's perspective? He feels love for him even though Saul still wants to kill him. God loves Saul, and he loves him right where he is, as a murderer and usurper. David, now, seeing him from God's perspective, can look upon Saul, his enemy, and see him as a man who needs help, and he loves him. He comes out with, "My father," not with "My king," but "My father."

I Samuel 24, verse 11b:

"Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it."

This is a glorious passage. When David repents and agrees with God, God takes that very piece of robe David had sinfully cut off and sanctifies it! He takes the very thing used for sin and uses it for righteousness. This is the redemption of God; Romans 8:28 in full bloom. Cutting off that robe was cutting Saul's throat in David's mind. It symbolized murder. However, in the hands of God and a repentant man it becomes an instrument of redemption. Since David has dealt with his own sin and understands that it was against God, he is now used of God as a mediator for Saul. He begins to focus Saul on the real issue in Saul's life which is God's will because he has finally realized God's will was the real issue in his life too.

I Samuel 24, verse 12:

"May the Lord judge between you and me, and may the Lord avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness;' but my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? The Lord therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause, and deliver me from your hand."

David is trying to get Saul to focus on YHWH, the God of Israel, the God of the covenant; the God who anointed Saul king; the God who allows Saul to stay king. Saul is not fighting David, he is fighting God. God would like Saul to repent too, and he uses David who can now focus Saul on God because he himself has seen his need to focus on God.

There is an interesting simile here. In that day a dead dog was a cur, a mangy cur. According to David, who is the king of Israel pursuing? "A dead dog." What is he implying there about his ability to wrest the throne from Saul? Does David feel in his heart that he has any ability to get that throne on his own? No, he sees himself as "a dead dog." Dead dogs can not bite. "I have no ability to take this throne away from you, oh King of Israel!" What else does he feel like, "a single flea." On the carcass of this dead dog, Saul is after this one flea from all the infestation of this whole carcass. That is pretty stupid, isn't it? Well, what is Israel being infested with right now while Saul spends his time chasing one young man?. The Philistines! They are infesting the country. There are fleas everywhere in Israel, and Saul is giving away the kingdom piece-by-piece while chasing "one single flea" on the carcass of "a dead dog." David not only points Saul toward God, he also appeals to his reason in an attempt to get him to focus. David also asks that the Lord plead his cause, which God does beautifully. But what does it say about how much the Lord really wants Saul to repent, this man who is violently opposed to God? How far will God go to redeem a sinner? All the way! Saul deserves nothing but the condemnation of God, and God still loves him and wants him to repent.

Now at least Saul feels remorse if not true repentance yet.

I Samuel 24, verse 16:

Now it came about when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?"

What has Saul been calling David up to now? "Son of Jesse," son of that family with Moabitesses and Canaanites in it, [even one marriage to an Ammonite], a nothing kid, that runt of the litter who comes from a

mixed bag of a background, not even a pure Jew. What happens when David shows compassion and mercy to Saul and calls him, "My father," shows him respect which Saul does not deserve, prostrates himself and calls him, "My lord, my king." What does it do to the heart of the enemy? It melts it, doesn't it? "David, my beloved," is what Saul really means when he calls him "my son, David."

I Samuel 24, verse 16b:

Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

Has it ever struck you that the tragedy of Saul's life is that it is lived in a constant state of tension? He really does love David. There really is a father-son relationship there. Saul is not a degenerate maniac. He is an outstanding man, although admittedly living in his own strength instead of God's, but he really is an outstanding man. He is a far better father than David. He was a great king while he was walking with the Lord. He is a superb general. His own sons love him. His son, godly Jonathan, goes to his death with him. His other sons also stay with him and are killed alongside their father Saul in his last battle. In the midst of his madness, Saul's sons die with their father. What do the sons of David do? They fight among themselves and one son even tries to kill David and take over his throne. Humanly speaking Saul is really an extraordinary man. Tragically though, Saul lives much of his life dominated by the flesh even though he has a godly background. "Saul" means "prayed for." Since his father named him "prayed for," he probably was an answer to prayer. And Saul, in the depths of his soul, really wants to do good, but he is in bondage to the flesh which says, "I come first." "Me, myself and I," the unholy trinity. Have you ever thought about the horrendous tension Saul must have undergone? Let me read you about another Saul 1,000 years later.

Even though 1,000 years apart the two Sauls have essentially the same experience. In Chapter 7 of Romans, the Apostle Paul [Saul of Tarsus before his conversion] a Benjamite, from the tribe of Saul, named for Saul the king, starting in verse 14 writes to the Roman church:

Romans 7, verse 14:

For we know that the Law is spiritual [God given]; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin [I am a victim not a victor]. For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one going it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin [the flesh] which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other with my flesh the law of sin.

That is a perfect description of what Saul of Tarsus and a thousand years earlier Saul of Benjamin went through. The life of Saul of Benjamin was just an agony of tension. A man who really wanted to do good but who was driven by the flesh. You can see it here. He just breaks down and weeps when he is confronted with the love action of David his son.

In I Samuel 24, verse 17 he says:

And he said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you. And you have declared today that you have done good to me, that the Lord delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely? May the Lord therefore reward you with good in

return for what you have done to me this day."

He makes a public confession and fully acknowledges that David is doing right. He is a broken man, but do you notice one thing about his blessing? It is the same kind of blessing that he voiced before. Remember in Chapter 23 he blessed the Ziphites for betraying David into his hands. "May you be blessed of the Lord for your compassion on me." What does his blessing here emphasize again? "May the Lord therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day." The flesh is incurably self-centered. Even when it blesses, the blessing is self-centered. Even when it is religious, it is self-centered. It demands something for itself.

We see it in our worship systems. It is apparent in these beautiful cathedrals. Their stained glass windows, gorgeous wooden carvings, great high altars are designed to make you feel in the presence of God. The beautiful music they play is designed to give you a sense of worship, but instead of supplementing the teaching of the Word as it should, in many places it has taken over as the main event because it makes you feel religious. The pastor will follow with at most a twenty minute message on how good you really are deep down inside your being, encourage you to try harder, to do the best you can, and declare God will reward you. That is right out of the pit! The message of the gospel is that we are hopeless and helpless and cannot do anything that is acceptable to God in and of ourselves. The flesh cannot please God. Therefore God has taken steps to do in us and through us what we cannot, and even many times will not, do ourselves. Don't try harder. Trust! Walk in obedience to your Lord and while you are doing it, have an attitude of thanksgiving that He is doing continually in you and through you what you cannot and will not do yourself. You can go to hell in the most beautiful cathedrals in all the world.

When I was a youth, I attended for awhile a church down south with a new million dollar [in those days a lot of money] "sanctuary," which is what they called it and which is not Scriptural. [You are the sanctuary of God if you are indwelt by Him]. It was actually just a building with a mortgage. I admit that it was beautiful. But at the same time they redid the hymnal and removed any reference to the blood of Jesus Christ when the Scriptures teach in both the Old and New Testaments that without the shedding of His blood there is no forgiveness of sin. They previously had had a godly old Scotch preacher who taught right on line with the Word of God. When he retired they brought in a young man from one of the liberal seminaries and in one generation that church lost its way. It is now one of the most beautiful places I know of in Southern California to go to hell.

Now on to verse 20. God pleads David's cause and he pleads it from the lips of David's enemy:

I Samuel 24, verse 20:

"And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. So now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household."
And David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

The very lips of his enemy are what God uses to plead David's cause. And Saul himself confirms that he knows David will one day be king. The very man David wanted to kill is the very man God uses to strengthen David's faith.

But there is an conspicuous flaw in David's character that shows itself here. It was very common in the ancient east for a new dynasty to eliminate man, woman and child, particularly male children, of the old dynasty. And it was also very common for a new dynasty to eliminate all brothers, flesh and blood brothers, of the old dynasty. They wanted to eliminate all chance of opposition. In fact, when we get into the book of Kings, the wicked kings of the northern ten tribes do this again and again.

What did Jonathan ask David to do when he covenanted with David and acknowledged David would be king some day? Remember? "Do not cut off my relatives. If I am alive, be good to me and if I am dead, be good to my relatives." Saul asks the same thing here. What is the flaw in David's character that these two people who

love him and know him very intimately are aware of? It is something God will deal with in the very next chapter. Something David just demonstrated in this chapter. He is a great warrior, but he is more than that. He is a vindictive warrior. David likes to get even. We are going to see it again and again. God is going to make David a man after God's own heart. How will he do it? What did God do about your sins? Get even? God is a holy God whose holiness must be satisfied. How can that holiness be satisfied? By God giving himself. He paid for your sins and my sins. He did not "get even" with us. Instead He went to the cross himself for us and died in our place. David has to learn this, and God is going to teach him this principle.

Next time in chapter 25 we have David and Abigail and you will see how God begins to deal with David's vindictiveness. In Chapter 26 we will see David's vindictiveness put to the test. God is a very faithful God in correcting the flaws in our character.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you so much for your Word, for how it shows us what we really are and what you really are and how you love us with an everlasting love whether we receive you into our lives or not, whether we obey you or not. You love us because we belong to you. We are your creatures and those of us who belong to you, Lord, are your children. Whether we accept you or reject you, you love us until the day we die, and you even love us in eternity even though you may have to condemn those of us who will not receive Christ as Savior and Lord. Father, we do not understand that kind of love, that loves its enemies that loves them intimately and that loves them for all eternity; a God that loves Satan so much that you even describe yourself as beating your breast in anguish when Satan fell even though You hate everything he stands for and have condemned him to hell for all eternity. We can't understand that infinite degree of love, but we thank you for it and rest in it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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