

David on the Run

This week in our pursuit of being women after God's own heart we will follow David through his rise in popularity as a young military hero. He is beloved of country, and wins the hearts of many, including the children of King Saul. David's character stands in strong contrast with that of Saul. As we pursue our study this week, make note of characteristics of David's personality that are highlighted by his interactions with Saul, Jonathan and Michal. It is these characteristics that God saw in David that endeared David to him. God bless you this week as you study his word. May it encourage and enlighten you as you reflect on what it means to be a woman after God's own heart.

Saul's Jealousy of David

Saul had initially welcomed David into his court as the hero who defeated the giant Goliath. David was given a position in the court as Saul's armor bearer and as a court musician. We will soon see that as David's popularity increases, Saul's favor decreases.



Read carefully the passage of 1 Samuel 18:5-18. As you are reading, note down the emotions Saul exhibits.

According to verse 7 what is it that ignited Saul's jealousy?

Verse 10 tells us that the next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house..." The Hebrew word *naba* translated here as "prophesying" can also mean "under the influence of". What did Saul do under the influence of this evil spirit?

Complete verse 12: "*Saul was afraid of David, because the _____ was with David but had left Saul.*"

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♥ Complete the ending of verse 8: “What more can he get but the _____?” Take a few minutes and turn back to 1 Samuel 13: 13-14 and 15:28. What do you think maybe occurring to Saul and how do you think he is responding to it?

We hear that everything David does is met with great success because the Lord was with him. As a result of David’s success Saul’s resentment and fear of David continued to grow while the nation of Israel came to love David even more. Saul decides he needs to rid himself of David but he doesn’t want to do it in a way that would bring judgment against him in the eyes of all of Israel. What are Saul’s next attempts to rid himself of David and what are the results?

	Action	Result
v. 13-15	_____	_____
	_____	_____
v.20-27	_____	_____
	_____	_____
v. 28-30	_____	_____
	_____	_____

The King James Version describes David’s success in verses 5 and 14 in slightly different terms than the NIV. Verse 14 says: “*And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.*” David’s success is directly related to behaving wisely, making wise decisions. The KJV also describes David this way in 1 Samuel 16:18: *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and **prudent in matters**, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.* It would appear that David is a man who considers his options and uses caution in decision making, unlike Saul who tends to act rashly and irrationally.

♥ Read James 3:13-18.

- According to James, where does wisdom come from?

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- Where there is envy and selfish ambition what is the result?
- How do these verses apply to David and Saul?

Saul miscalculated in allowing Michal and David to marry. In verse 21 what did he hope Michal would be to David and what would happen?

The term translated as “snare” is a Hebrew word used three times in the Torah to describe the danger of idols and idolatry.¹ Later we learn that Michal brings idolatry into her marriage with David. It appears that Saul is perceptive and shrewd enough to attempt to attack David spiritually, where physical attacks have been unsuccessful. If David were to turn to idolatry, the Lord’s hand might turn against him, removing his hand of protection from David in battle with the Philistines. Unfortunately things did not go as Saul planned. David continued to prosper in all he did. Clearly the Lord was still with him. Saul became more afraid of David because as Michal’s husband, David now had a claim to the throne. By permitting this marriage Saul would learn that love is stronger than family loyalty. At first he didn’t seem overly concerned about using his daughters as pawns in his schemes against David, but I think now he’s starting to see he sacrificed more than he realized. Should something ever happen to Saul and his son Jonathan, his heir, he has just handed the throne over to David through Michal.

♥ In this chapter, what character traits do you see modeled by David that reflect a man after God’s own heart?

¹ New American Commentary

Saul Tries to Kill David



In our passage today we will see Saul's deadly anger burning against David.
Read 1 Samuel 19:1-24.

What does Jonathan warn David about and advise him to do?

What is the result of Jonathan's conversation with his father?

What happened when David was summoned to play the harp for David?

- Reread chapter 18:11, how many times did David already escape a similar situation with Saul?

Complete v 11: *Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to _____ him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed."*

♥ Did you notice **what** Michal used as a ruse to attempt to fool Saul's men? It wasn't a dummy or just a statue. What was it? What do you think of her choice of objects and its presence in the home of David? What is the significance of it being there?

- According to tradition Psalm 59 is explicitly connected with this episode in David's life. According to her actions, who does Michal place her trust in for David's escape?
- Take a look at Psalm 59, who does David place his trust in for deliverance? (see verse 9-10 and 16-17).

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Michal is following in her father's spiritual footsteps. She does not place her faith in the God of Israel, but in pagan idols. Her apostasy will cost her dearly. Just as Saul's spiritual disobedience and rejection of God will cost him not only a kingdom, but the establishment of a dynasty, Michal too, will suffer the consequences of denying the one true God. Look ahead to 2 Samuel 6:23. What does it say about her family?

What did Michal tell her father when confronted with David's escape?

While this lie probably preserved her life (Saul didn't think twice about condemning his son to death over eating honey, he probably wouldn't have too much difficulty in taking his anger out on her for helping David escape). What do you think this lie contributed to Saul's fury against David?

♥ Verse 18 tells us that David fled to Samuel in Ramah. Why do you think David went to Samuel?

David's escape from Saul's clutches in Naioth is miraculous. What happens to Saul's men and then to Saul?

Complete verse 24: *He stripped off his _____ and also prophesied in Samuel's presence. He _____ that way all that day and night.*

The prophesying denotes being under the influence and control of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God covered the stronghold of Naioth and its influence was felt by all who entered in with evil intention. Even Saul, the most powerful man in the Kingdom was subject to the control of the Spirit of God. That spirit was invincible and insurmountable. The Spirit of God that had marked David as the next King now served to protect David for that future kingship. This is the last time Saul will be under the influence of the Spirit of God, and God would use that opportunity to humble Saul before all Israel.

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- The robes he strips off include his royal vestments. What do you think is the significance of this statement?
- The word translated “lays” is the Hebrew word “*naphal*” which means: to fall, lie, be cast down, fail, to cause to fall, fell, throw down, knock out, lay prostrate. What do you think the Holy Spirit is demonstrating to Saul through this experience?
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David and Jonathan



After fleeing Naioth, David sought out Jonathan. Read Chapter 20 of 1 Samuel.

Does Jonathan initially believe David’s accusations against his father? (See verse 4) Despite his response what does Jonathan agree to do?

What is Jonathan’s request of David in verse 14-15? What does it imply?

Verse 16 says that Jonathan made a covenant with the House of David. In this context the word house refers to David’s family line, in particular his descendants. Why would he make a covenant with the *house* of David? According to the *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, “a covenant was a treaty, alliance of friendship, a pledge, an obligation between a monarch and his subjects, a constitution.”

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♥ Look back to 1 Samuel 18: 1-4. These verses recount the original covenant between the two men. Bear in mind that Jonathan had just witnessed David defeat Goliath by placing his faith in the Lord's deliverance. Complete verse 4: *Jonathan took off the _____ he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his _____, his _____ and his _____.*

- What did Jonathan first take off and give to David? _____
This represented the Royal Regalia of the heir to the throne. Jonathan, heir to the throne acknowledged David as the rightful heir.
- Next he handed over what three items? _____
These items represented Jonathan's pledge to protect and serve David.

Turn back to 1 Samuel 20: 12-16.

- What do you think this covenant means?
- Who is witness of this covenant? (verse 23, 42)

Saul responds with anger to Jonathan when he talks to him about David's absence from the king's table. What did David say that Saul's response would mean? (See verse 7)

- What does Saul accuse Jonathan of doing in verse 30?
- What does Saul recognize as being fulfilled as long as David lives? (Review 1 Samuel 13:13-14)

Verse 41 tells us that David wept the most at their separation. Why do you think that is?

Saul Pursues David



David, now on the run having lost his place at court, lost the safety of his home, and the support of his wife comes to the priest Ahimelech in Nob where the tabernacle resides. Read 1 Samuel 21.

For what reason does David go to Nob? What two things is he seeking and who accompanies him?

What lie does David tell the priest? What would be of such concern to David that he would lie to the priest?

♥ David is hungry and asks for some bread. What type of bread does the priest have? What is its proper name?

- Leviticus 24: 8-9 Describe the purpose of this bread and what is to be done with it.
- Jesus mentions this incident specifically in Matthew 12:3-8. Complete verse 7: *If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire _____, not _____,' you would not have condemned the innocent.*
- What is Jesus' point in this passage? How does it relate back to 1 Samuel 21:5-6?
- The Hebrew word for Shewbread is *paneh*, which means, face, countenance, presence. Hence its other title: The Bread of the Presence. It was kept before the Lord's presence in the tabernacle. What do you think may be the

correlation between bread and presence? What might God have been trying to show David through this symbolism? Take into consideration Matthew 4:4.

After finding sustenance, David asks for a weapon. What weapon does he retrieve?

This interlude at Nob is spiritually significant. While David does lie to the priest, likely it is for the priest's own protection. Providing aid and arms to an enemy of King Saul would certainly bring the King's wrath, which as we will see is unavoidable. David says, *"The king charged me with a certain matter..."* (v. 2). David neither clarifies what matter he has been charged with or even by what king. It is possible to take David's words to mean that he is on a mission for *another* king. David has referred to God, or Yahweh, as his King (cf. Psalm 5:2; 20:9; 24:7–10; 29:10; 68:24; 145:1). Yahweh has previously been referred to as the King of Israel in 1 Samuel 8:7 and 12:12. If we take David's words to mean that he is on a mission for Yahweh, then his statement is more of an omission of all the facts, rather than an outright lie. As for the men he mentions, others will come to join him later on, though they are not currently present at another location as David seems to indicate.

The priest Ahimelech seems to recognize David's dire plight. He agrees to allow David (and his men) to consume the Bread of the Presence based on two criteria. The Bread of the Presence could, under normal circumstances, be consumed only by consecrated Levites and in a holy place (Leviticus 24:9). However, Torah law could be super-ceded in dire circumstances, for example the preservation of life. The priest Ahimelech was qualified to make the judgment that David's circumstance was an issue of life and death. He had no other food to offer and David had no means of obtaining sustenance. The Torah law could be suspended in this situation. The second criteria required by the priest was that David (and his men) be ritually clean regarding sexual contact (Leviticus 15:18), as would the Levites be required who normally consumed the bread. The fact that David replies, *"The men's things (bodies) are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!"* (v. 5) reveals David's belief that Israelite warfare was a holy matter and that those who fought under his command be consecrated servants of the Lord during all missions.² When David confronted Goliath, he was motivated by the

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fact that the Philistine had “*defied the armies of the living God*” (17:36) and he entered into battle “*in the name of the Lord Almighty*” (17:45).

Nob is probably the most sacred shrine of Saul’s kingdom, possibly an official state sanctuary.³ David may have gone there with the intent of retrieving Goliath’s sword. It had become his property upon defeating Goliath. David may have left the sword at this shrine as a gift of dedication in response to the Lord giving David this victory. David was able to reclaim this sword that Ahimelech had hidden behind the Ephod. According to the Holman Bible Dictionary, the Ephod was a priestly garment “associated with the presence of God or those who had a special relationship with God.” The Ephod of the High Priest bore the gem encrusted breast plate⁴ which held the Urim and Thummim used to cast lots to determine God’s will in a matter. It is unclear whether this ephod at Nob belongs to the high priest⁵, but as we will see, it does come into David’s possession at a later time. We can see that Goliath’s sword, hidden behind the ephod signifying God’s presence, takes on a sacred or consecrated element. God makes *this sword* available to David for a sacred mission as Israel’s future king. David rightly says, “*there is none like it*” (v9).

David, utterly alone and pursued chooses to go to Gath. Who else was from Gath?

A champion named _____, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. (17:4)

♥ What would ever possess David to go there? What possible reasons could David have for going to Gath?

♥ Why would he pretend to be insane? Do you think this was all an act? Give reasons for your opinion.

³ McCarter, P. Kyle; *1 Samuel*; pg. 366

⁴ See Exodus 28-35 for more details

⁵ Ahimelech is the *chief priest* at Nob, and his grandson served with Zadok the High Priest during David’s reign.

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God, with his wonderful sense of humor, protects David from the Philistine king:

*Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me?
_____that you have to bring this
fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?" (v. 14-15)*