




THE COMMUNITY

Total Surrender | TRUSTING GOD EVEN IN THE MIDST OF ADVERSITY

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

1 Samuel 18:1-20:42

Killing Goliath the giant vastly helped David's public image. If he were living today, he might have found his face on the cover of GQ. People were going crazy over the valor of David. Even Jonathan, the king's son, found David to be a true blood brother. Our narrative package of 1 Samuel 18-20 covers a lot of ground. Saul becomes terribly jealous of David and therefore wants to kill him. Sadly, Saul thinks that murdering David will solve his problems. Little does Saul realize that his problems don't originate with David, they are products of his wicked heart.

This passage teaches us that even in the midst of dire circumstances we can turn to God and trust that if we are faithful to Him, He will provide deliverance. During the study, stress that God is still sovereign – even when things look badly – and that David stays faithful to Saul even though it might cost him his life. God gives David the strength to fulfill his duty, and we can trust God to do the same.

Saul Becomes Jealous of David (18:1-30)

Immediately after the battle with Goliath, David and Jonathan become best friends. Jonathan feels so much allegiance to David that he gives him his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt (v. 13). This reveals Jonathan's incredible respect and honor for David. In later chapters, we will see that this friendship becomes stalwart and unbreakable. As David fights more and more battles, the Israelites give him much praise. The women sing in the streets, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This is not pleasing to Saul. His ego swells and he begins to let jealousy seep into his heart. Saul proclaims, "What more can he have but the kingdom" (v. 8). This simply means that David is practically the second most powerful man in the kingdom. The very next day "a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul" (v. 10) that causes Saul to be angry with David. This word "harmful" is the same Hebrew word (ra') as in 16:14, which can mean evil. From that day on Saul continued to search out ways to kill David. Saul even tries to get his daughter to marry him "that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him" (v. 21).

Saul is afraid of David because he has the Spirit of the LORD. So, instead of turning to God, he willfully becomes David's enemy. Nevertheless, David hopes in God and stays faithful to Saul during this grave adversity. This chapter shows the utter ugliness of Saul's heart and how far he has drifted from God.

What's the Big Idea?

God is with David during adversity, expressed in his success in battle, his deliverance from Saul, and his covenant love with Jonathan. This passage shows us that God reigns over all our circumstances for His purposes and shows grace to His people by granting them favor, deliverance, and covenant love.

What's the Problem?

Our fallen nature causes us to turn to ourselves or other things in the face of adversity instead of turning to Almighty God.

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Saul Pursues David (19:1-24)

Chapter 19 is a continuation of Saul's disgust with David. Saul spoke to his servants about killing David and even asks Jonathan to kill him! Jonathan goes before his father and pleads for David's life. Then Saul, as if he had a split personality disorder, says, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." We see two things here: 1) Saul lies – as we'll soon find out; 2) He uses the lord's name in vain! In verses 8-10, David comes back from war and for a third time, a harmful spirit from God comes upon Saul. David is playing the lyre again when Saul tried to chuck his spear at him. This is the third time this has happened (see 18:11). Notice how Saul, not seeking the Lord, is hopelessly distraught and overwhelmed and how David, humble and God-fearing, is at ease and continually has victory after victory. This section illustrates the peace and security we can find when our faith and trust is in God. Saul is obsessed with making a name for himself, whereas David is seeking to make God's name famous. Help your group follow David's example by seeking the Lord for mercy and grace to be humble and dependent on Him alone.

David and Jonathan Plan (20:1-42)

In the final chapter of our narrative, David asks Jonathan to tell him the reason Saul is after him. "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life? (v. 1). David tries to remain humble and broken and he looks deep inside himself, wondering if perhaps he has committed a sin. of course that is not so; David is innocent. David and Jonathan make plans for David to escape Saul's evil conspiring (vv. 5-17). During the new moon feasts, David will be hiding in the fields. It's going to be a nerve racking three days for David, but through this he leans more deeply on the Lord for strength, protection, and deliverance.

When the feasting begins, Saul does not say anything about David's absence until the second night. When Jonathan explains that David had asked to be excused to return home, Saul's anger is ignited. Saul asks Jonathan why he is loyal to David because as long as he lives, Jonathan's kingdom will not be established. But Jonathan does not think like his father. Jonathan is not concerned with worldly success – something that Saul will never understand.

As the story unfolds toward the end of chapter 20, discuss with the group the unshakeable faith of David and Jonathan in the LORD and how it was their comfort and refuge in such a time of uncertainty. Help them grasp that if David could lean on God in a time when people were seeking to kill him, we can trust in God in anything. The passage, like others, points to Jesus and His sufferings. He suffered, not so that we won't have to, but so that we might run to Him during our suffering (eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:15-16).

What's Our Response?

Turn to God in faithfulness despite the adversity you face in the things God has for you to do.

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What Are the Questions?

1 Samuel 18:1-20:42

Launch

What are the signs that God is with a person?

Explore

Read 1 Samuel 18

1. Jonathan makes a covenant with David and gives him his robe and sword (verses 1-4), which signified that he was conferring his rights as crown prince upon David. How does this strike you as unusual?

2. What evidence do you see of David's prosperity or blessing in this chapter?

3. To what does the author attribute David's prosperity or blessing?

4. How does Saul respond to David's blessedness?

Read 1 Samuel 19

5. How does God show his favor to David in this chapter?

6. Look again at verses 9 and 20-23. What does it say about God that He is both behind David's affliction and David's deliverance?

Read 1 Samuel 20

7. Summarize the plan Jonathan and David devise in verses 1-23.

8. What do verses 14-17 say about the source of Jonathan's commitment to David?

9. How does Saul respond when David misses dinner for a second night in a row?

Apply

10. Think about a hard circumstance you're facing. What difference would it make to see that this circumstance is part of God's bigger plan for your life?

11. How does Jesus' death on your behalf and His covenant with you (if you're His follower) assure you of His favor and good intentions as you face hard circumstance (see Romans 8:32)?

12. Read Matthew 6:33. Just as Jonathan sought a kingdom other than his own, Jesus calls us to do the same. In what ways do you find yourself seeking your own kingdom, and how do you sense God calling you to change to ensure you're seeking His kingdom?

13. Read Romans 8:28-39. In what ways do these themes show up in this passage in a way that suggests that God acts similarly toward His people as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ?

14. What contrasts exist between David's experience and the experience of Christ's followers in Romans 8?

15. Read 1 Corinthians 11:25-26. How does Jonathan's covenant with David picture Christ's covenant with His followers?

NOTES:

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What Are the Answers?

1. Most people fight to keep power and eliminate potential sources of opposition. They don't give it away.
2. His covenant with Jonathan, success in battle, favor from the people, and Michal's love.
3. The LORD was with him.
4. He fears him and tries to kill him.
5. He rescues him from Saul through Jonathan in verses 1-10, through Michal in verses 11-17, and through the prophets in verses 18-24.
6. It shows that the adversity David faced didn't happen by accident but to fulfill God's purposes for David.
7. Jonathan feels out Saul about David and uses arrows in a field to signal a hiding David about Saul's disposition toward him.
8. Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much as his own life.
9. He accuses Jonathan of conspiring against him and calls for his death.
10. Allow the group to discuss.
11. Allow the group to discuss.
12. Allow the group to discuss.
13. God brings good through all circumstances and makes them more than conquerors, keeps us connected to His love in the midst of all kinds of circumstances, and lets us experience this love in the context of relationships with other followers of Christ.
14. Although God's love for His people is always certain through faith in Christ, physical deliverance isn't a guarantee.
15. Just as Jonathan is committed to David even up to death, Christ has shown His commitment to His people in the same way. But Jonathan and David's covenant only had temporal impact while Christ's covenant with His people has eternal impact.

Memorize

Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.'"

1 Samuel 20:42



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