

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY FIVE

Aftermath of a Giant-Killing

1 Samuel 17:55–18:9

David had done nothing to deserve the treatment Saul gave him. His motive was right. His action was right. But Saul was jealous, so he misunderstood. I'll tell you . . . life is not fair! The wicked prosper and the righteous are afflicted. But God knows what He's doing.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

N*o good deed goes unpunished!* Have you ever heard that cynical quip? People usually blurt it out when helping someone backfires, and instead of thanks, they get trouble in return.

However, the truth is, God sees every act of sacrifice, generosity, and love. With God, no good deed goes *unnoticed*. He smiles upon His children when they reflect His heart, and He “rewards those who sincerely seek him” (*Hebrews 11:6*).

Yet it doesn't always feel like God is watching when an act of love receives no reciprocation. When giving generously results in financial hardship. Or when the acclaim from a heroic action generates jealousy and animosity in others.

Although David's defeat of Goliath saved the nation, it also stirred up a bees' nest of trouble for him. His victory over one enemy created a new one: King Saul.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will look at the early days of Saul's long hatred for David. David may have felt he was being “punished” for doing good, but God's favor never left him. David's example of patiently trusting in God through mistreatment reveals what followers of Jesus can do when they face opposition, despite—or even because of—their faithfulness to God.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Pray the wisdom-rich words of *Psalms 37:1–6*, asking God to fill you with wisdom as you face your enemies.

*Don't worry about the wicked
or envy those who do wrong.
For like grass, they soon fade away.
Like spring flowers, they soon wither.
Trust in the LORD and do good.
Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.
Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you your heart's desires.
Commit everything you do to the LORD.
Trust him, and he will help you.
He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn,
and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

With Goliath leading their war machine, the Philistines threatened to crush the newly formed kingdom of Israel. The young shepherd looked nothing like a warrior, but David defied expectations. He defeated Goliath because of his faith in God, winning both the battle and the hearts of the people. With a whirl of his sling, David became the most famous man in Israel.

But the most beloved person in the kingdom *should* be the king. At least, that's how Saul felt. Saul didn't know that God had already chosen David to replace him as king. Turn now to *1 Samuel 17:55–18:9* to see the genesis of the souring of Saul's relationship with his heir apparent.



Observation: Four Different Relationships

Pastor Chuck Swindoll's approach to Bible study—as described in his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*—begins with observing a passage of Scripture. He looks carefully at every word, every sentence, every paragraph and asks, “What does the text say?”¹ Read *1 Samuel 17:55–18:9* this way.



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David under Saul—1 Samuel 17:55–58

News about David's defeat of Goliath spread quickly. What inquiry did Saul make about David's identity just before and after David's battle with Goliath? He made this inquiry *three times* in *1 Samuel 17:55–56, 58*.

How did David respond to Saul's inquiry in *17:58*? What strikes you about David's response?

David with Jonathan—1 Samuel 18:1–4

David's proximity to King Saul allowed him to get close to his son, Jonathan. What expressions does *1 Samuel 18:1* and *18:3* use to describe the friendship between Jonathan and David?



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According to *1 Samuel 18:4*, what did Jonathan do for David in light of their friendship?

God knew that David needed an intimate friend—a kindred spirit—to go through the valley that was ahead of him. These men needed to embrace and relate and love one another and assure each other with God’s encouragement at low tides. It’s beautiful. And we need that in our lives as well. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

David before Israel—*1 Samuel 18:5–7*

David proved his worth to Saul by killing Goliath, and Saul honored David by giving him more responsibilities. According to *1 Samuel 18:5*, how did David fare in the assignments Saul gave him? Consequently, how did the people of Israel view David according to *18:5–7*?



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Saul versus David—1 Samuel 18:8–9

According to [1 Samuel 18:8](#), what was Saul’s emotional response to Israel’s newfound love for David? How did the events of this passage affect Saul’s relationship with David, according to [18:9](#)?

David became an overnight celebrity. Very few people could take that all in stride, but David did. He knew how to live with success without having it affect him. It’s a rare person who can do that . . . especially if he or she is young and has never lived before the public.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Learning from David’s Relationships

The interpretation phase of Bible study examines timeless theological truths based on a passage of Scripture. The author of 1 Samuel draws out four themes: submission, affection, exaltation, and opposition. After you answer each question below, *write your own timeless principle* based on David’s example that believers in Jesus Christ can follow.

How did David show *submission* as he found himself in the court of King Saul ([1 Samuel 17:55–58](#) and [18:2, 5](#))? Remember, David had been anointed as Israel’s next king, but Saul didn’t know.



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How did David and Jonathan show brotherly *affection* for one another amid David's tumultuous relationship with Saul (*1 Samuel 18:1–4*)? For some insight into the meaning of the expressions used to describe their friendship, check out *Constable's Notes* at netbible.org.

How do you think David responded to the people's *exaltations* (*18:5–7*)? (Note: you can learn interpretive principles both from what the text says and from what it does *not* say.)

Based on the character of David presented in this entire passage, how might you expect David to respond to the *opposition* from King Saul in the coming passages (*18:8–9*)?

Throughout this season of David's life, he remained humble—despite knowledge that he would soon replace Saul as king and despite the praise poured on him by the people. This posture kept his focus away from himself and on his God. *What an example!*



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Correlation: David's Success and Wisdom

First Samuel 18:5 notes that David “prospered” (NASB) in every task Saul assigned to him. The Hebrew verb translated “to prosper” or “to succeed” is *sakal*, and this verb is often used specifically to describe someone walking in wisdom or insight.

Read the following proverbs containing the verb *sakal*. Describe how David showed the characteristics praised in each proverb, and how they are relevant for you to apply in your season of life.

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 16:23

Proverbs 21:11



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David's wise actions were rooted in his trust in God. He rested in God's protection and remained faithful while serving Saul—even when Saul hated him. Many today find themselves in a position like David's, wondering how to trust God in the face of a fearsome enemy.

Application: Persisting in Good Deeds

Three points of application arise from David's example during his time of transition from being a nobody to taking center stage in Israel's story—despite Saul's opposition.

1. *Not knowing the future forces us to take one day at a time.* David didn't know why he faced such fierce opposition from Saul, but he trusted God and poured out his heart to Him.
2. *Having a friend helps us face whatever comes our way.* Jonathan provided David a lifeline during his seasons of trial—extending encouragement, love, and support.
3. *Being positive and wise is the best reaction to an enemy.* David knew he would be king. He could have taken Saul's throne by force, but he trusted God's timing. How wise!

Do you ever feel like you're experiencing punishment for your good deeds? How can trusting that God sees these good deeds and holds the future in His hands change your perspective?



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Do you have a dear friend like Jonathan—a friend with whom you can lock arms on your spiritual journey? How has this friendship encouraged you in your walk with God? How can you be a Jonathan to someone in your life today?

What is your gut reaction when a Saul-like person attacks you? What would it look like for you to adopt a wise attitude like David's the next time you face an enemy?

David's good deeds earned him both fans and foes, yet neither led him to think too highly of himself. He trusted that God would make him king in His time, and all the while, he maintained an openhanded posture of a servant. Regardless of the opposition you might face today, trust your sovereign God.



A FINAL PRAYER

As you close your Bible today, offer this prayer from Pastor Chuck:

Father, show us the difference between what pleases us and what pleases You. Develop within us a sheer desire that we'll less and less even consider the option of disobedience. Help us be like David—to stand fast, to do what is right without tiring of it. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

