

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Feb 26

MONDAY

So Jonathan made a promise - a covenant with David. He again affirmed his desire that David would triumph over his enemies, even if those enemies turned out to include his own father! Then Jonathan had David repeat the same sort of promises - that's the way a covenant works: both sides promise each other - and then he begins to share his plan. He tells David that the day after tomorrow, David should hide in *Ezel*, a place that they both know of.

READ: I Samuel 20:16-19

The exchange here is intense. Jonathan caused David *to swear again*. He seems to be pressing upon him the seriousness of this moment. What impresses me is that David goes the extra mile. He could have said that he had already sworn to be Jonathan's friend and that he would not do so again. But he swallows his pride and swears. The value of the relationship far out-weighs the small price he was asked to pay.

TUESDAY

Jonathan finishes telling his plan. He said that he would shoot 3 arrows and purposely miss the target. A servant would go out in the field to search for them. If Jonathan hollers to the servant that he should come closer to search for the arrows, that means the coast is clear. But if Jonathan hollers for the servant to look further away, that means for David to get as far away as possible.

READ: I Samuel 20:20-23

The plan is made and agreed upon. That there's a plan impresses me. We need plans in life. How do I get from here to there - I need a plan. How do I lead my kids to live wholeheartedly for the Lord? How do I practice wise stewardship and also generous giving? How do I grow in the things of God. Let's do some planning today!

WEDNESDAY

David missed dinner. Twice. The big deal is that he had a reserved seat at the King's table! (and when the King invited you to lunch, you went to lunch!) Anyway, after the second missed meal, Saul asked if anyone knew where David was? Jonathan (following the plan) said that David had asked of him permission to go to Bethlehem and join his family there for worship. David's older brother had more or less commanded him to be there.

READ: I Samuel 20:24-29

Notice this: David's reputation was such that when King Saul saw his empty seat at the table, he assumed that he was "not clean", (that is, he thought David had somehow polluted himself spiritually - such as coming into contact with a dead body - and as a commander in the army, that was very possible) and that he would need to first ceremonially cleanse himself, according to the Law of Moses. Saul's first thought was that David was involved not in treachery or mischief, but in something to do with the Lord. Such was the lifestyle of David - a lifestyle which spoke volumes! What's my lifestyle saying?

THURSDAY

When he heard Jonathan's explanation, Saul was furious. He verbally attacked Jonathan and accused him of being on David's side. He explained in no uncertain terms that as long as David was around, Jonathan would never get to be king, and therefore, David must die. Once again, Jonathan defended David's loyalty, and Saul ended up throwing a spear at Jonathan! It missed and Jonathan became angry at his father for the way he was treating David.

READ: I Samuel 20:30-34

Jonathan's explanation was plain enough and honorable enough to produce only one response from his father - that of a blessing upon David's venture. But instead, Saul exploded and attacked Jonathan. Jonathan is grieved both for his father's inappropriate outburst and for his malice towards David. He's distressed at the shame of being falsely accused of such evil in the presence of others. Saul's temper brought animosity into the dearest of all his relationships. A temper does that. Anger does that. It destroys even the closest of ties. Anger burns. It often burns all its bridges. Lord, keep us from anger.

FRIDAY

In the morning, Jonathan went out to fields to practice his archery. He instructed a servant to fetch the arrows. (after they landed!) And just as he and David had arranged, he shouted for the servant to look beyond, that is, further away for the missing arrows. (meaning, it was not safe for David to come in) The servant eventually found the arrows and never caught on to the ploy he had been a part of.

READ: I Samuel 20:35-39

Let's not miss the danger in all this. The king had already tried to kill both David and Jonathan. He would love to catch wind of an air of conspiracy so that he could try again with some legitimacy. After all, plotting against the throne - that was grounds for execution! The commitment to doing the right thing drove Jonathan onward. There are some things more important than life itself.

SATURDAY

Jonathan sent the servant with his bow and arrows (*artillery*, the KJV says) back to the palace, and then he sneaked out to meet David. David acknowledged Jonathan as the king's son and then they hugged each other, weeping over the fact that they couldn't be together anymore.

READ: I Samuel 20:40-42

The friends comfort each other in the covenant that was between them. This is our comfort - that *God has made with us an everlasting covenant!* We remind ourselves of that covenant every time we take the Lord's Supper and read the words "this is the new covenant in my blood." The new covenant is the promise God made that He will change our hearts and give us faith, and that our hope for salvation does not rest on any good that we can do, but on His eternal goodness. We call that Grace! And that by his grace, are we saved. Remember that covenant. There's much comfort in it. #19