

MONDAY

After David's glorious victory over Goliath, King Saul more or less claimed David as his own (kings can do that)! Living in the palace, David found a true friend in Saul's son, Jonathan. The two promised each other loyalty and undying friendship. As a gesture of all this, Jonathan gave David his robe, his armor, and even his weapons.

READ: I Samuel 18:1-4

Matthew Henry sees a picture of Christ in all this: the Lord Jesus stripped himself of his own glory in order to clothe us, and He emptied Himself to enrich us. Then, He went on and did much more than Jonathan: He clothed himself with our sinful rags! And the motive behind it was not unlike what we read about here: *he loved him as his own soul*. Wow! What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God! What marvelous love is this, O my soul!

TUESDAY

Saul gave David a leadership position over troops and when Saul ordered him to battle, David went, and won! Soldiers, palace servants, and basically everybody admired him. On one occasion, Saul and David and the armies had been out fighting the Philistine remnant. Returning to Jerusalem after yet another victory, the troops were met by the women of the city. They were dancing and singing in celebration. Their song praised Saul for his prowess in battle, but it praised David even more.

READ: I Samuel 18:5-7

Talk about hero worship! David had people singing songs about him! They were dancing in the streets! "Hardly my story," you're thinking? Well, maybe not. But there will be times when you are praised for a job well-done. Or for a great attitude. Or for your humble spirit. (Be careful of that!) And before you know it, it is your story!

WEDNESDAY

When King Saul heard the lyrics, he flew into a jealous rage. He reasoned that David's popularity was a threat to his kingship. The very next day, as David was playing the harp to soothe the troubled spirit of the king, Saul grabbed a spear which he evidently kept handy for such occasions, and threw it at David. In fact, Saul tried the same thing another time! He missed both times, and David escaped.

I Samuel 18:8-11

Do you notice how close behind the good times trouble follows? Right on its heels! Saul was quick to take offense and be suspicious of David when he had absolutely no cause to be so. Do we not find ourselves, at times, quick to take offense. We assume that every whispered remark is about us. May we be slow to take offense and not suspicious of the motives of others. That's the lesson.

THURSDAY

Saul recognized that God was with David and that he himself was no longer concerned with the things of God. As a result, he hated and feared David. Saul did not permit him to come before the throne any more, but he greatly increase his military responsibilities, putting him in charge of 1000 soldiers. He evidently hoped that David might suffer harm on the field of battle. But David led the troops wisely for God was with him.

I Samuel 18:12-16

Saul's real reason for despising David was that God was with David, and Saul knew it. The more clear it became that God was with David, the more Saul hated him. Of course, he did not admit to such a thing. But this passage speaks plainly: "Therefore, Saul removed him. If you faithfully live for the Lord and reflect His glory in your life, you will most definitely face opposition. No one who lives in the darkness looks good next to someone who lives in the light! Don't be surprised that you are not voted *Most Likely to Succeed* or *Best Loved by Person*. Loved by our heavenly Father and by fellow believers is all we hope for, and all we will sometimes find. It is enough.

FRIDAY

In his jealousy and resentment, Saul offered David the hand of his daughter Merab. But Saul did so saying that in exchange for her hand, David would have to do a lot more fighting. Saul was still thinking that the more time David spent on the battlefield, the greater his chance of being killed. David demurred and said that he was not worthy of marrying the king's daughter.

I Samuel 18:17-19

David did not demand the prize offered for killing Goliath. But Saul was bound to it, yet tried to use it against David. He connected the marriage to military service in such a way as to make it more likely that David would die. He tried to provoke David by giving his daughter to another at the last moment. We read only that David's response was one of humility. "I don't deserve to marry royalty," he replied. Wow! It will take more than a king who does not keep his promise, then distorts it for his own purposes, then reneges on it altogether to get David to respond inappropriately. What does it take to get us to do something we will later be sorry for? Often, not very much. A cutting remark? A hateful look? May we depend upon God this day to live on a higher plane. Up where David lived. Up where living for God is what drives me!

SATURDAY

After deceiving David and giving his oldest daughter to another man when she had already been promised to David, King Saul learned that his second daughter, Michal, had also fallen in love with David. Saul saw this as a great chance to gain an advantage over David. He instructed his servants to spread the word (and make sure David heard it) that Saul would be delighted to have David and Michal get together. David did get the word and once more, he responded with grace and humility.

READ: I Samuel 18:20-24

We have here two examples: Saul, who never ceases to amaze us of how much of a skunk he has become that he would manipulate the lives of his own children in order to exercise his hatred towards David; and secondly, David, who also amazes us, that once more he responds with grace and humility. "You can fool me once, but you'll never fool me twice". Confucius or somebody said that and we might be thinking that such words are words of wisdom. But David takes us to a higher plane! Despite Saul's dealings in the past, and despite a small voice in the back of David's mind saying, "O boy, what's he up to this time?" David's response is godly. Help us, Lord, to respond this way as we deal with characters like Saul every day!