

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Apr 24

MONDAY

Back in his camp, David climbed to the top of a small hill. He called for Abner, commander of Saul's army, and Abner disdainfully acknowledged him. David asked how he could have let down his guard so carelessly as to allow an enemy to kill his king.

READ: I Samuel 26:13-15

David is planning to display the items which he had taken from beside Saul in the cave, and is setting Abner up to see that David had been there with an opportunity to kill him. I think we should notice the care with which David operates and carries out his plan. It's a trait that served him well and which will serve us well. Today, whatever we put our hand to, may we be wise and careful, trusting not in our wisdom nor carefulness, but in the Lord. But Lord, make us a wise as serpents.

TUESDAY

David continued to banter with Abner and upbraided him for his slothfulness in protecting the king. Abner was ready to shrug off David's criticism, when all at once, David whips out Saul's own spear and water jug! By this time, Saul himself had joined Abner and the others, and when the king saw the two items and heard David's voice, he cried out, "Is that really you, my son David?"

READ: I Samuel 26:16-18

Saul's reply seems like such a tender one. Does it not indicate a truly changed heart? Not really. The heart of man is not so easily changed. And that's especially true when the Holy Spirit is not doing the changing. (the Holy Spirit had left Saul) Saul is still Saul. His hatred and jealousy still drive him. Does not the degeneracy of the human heart leap off the page? Does it not serve to drive us to Jesus with intense pleading for his keeping? Remember: *He is able to keep all that we have committed unto Him.*

WEDNESDAY

David pleaded with Saul to listen to reason: if the Lord had put the desire to persecute David into Saul's heart, so be it; but if Saul's advisors had planted the seeds of distrust and hatred in Saul's heart, he should curse them. He told the King that hunting him down with an army of 3000 expending his energies on the wrong target, and that there were real enemies needing the king's attention.

READ: I Samuel 26:19-20

David compares himself to a flea, and the actual enemies of Saul to a partridge in the mountains. David is saying that Saul is wasting his energies and resources. How easy it is for us to get aimed in the wrong direction! There are Christians who spend their energies attacking other believers, other Bible translations, and others' convictions (or lack of convictions, as they see it). And, in doing so, they are hunting fleas! The forces of God on earth today (we who believe) must be more wisely employed!

THURSDAY

Saul promised to amend his ways and he invited David back to the palace. David returned his spear to Him. Then he pronounced his conviction that God is a just God.

He reminded Saul of his own refusal to harm the king even when the opportunity was sleeping before him. He added that God protects him. In the end, Saul praised David and then returned to his palace. David went his own way.

READ: I Samuel 26:21-25

Here is the final attempt (as it turns out) on David's part to make peace with Saul. They will never see each other again. Notice how David tries to make peace by dealing with Biblical principles: the sacredness of being chosen by God, the justice of God, the protection God gives, and the deliverance which God gives to overcome temptation. And David suggests, obviously, that these principles apply to the current situation. This is a great way for us to deal with life. We should base our decisions and actions on biblical principles. That's what it means to do the will of God.

FRIDAY

David moved around in the desert hiding from Saul, desperately seeking a place of refuge. Finally, he decided to flee to the "safety" of the Philistines. So, taking his 600 men and his two wives, he fled to Gath where Achish was king.

READ: I Samuel 27:1-3

Despondency overcame David as he looked at the immense forces of Saul and then at his own 600 misfits. He noted, undoubtedly, that his forces had not increased in number for quite a while. In short, David was looking at the wrong things. He surely had every reason to doubt Saul's good will, but he had better reason to trust God. He lost sight of the fact that God had promised him that he would be king. If we lose sight of the promises God gives us, despondency is just around the corner, and defeat is knocking at the door. We have been given great promises to cling to, and we need to do that today and everyday!

SATURDAY

Saul stopped pursuing David when he learned that David was living among the Philistines in Gath. David asked Achish, the king of Gath, for a place to live in the countryside outside of Gath. The king gave David a place on the border between Gath and Israel, a place called Ziklag. And David lived there for 16 months.

READ: I Samuel 27:4-7

God wanted David in Ziklag. It was a great place for David to be: it allowed him to be near the kingdom that would be his; it allowed his forces to grow remarkably during the following 16 months; and it provided a safe place: not too near the dangers of the changeable whims of a Philistine king, nor too near the clutches of a Jewish one, Saul! When David approached Achish to ask for a place to settle down, he had no idea how perfectly God would make that come about. Much like you and me as we ask God to lead and direct us. But God puts certain people into the right place at the right time and puts certain thoughts and ideas into their minds, and they do this or that, and God is working out His purposes for us! And in us! And through us! On this earth, it does not get any better than that!

#27