



1 SAMUEL 16 - 18

A KING IN PLACE OF THE KING

Weeks 30-32 – The Rise of Young David

Introduction

Saul was rejected as king because of his insubordination and rebellion against God's commands (15:23). He was told, through Samuel, that the kingship would be given to a "man after God's own heart" (13:14).

Now, we are introduced to young David, who will become Israel's 2nd king. In these early scenes from David's life we see a level of connectedness to God that was lacking in Saul (though very much evident in Jonathan). David will manifest a true heart for God in many ways, most notably in defeating the Philistine giant, Goliath, for the glory and honor of God's name.

Samuel anoints David: 16:1-13

Samuel had been mourning greatly the failure of Saul as God's anointed king (15:35 and 16:1). God told Samuel that the time of mourning was over, and he must go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem, to anoint Israel's 2nd king.

There is a time for mourning, fasting, praying, and crying over losses of dreams, relationships, opportunities, etc. (Ecclesiastes 3:4). Loss is a form of death, thus grieving is a necessary step in the healing process. The length of time for grieving depends on the severity of the loss. But there also comes a time when we must embrace God's signal to begin to "landscape around the loss" and "walk in the new normal." As we do this, God promises to give us healing, comfort and strength to move forward.

Samuel had legitimate fears that Saul might hear of his trip to Jesse's house and put him to death (16:2). He asked: "*How can I go?*" In response, God gave Samuel a way to move forward, and he obeyed without hesitating or wavering.

As we have seen before, fear is a normal reaction to danger. It is what we do when we are afraid that determines whether we remain paralyzed, or move forward.

It is common, as Samuel did, for us to ask God **HOW** He might work in some situation.

Yet, there are 2 very different kinds of HOW questions: **the HOW of faith** and **the HOW of doubt**. Mary, the mother of Jesus, asked God **HOW** He would cause her to bear His son (Luke 1:34). Like Samuel, she was given a simple answer, and she was immediately willing to obey.

On the other hand, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, asked **HOW** the promise of a son could be fulfilled for him, since they were old (Luke 1:18). **His question was tinged by doubt**, thus God disciplined him with muteness (inability to speak) for the entire 9 months of his wife's pregnancy.

When we question God as to **HOW** He might work in the concerns of our lives, let us make sure we are asking with **the HOW of faith**, not **the HOW of doubt**.

After properly consecrating Jesse and 7 of his sons, the candidates were brought before Samuel, beginning with the oldest, Eliab.

When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (16:6,7).

Samuel must have been surprised that none of them were God's choice. David, the **youngest** son, was not even considered to be a worthy candidate, thus he was not invited to the anointing feast.

But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here" (16:11).

Samuel had performed the purification ceremony to prepare Jesse's sons for the feast. David came in directly from the fields, 'unclean' because of his contact with animals. Yet, **God did not wait** for all of the religious purification rites to be performed again. The Lord **immediately** revealed to Samuel that this was His choice.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah" (16:13).

Why was David invited right into the feast without purification rites being performed?

Because, unseen to human eyes, God saw that David's heart was already purified and consecrated. His love for God and trust in God, as "his shepherd," was **an everyday experience** (Psalm 23).

David serves as Saul's healing musician: 16:14-23

While the Spirit of the Lord came upon David, an evil spirit "from God" came upon Saul, tormenting and terrorizing him. As we learn from other Scriptures, evil spirits sometimes gain permission from God in order to carry out their malevolent schemes (see Job 1:6-12).

It was decided that a skillful musician might be able to soothe Saul, bringing relief from the influence of the evil spirit. Enter David, the “sweet psalmist of Israel.” Then one of the young men said, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him” (16:18).

David was described as a heroic warrior, with a reputation of having been used powerfully of the Lord. Thus, it is possible that the record of David’s battle with Goliath (ch.17) had already occurred. If this is the case, then **ch.17 is a flashback narrative**, intended to show how David rose to prominence in Saul’s eyes, thus being chosen to serve in his court as musician and armor bearer (ch.16).

Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight” (16:21,22).

Goliath taunts Israel: 17:1-11

Goliath, the Philistine champion, was one of the remaining descendants of the giant Anak (Joshua 11:21,22). He was roughly 9 feet tall! He came forth on 40 consecutive days defying Israel to send one man out to engage with him in a ‘winner-take-all’ fight.

“Am I not a Philistine and you are servants of Saul? I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together.” When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid (17:10,11).

Israel’s reputation at this point was that they were “servants of Saul,” not servants of God. Not even Saul, who was a head taller than anyone in Israel (9:2), dared to take on Goliath. Why did Jonathan not step forward, given his heroic faith-deeds in previous settings? Perhaps Saul would not permit Jonathan any further opportunities for success, since the people already regarded Jonathan more highly than his father (see 14:45).

David’s questions: 17:12-30

David is introduced again, as if we had not already become acquainted with him (17:12-14; perhaps another clue that the entire 17th chapter is a flashback.) David was sent back and forth from his father’s house to the battlefield to check on his 3 oldest brothers and to bring them provisions.

On this particular occasion, David began to ask questions about Goliath's taunt and why someone was not acting in God's strength to defeat him.

Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" (17:26).

In David's eyes, Goliath's taunt was not merely against Israel, but against the God of Israel. He inquired as to the reward promised to the man who not only "kills the Philistine" but, more importantly who "takes away the reproach from Israel." **For David, the glory and honor of God was at stake.**

Further, he knew that *"everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished" (Proverbs 16:5).*

David's bold questions and fearless faith were not well received by all. In particular, he incited the fierce anger of his eldest brother.

Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" (17:28,29).

David's 2 questions in response to his brother's attack are revealing: **"Now what have I done! Can't I even ask a question?"**

It seems that such scornful attacks were a **common experience for David**, the youngest of 8 brothers. As for Eliab, his anger reveals a lot of **buried bitterness** toward David:

- Was he angry that Samuel had passed over him (the firstborn) in favor of his youngest brother?
- Was he jealous over the evidence of the Spirit's anointing on David's life?
- Was he angry at himself that he lacked the courage to face Goliath?

Two things are clear: Eliab was harboring bitterness toward David . . . and David had become accustomed to being put down (verbally abused.)

We often **minimize** the impact of our family of origin on our lives. Yet, *“family patterns from the past are played out in our present relationships without us necessarily being aware of it”* (Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, p.96).

David’s life story will continue to reveal some of the roots of being the youngest and being left ‘alone’ to watch the family’s sheep. David definitely attached emotionally to His God; but he never seemed to attach well to those in his family, or to others (except Jonathan). See *Emotionally-Healthy Spirituality* ch.5 for an excellent discussion of the impact of your family of origin on your present experience.

David kills Goliath: 17:31-54

David was brought before Saul, who immediately noted that he was “too young” to fight Goliath (17:33). David responded by telling how, as a shepherd, he had killed a lion and a bear with his bare hands. He was certain that the Lord would help him again.

And David said, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine” (17:37).

Saul then clothed David in his own armor; but it was far too big and bulky for him. David chose instead his usual weaponry and his mastered skills: his shepherd’s staff, his sling, and 5 smooth stones. With these he was fully equipped to face Goliath.

When Goliath saw young David, he scornfully mocked him; but David, confident he was fighting with GOD on his side, would not back down:

Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands” (17:45-47).

David contended for God’s glory, not his own. He fought in defense of the Lord’s name and the Lord’s honor. By doing so, he was letting “all the earth know that there is a God in Israel.”

Note: When the first Christians encountered persecution, they took a page from David's songbook as their inspiration while praying together:

"Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed" (Psalm 2:1,2 – See Acts 4:25,26).

The persecuted Church knew that their "Goliath" (the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman authorities) was fighting against not just themselves, but against the all-powerful, sovereign Lord and His Christ. Thus, they gained courage to stand in the face of overwhelming odds, just as David had done.

Saul inquires as to David's identity: 17:55-58

After routing the Philistines, Saul inquired about David's identity, specifically who his father was. This could again indicate that **this chapter is a flashback** and that Saul's first exposure to David was the Goliath incident.

On the other hand, it may simply indicate that Saul did not know who David's father was, and that he was making good on his pledge to give 'tax-free' status to the father of the one who would conquer Goliath (see 17:25).

Jonathan befriends David: 18:1-4

Jonathan, son of Saul, continued to shine as one of the heroic, yet humble, figures in this portion of Israel's history. As Jonathan meets another passionate warrior like himself, he initiated a soul-connection and pledged his loyalty to David. He even gave David his royal robes and weapons. David had found a "true brother!"

"Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself . . . Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt" (18:1-4).

God allows many different kinds of people to come into our lives in order to shape and grow us. Some of these people act negatively toward us, while others act positively:

- 1) David's family seemed to IGNORE and MARGINALIZE him.
- 2) David served as a HEALER and COMFORTER to Saul.
- 3) Eliab was a MOCKER and ACCUSER to David.
- 4) Jonathan became a beloved FRIEND and SUPPORTER of David.

Regardless of whether people act negatively or positively toward you, know that **they are there, by God's design, to grow, refine and shape you** for His purposes.

David's military success and Saul's anger: 18:5-9

Saul appointed David as one of his key generals, and he quickly had tremendous military success. However, the songs that people were singing about David aroused great jealousy in Saul's heart:

The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on (18:7-9).

This was the beginning of a long struggle (spanning 10+ years) between Saul and David. The tension was driven by Saul's jealousy and rage. Yet, God used this prolonged struggle in many ways to shape and refine David for His purposes.

Jealousy is a God-given emotion.

'*Good jealousy*' is a healthy desire to protect something that is rightfully ours and very dear to us. God has 'good jealousy' toward each of us (Exodus 20:5; James 4:5).

'*Bad jealousy*' is when we envy another person (their popularity, status, talents, skills, opportunities, position, etc.).

When we have good jealousy, we are imitating our Father in heaven. When we have bad jealousy, we are imitating the Devil, who first fell from God's favor when he became jealous of God's glory (see Isaiah 14:13,14).

Saul attempts to kill David: 18:10-16

In fits of rage, Saul twice attempted to kill David with his spear, even as David played soothing music for the king. David escaped both times; but this marked the end of his service as Saul's 'medical musician!'

"Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people" (18:13).

Outside of Saul's court, David's God-given successes continued to pile up, and the nation grew in their love for their new champion.

"David was prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him. When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them" (18:14-16).

Note the progression in the language describing Saul's emotions toward David: suspicion (18:9), fear (18:12); dread (18:15); more afraid (18:29a); he was David's enemy continually (18:29b).

This **downward spiral** likely had its beginning in Saul's deep insecurities (see p.306 of these notes). Saul's emotions swelled, however, into a murderous rage when the evil spirit was allowed to come upon him, as David played his harp in the king's court.

Saul invites David to marry his daughter: 18:17-28

"Jealousy is very inventive of methods of executing its cruel purpose" (F.B. Meyer).

Saul **twice** tried to have David killed by the Philistines. First, he offered **Merab** to be David's wife, in exchange for David's promise to fight the Philistines for him (although Saul should have already given Merab to David for killing Goliath – see 17:25).

For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him" (18:17).

David humbly refused this offer, however, on the grounds that he was not of high enough standing to marry into the royal family. Yet, when Saul offered his 2nd daughter, **Michal**, to David, he took the offer. The dowry, this time, required David to risk his life by shedding Philistine blood.

“The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.” Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines (18:25).

David took his men and swiftly killed **double** the required number of Philistines, much to Saul’s dismay.

“When Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David’s enemy continually” (18:28,29).

David’s rising reputation: 18:30

“Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants (officers, NIV) of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed” (18:30).

Additional thoughts: A “man after God’s heart.”

We will certainly learn, as David’s story unfolds, that he was far from perfect. In fact, he was by his own admission, a **“sinner from the womb”** (Psalms 32,51,etc.).

Yet, there were qualities that made his heart attractive in God’s eyes. Note these contrasts:

David (& Jonathan)	Saul (& Eliab)
Abandoned to God	Focused on Self-Importance
Desiring God to be great	Maneuvering to stay on top
Living for an audience of One	Enslaved to people’s opinions
Exercised faith in God	Paralyzed by fear
Obedied God at all costs	Obedied only until it got uncomfortable

The following comments by **Charles Swindoll**, on ***"Becoming a Man or a Woman after God's Own Heart"*** are excellent:

"When God scans the earth for potential leaders, He is not on a search for angels in the flesh. He is certainly not looking for perfect people, since there are none. He is searching for men and women like you and me, mere people made up of flesh. But He is also looking for people who share the same qualities He found in David. God is looking for men and women *"after His own heart"* (1 Samuel 13:14).

What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart? It means your life is in harmony with the Lord. What is important to Him is important to you. What burdens Him burdens you. When He says, "Go to the right," you go to the right. When He says, "Stop that in your life," you stop it. When He says, "This is wrong and I want you to change," you come to terms with it because you have a heart for God . . .

When you are a man or woman after God's heart, you are deeply sensitive to spiritual things. 2 Chronicles 16:9 explains it this way: *"For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."*

What is God looking for? He is looking for men and women whose hearts are His — completely.

That means there are no locked closets. Nothing's been swept under the rugs.

That means that when you do wrong, you admit it and come to terms with it. You long to please Him in your actions. You care deeply about the motivations behind your actions. God is not looking for magnificent specimens of humanity. He's looking for deeply spiritual, genuinely humble, honest-to-the-core servants who have integrity . . .

We live in a world that says, in many ways, *"If you just make a good impression, that's all that matters."* But you will never be a man or woman of God if that's your philosophy. Never.

You can't fake it with the Almighty. He is not impressed with externals. He always focuses on the inward qualities, like the character of the heart... those things that take time and discipline to cultivate."

Charles R. Swindoll, ***"Becoming a Man or a Woman after God's Own Heart," Insights*** (April 1997).