

Session 11 David: Living with a Free Spirit (1 Sam. 18)

I. DAVID ENTERS A NEW SEASON OF PROMOTION WITH UNCERTAINTY IN GIBEAH

Now when he (David) had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt. 5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. (1 Sam. 18:1-5)

- A. After David killed Goliath, he suddenly entered into a new season in God. He began a time of promotion and national prominence that included great uncertainty and danger (1 Sam. 17-20). This period lasted about 4-5 years (from approximately age 18-23).
- B. David was invited to move to Gibeah, which was King Saul's royal court or governmental headquarters which was the Wash., D.C. of his day (1 Sam. 18:2).
- C. David's new relationship of favor with Saul's oldest son, Jonathan, who was the number two person in the kingdom. (1 Sam. 18:1, 3). David was given a position of authority in the army as a young man about 20 years old (1 Sam. 18:5). He was accepted by all the people of Israel and all the servants in King Saul's court (1 Sam. 18:5). The young women throughout the nation sang songs of David's triumph (1 Sam. 18:6). David was honored in marrying the King's daughter (1 Sam. 18:27).
- D. The covenant relationship between Jonathan and David: the robe spoke of Jonathan's position of authority in the government and the shield and sword were his weapons of war. In other words, all Jonathan's wealth and honor was at David disposal as well as Jonathan's commitment to fight David's battles.

II. THIS TEMPORARY PROMOTION WAS TO TRAIN DAVID'S HEART FOR HIS FUTURE

- A. David's identity was tested and strengthened by early praise and success (promotion before men).
The crucible for silver....but man is tested by the praise he receives. (Proverbs 27:21, NIV)
- B. God's purpose of this season was to train David's heart for future days. Some young people stumble in the a season of promotion by misinterpreting it and thus, being distracted from focusing on developing their primary identity as a lover of God who cultivates a servant spirit.
- C. His promotion came abruptly, however, it left just as suddenly, as he found himself fleeing from Gibeah for his life to enter a time of adversity in the "Adullam years" (that lasted about seven years) where David would be tested with hardship and difficulty.

- D. We naturally seek out the positive side of promotion without always understanding its downside. God sends promotion in a package that will protect our hearts from pride and the many sins that flow from pride. We must adjust our vain imaginations about God’s promotion in this life. To seek promotion without seeking to develop meekness (servant spirit) with even greater urgency results in disappointment.
- E. God uses turbulent circumstances to re-align and strengthen our hearts in truth. We must always remember that God is mostly after establishing meekness in and through those that He is raising up to anoint. God established David then, with a view of establishing him in meekness so as to use him to reign in the Millennial Kingdom.
- F. Leadership Lesson: early successes can be deceptive if misinterpreted as a season to establish their name instead of a time to grow in God. Some sell out quickly at the first signs of success by leaving their focused pursuit of intimacy with God to busy themselves with making their ministries bigger.

III. DAVID LIVING WITH A FREE SPIRIT

- A. In 1 Sam. 18, we see David’s heart and spiritual understanding as he lived with a free spirit because of his relationship with the Lord. David’s identity was tested by praise along with the uncertainty as “his place of favor” was constantly changing.
 - 1. *A free spirit* – is to live “in the present tense with the Lord” without being weighted down and being self absorbed (distracted by fear, offense or grasping for personal rights, honor, position, money, etc.), but rather living in generosity toward both friends and enemies because he trusted in God’s goodness.
 - 2. *An anxious and guarded spirit* – is to live continually in fear of loss, rejection and carefully guarding how much one is willing to give (love, money, honor) to others.
- B. In all the seasons of David’s life, he sought to know the joy of living with a free spirit by experiencing active intimacy with God (beholding God’s beauty/waiting on God) as he trusted God’s goodness.

One thing I have desired of the LORD...that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD...13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD...14 Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD! (Ps. 27:4, 13-14)

Create in me a clean heart (free of sin and fear), O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...12 Restore...the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous (free) Spirit. (Ps. 51:10-12)
- C. He actively trusted God to release His bountiful goodness in the best timing.

The LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Ps. 84:11)

Into Your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. (Ps. 31:5)

IV. THE STRUGGLE OF UNCERTAINTY: CONTINUALLY CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. The circumstances in David's life in this season, were constantly changing from one extreme to another. He started out with great favor in the king's court and marrying His daughter. However, soon he experienced great danger as the king sought to kill him (1 Sam. 19:1).
- B. David did not know where he stood with King Saul. Things seemed to change near daily. Although, circumstances were constantly changing, David's heart stayed steady in the strength of God.
- C. This season of changing circumstances (uncertainty) and early promotion was God's strategy to train David's heart to be steadfast in a future time of greater turbulence called prosperity. David's worst sins occurred in the times of his greatest honor and prosperity when he was king of all Israel (age 37-70).
- D. David learned to enjoy God without clarity of what to expect from others in changing circumstances. One of most difficult tensions in life is in not knowing what to expect. Where do I stand? In favor or adversity? Sometimes it is impossible to know what to expect. This is a time when the Lord is forming our hearts. It is normal to want to know where we stand in the circumstances around us, but God does not always allow us to know this. God allows uncertainty that we might find our primary security in our relationship with God. God does not want our security to be in what we know about our circumstances or our future, but in Who we know.
- E. David lived with open handed expectancy as he considered the promises that God gave him through the prophet Samuel as well as those given by King Saul.
- F. At times like this it is easy to draw back since our identity is in the place of favor that we may occupy for a season instead of in the One who gives favor and takes it away. To look to people and circumstances as our primary source for attaining our destiny is to live with an anxious and guarded spirit. Often, our heart changes when circumstances change. In other words, our happiness depends on circumstances working out.
- G. The way to cultivate a free spirit is to live before an audience of One and to see our primary greatness in God's sight which will only be fully manifested in the age-to-come. David cultivated this in his youth (while still in his early 20's). This is unique and remarkable steadiness at such a young age.

V. DAVID'S CORE REALITY: SPIRITUAL IDENTITY BASED IN INTIMACY AND MEEKNESS

One thing...that will I seek...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD (Ps. 27:4)

I will meditate on the glorious splendor (beauty) of Your majesty...(Ps. 145:5)

I will love You, O LORD, my strength. (Ps. 18:1)

He delivered me because He delighted in me. (Ps. 18:19)

*Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand...**8** Keep me as the apple of Your eye. (Ps. 17:7-8)*

A. The primary way in which David saw himself and measured (evaluated) the success of his life was by two core issues: intimacy with God and meekness before people. In other words, first, to establish his primary identity (his sense of value/success) in intimacy with God as being loved by God and in being a lover of God then second, to walk in meekness. David ***felt successful before God (ultimate sense) in context to how much he grew in the anointing of love and meekness.***

B. David's primary identity (value and success) was established in who he was spiritually or who he was in his intimacy with God. In other words, who he was before God as "one that God loved" then as "one who loved God" in return (overflowed to others). In this and by the anointing of the Spirit, David ***felt*** the power of being loved by God and of loving (God/others) in return. David's primary paradigm of success was in being successful before God (which is ultimate success) with the "anointing to love and live in meekness." This is a radical paradigm for living on earth.

I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me. (Song 7:10)

C. **Leadership Lesson:** Our primary identity in life is to be one who is "loved and a lover" therefore, we are successful before God (which is ultimate).

VI. SEEING GOD AS OUR SOURCE AND GOAL

A. **Our challenge is to see God as our source and goal.** Man's favor or threat is partially given to help us see God's goodness working in our lives. The real issue is that we understand that we receive our primary inheritance from God (not men), in God (not in positions) and for God (not for our prideful use).

B. We easily get our eyes on man whether we are experiencing their favor or their threats. We can see some of the truth of what is in our heart by seeing our response to favor or threat. The measure that we are mad, glad or sad about man's favor or the threat of losing it, tells us how much we look to people more than God as our ultimate source of promotion and provision.

C. David trusted the Lord or put his hope in Him in times when he experienced man's favor and threat. In other words, David viewed God as His primary source and not Saul's favor. Therefore, David was not afraid of losing God's favor.

- D. David viewed his greatness as being found in growing in meekness not in being king over Israel. David saw his ultimate destiny as ruling after the Lord's return not during his initial earthly reign (1 Chr. 28:4; Ps. 37:9-11, 18, 27-29).

The LORD...chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. (1 Chr. 28:4)

Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore....²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever. (Ps. 37:27-29)

Those who wait on the LORD...shall inherit the earth...¹¹ the meek shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:9-11)

The LORD knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever. (Ps. 37:18)

- E. **Leadership Lesson:** to see God as our source of promotion, protection, provision and direction and not the resources of even powerful kings.

VII. CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES – SAUL'S INITIAL JEALOUSLY TURNS TO HOSTILITY

- A. There is a 2-fold leadership lesson related to Saul in 1 Sam. 18.
1. Do not be a Saul by seeing the people as our source instead of Lord.
 2. Do not fear Saul by seeing Saul as our source instead of Lord.
 3. Both responses will cause us to live with an anxious and guarded spirit that needs to continually manage fear of loss, rejection and carefully guards how much we are will to give to others.
- B. There was a significant progression in Saul's fear and jealousy towards David.
- If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (Jas 3:14-17)***
1. To act on or speak out of fear and/or jealousy causes it to grow and opens the door for demons to move in our inner man. There is a point in time when demonic energy enters the emotions of those who yield to them. As Saul spoke and acted in fear and jealousy, they both grew in his heart as each one fueled the fire for the other.

2. This pattern is inevitable to anyone who allows the negative seed of fear and jealousy to grow instead of uprooting it with repentance. It will surely grow if it is not aggressively confronted in our heart.
- C. Saul's initial anger grew to jealous suspicion.
As they were coming home...from the slaughter of the Philistine, the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul...7 The women sang...and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." 8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" 9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward. (1 Sam. 18:6-9)
- D. Saul was attacked with a demonic spirit resulting in his first act of hostility toward David.
It happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul...David played music with his hand...but there was a spear in Saul's hand. 11 Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice. (1 Sam. 18:10-11)
- E. Fear set in as Saul feels threatened by David. This leads Saul to other acts of aggression against David. Then, Saul removed David from his position. David was Saul's most effective servant. Saul could have benefited greatly from him.
Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. 13 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. (1 Sam. 18:12-13)
- F. Saul's foundational issue was his fear and jealousy compounded by the knowledge that the Lord left him and was with David. Note the contrast between David acting in wisdom and Saul growing in fear. David's wisdom (1 Sam. 18:5, 14, 15, 30) was related to his free spirit. We can see more clearly when we are not "clouded by smoke" of seeking to gain or fearing to lose that which is held by man's favor.
David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him. 15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. (1 Sam. 18:14-16)
Saul was still more afraid of David...30 Then the...Philistines went out to war...whenever they went out...David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul...(1 Sam. 18:29-30)
Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David...(1 Sam. 18:28)
- G. Saul sought to kill David indirectly by giving David his wife then demanding a dowry which would result in David being killed by the Philistines. David responded in gratitude not fear or anger at being put in a position that required him to either risk his life or insult the king by refusing his daughter.

Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him." 18 David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" 19 But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel...as a wife. 20 Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. They told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21 Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall be my son-in-law today." (1 Sam. 18:17-21)

- H. Saul continued with a series of deceitful schemes (v. 22, 25) as he maintained his plan to kill David indirectly by demanding a dowry for Michal. David responded in gratitude not anger as Saul broke his word to David about his first daughter Merab, this was a public (national) insult of David.

Saul commanded his servants, "Communicate with David secretly, and say, 'Look, the king has delight in you...therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'" 23 Saul's servants spoke those words...and David said, "Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?" 25 Then Saul said, "Thus you shall say to David: 'The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 26 So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law....27 therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines...then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife. (1 Sam. 18:22-27)

- I. Saul's fear and hatred grew more with each evil deed that he did against David until Saul became his enemy continually, which lead him eventually to seek to kill David directly.

Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; 29 and Saul was still more afraid of David. Saul became David's enemy continually. 30 Then the princes of the Philistines went out to war. And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed. 19:1 Saul spoke to Jonathan...and to all his servants, that they should kill David...(1 Sam. 18:22-19:1)

VIII. DAVID'S FREE SPIRIT REACHES ITS PINNACLE IN HIS MEEKNESS AND GRATITUDE

- A. David's consistent response of a free spirit with meekness and gratitude was only possible because he saw God as his source. Who David looked to and Who he wanted most was God, not Saul and not a position of honor in Saul's government.
- B. David's meekness and gratitude (1 Sam. 18:18, 23, 26)

David said..., "Who am I, and what is my life...that I should be son-in-law to the king?" (1 Sam. 18:18)

David said, "Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?" (1 Sam. 18:23)

It pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. (1 Sam. 18:26)