

King David: How to Respond to Mistreatment (1 Sam. 24; 26)

I. ENTRUSTING OURSELVES TO GOD WHEN WE ARE MISTREATED

- A. One important aspect of our spiritual life is how we respond when mistreated or falsely accused. We will be all mistreated many times in our lives. If we respond in the right way, we will grow deeper in God. If we respond in the wrong way, a residue of bitterness will slowly build up in us, causing us to live with a dull spirit.
- B. ***Foundational principle:*** Believers no longer have the primary ownership of their lives, because Jesus bought them and owns them (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Therefore, for any who diligently seek to obey His leadership, He takes responsibility to intervene when they are mistreated in ways that affect their reputation, honor, money, possessions, or position of influence and impact, etc.
- ¹⁹You are not your own...²⁰For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)***
- C. King David is a premier example of how to respond rightly to God in mistreatment and adversity. In Psalm 31, we see how David interacted with the Lord when he was being severely mistreated. By trusting God to intervene, and by refusing to retaliate, he brought God into the conflict. This was partly how David engaged in spiritual warfare in personal conflicts.
- ⁵Into Your hand I commit my spirit...¹⁵My times are in Your hand. (Ps. 31:5, 15)***
- D. When David “committed his spirit” into God’s hands, he was committing to God everything that deeply touched his spirit—his reputation, money, possessions, position, and impact, etc. He was ***entrusting the outcome*** of the most important issues in his life to God’s leadership. To commit “our times” to God is to ***trust His timing*** in answering us.
- E. When we commit ourselves into God’s hands in times of mistreatment, we make a transaction with God to trust Him to intervene and establish ***His will*** in our lives, in ***His way*** and in ***His timing***. This involves ***transferring our personal rights*** into His hands and, thus, transferring responsibility to Him. For example, because all our money has been committed to Him, if someone steals it, they are stealing from Him. He is responsible to intervene to get the money back in His time and His way.
- F. The Lord will provide for and/or vindicate His people in His time and way. We entrust our future and the mistreatment to God by trusting His leadership to answer in His way and in His timing.
- G. By trusting God to intervene in our conflicts, and by refusing to retaliate and committing to do good to our enemies, we bring God and His activity into the situation.
- ¹⁹Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to [God's] wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord...²⁰if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink...²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:19-21)***
- H. Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father to be vindicated in the right way and in the right timing.

⁴⁶He said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” (Lk. 23:46)

²³While being reviled, He [Jesus] did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously. (1 Pet. 2:23; NASB)

II. DAVID AND SAUL AT THE WILDERNESS OF EN GEDI (1 SAM. 24)

- A. David found King Saul sleeping in a cave and refused to harm him (1 Sam. 24).

²Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David...³So he came to...a cave...David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave. (1 Sam. 24:2-3)

- B. David stopped his men from harming King Saul.

⁴The men of David said, “This is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand...’”⁶He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to...the Lord’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him...”⁷David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. (1 Sam. 24:4-7)

- C. David committed his cause into God’s hands.

⁸David arose afterward... called out to Saul, saying...¹⁰“This day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave... I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord’...¹²Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you...¹⁵Let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand.” (1 Sam. 24:8-15)

III. DAVID AND SAUL AT THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH (1 SAM. 26)

- A. Saul continued to seek to kill David and to pursue him with 3,000 soldiers.

²Saul...went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David...⁷There Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head...⁸Abishai said to David, “God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear.” (1 Sam. 26:2-8)

- B. David refused to harm Saul. God caused a deep sleep to come on Saul to test David’s heart.

⁹David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD’s anointed, and be guiltless?”¹⁰David said, “...the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish”...¹²They got away...for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them [Saul’s camp]. (1 Sam. 26:9-12)

- C. David committed his cause into God’s hands again (1 Sam. 26:24). Several years later, Saul died in battle by the hand of the Lord (1 Sam. 31; 1 Chr. 10:13-14).

¹³David...stood on the top of a hill afar off...¹⁸He said, “Why does my lord [Saul] thus pursue his servant?...²³May the LORD repay every man...for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD’s anointed...²⁴...let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation.” (1 Sam. 26:13-24)

IV. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (e. g., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?