

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

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No: 41

### SIGNS OF DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

#### 1 Samuel 18

#### Introduction

In our recollection of Bible stories, the defeat of Goliath by David stands out as the high water mark of his life. But Scripture tells a different story. While the giant killing was David's greatest achievement up to this time, it swept him out to a sea of tumultuous testing - and he was adrift on that sea for many years.

- Can you recall three other Bible characters who had similar experiences of 'mountain top' experiences followed by severe testing?  
(For ref. see Genesis 12: 10-12; 13:8,9; Luke 3: 21-33; 4:1-2; Matthew 17: 1-4; 14-17)
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#### Read 1 Samuel 18: 1-7; 16

In the eyes of the people, David was a star. The people delighted in his leadership (18:5) and cheered his giant leap from the lowest recruit to company commander. The women even composed a song to praise their new hero.

By defeating Goliath, David had met and conquered his most fearsome foe ... or so he thought. Little did he realise his greatest enemy would come from his own camp, King Saul.

- Have you ever been attacked by a person you thought was on your side? How did you feel?

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- Along with David's greatest enemy, the passage reveals David's greatest friend, Jonathan. Have you noticed God bringing people into your life just when you needed them? What impact do you think the friendship with Jonathan have on David and his faith?

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- Jonathan's response to David's success was quite different from his father's. Take a few moments to compare Jonathan's supportive reaction with Saul's suspicious reaction? What does the contrast teach you?

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Saul, torn between the good he once knew and the darkness consuming him, distorted the women's chants of praise about David's victories and his (vv. 6-7). He turned demonically violent.

- As is often the case, the person out to get us is the one most afraid of us. But why did Saul fear David who was his most devoted subject? Was Saul's problem with David or with God?

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Through the events that followed Goliath's death, God continued to mould David into His man for the throne. And He used David's relationships as tools for the sculpting.

- How would you describe King David under King Saul? (vv. 2, 13)

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- How would you describe David with Jonathan?

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Merill Unger gives us some background about these covenant gifts (v.4).

"A covenant of friendship ... ratified by specific ceremonies in the presence of witnesses, states that the persons covenanting will be sworn brothers for life. ... To receive any part of the dress that had been worn by a sovereign or his oldest son and heir was deemed the highest honour that could be conferred on a subject (cf Esther 6: 8-9). Jonathan, the King's son, gave all the material gifts. David the poor man's son, gave only his love and respect."

- In the eyes of the people, David was a star. So how did David handle his stellar success?

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## **Note**

David “prospered” in his new role (vv 5, 14, 15). The Hebrew word is Sakal.

In verse 30, it is translated, “behaved himself ... wisely” (KJV), which hints at the words’ deeper meaning. Sakal can be defined: “wisdom which brings success.” According to Proverbs people who display this sort of wisdom restrain their speech and are teachable (Proverbs 10: 19, 21: 11). That was David. He wore his success with class and wisdom ... for the short time he owned it.”

- Theological wordbook of the Old Testament, ed R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr and Bruce K. Waltke (Moody Press, 1980).

## **Conclusion and Reflection**

Those of us in the dim aftermath of a bright victory can cling to three truths from this study.

First, not knowing the future forces us to live one day at a time. David had no idea that the giant killing would bring such intense opposition from Saul. He had to live one day at a time, taking things as they came and trusting God to prove Himself faithful.

Second, having a friend helps us to face whatever comes our way. The encouragement of a close friend makes the valleys of our lives seem less vast, less threatening, less ominous.

And third, a positive attitude and wisdom are the best defenses against an enemy. When you see your opposition coming, it’s easy to start rolling up the mental sleeves, thinking about where to throw your first jab. But the best response to opposition is to keep your cool and let God fight your battles for you.