

DAVID- A MAN OF PASSION & DESTINY

Principle and Opportunity

Introduction

David had a perfect opportunity to avenge himself against Saul, his arch enemy, but he refused to do so on the principle that "he would not harm the person whom the Lord chose as king (1 Samuel 24:6).

The temptation to get even was strong, especially in light of Saul's record of mistreatment in Chapters 22&23. For David, opportunity did not cancel principle. His men argued that this was his chance. They argued that the very opportunity was evidence of God's direction and therefore a reason for setting aside principle. David, however, thought differently. He believed that if principle and opportunity clashed, the opportunity must pass and the principle must remain.

We can't make anyone live in peace with us, but we can make sure the path to peace is clear on our side. Regardless of how others respond to us, God says, "Never take your own revenge". (See note next page).

Read 1 Samuel 24 (David spares Saul's life).

- What brings Saul to En Gedi?

Saul momentarily steps into a cave to "relieve himself", but little does he know that David and his men are hiding in the cave (v.3). And the men of David said to him, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish."

- When did God ever say this?

- How easy or difficult do you think it would have been for David to restrain his men from killing Saul? (vv. 4b - 7).

- Why did David cut off a piece of Saul's robe?

- Reread what David said to Saul in 1 Samuel 24: 8-15. In what ways can his example help you confront your offender?

If Hollywood had written the story of Saul and David, the filmmakers probably would have scripted a fight scene in which David kills the wicked King Saul, before taking his rightful place on the throne.

- Sounds like a good plot to us; Why would God have disapproved of it?

NOTE

God's prohibition against revenge doesn't mean that we should not defend ourselves as individuals or as a nation. Nor does it restrict us from seeking justice through the legal system. The issue has to do with personal vendettas and taking the law into our own hands.

Cutting Saul's robe may have felt good at the moment, but it didn't mend David's injury. Healing came when David confronted Saul with his misdeeds - not to get even but to tell the truth.

- In what ways does David's honest confrontation with Saul give you a positive example of how to deal with someone who has injured you? If this type of confrontation isn't possible, what could you do to bring closure to the situation?
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Because David refuses to get even with Saul, God blesses him. The proverbs tell us, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes his enemies to be at peace with him. (Proverbs 16.7).

- How did God bring peace between David and Saul through their conversation in the cliffs?
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Anger—A subtle enemy to fight

Read 1 Samuel 25

Everyday carries with it a certain aura of adventure and growth and the possibility of success. But it also brings the painful possibility of failure. Though God's mercies are new every morning, so are Satan's schemes. David, like the rest of us learned the hard way that you can't live today on yesterday's obedience.

Nabal's lands were set in an area in which stock theft was a major hazard both from wild animals and the raiding parties from neighbouring states. David and his 600 men provided protection to Nabal's flock in true Robin Hood style. Theirs is a volunteer force; no contracts are signed. But its customary for ranchers to compensate their protectors with a small portion of the harvest and the herds.

- What did Nabal and Saul have in common?
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- Lets' play "worst case scenario". What if David had taken revenge, what would he have been guilty of (1 Sam 25: 26,31)?

- What prerogative would he have taken from God (vv. 26, 31)?

- After showing restraint toward Saul, why do you think David lost control with Nabal?

- What was it about Nabal's response that set David off? What types of people or responses infuriate you?

- What did Abigail say that opened David's eyes and cooled his rage? (see 1 Samuel 25: 24-31)

- Although he lost his temper at first, David eventually mastered his anger rather than let his anger master him. What's one principle from this story that will help you control your temper?

- In what ways do we see God shaping David to become a man after His own heart?
