

Bible Studies for Life: August 11

Jonathan • 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-4; 23:15-18

By Jessica McMillan



McMillan

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In last week's lesson, we recognized that serving God with excellence, like David did, is not always appreciated by others. In fact, following God's plan can lead us into great danger sometimes. We also discussed how negative emotions left unchecked can impact us in ways that we don't realize or expect. This week, we continue to look at the tumultuous interactions between Saul and David, and how we can trust that God is always in charge, no matter what.

1 Samuel 18:1-4

David's victory over Goliath had brought him in contact with Saul's son, Jonathan. The two grew to love each other in a deep, true, and unified way (v. 1). While modern voices may try to make this type of "love" fit a particular narrative, there is no reason to suspect that this relationship was anything other than a close, non-sexual one. They became like

brothers – what some people call “chosen family.” Verses 1- 4 mention twice that Jonathan loved David “as himself.” Jonathan, however, was the king’s firstborn son, so everyone would have expected for him to be next in line to his father’s throne. Then, when Jonathan “took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt” (v. 4 NIV), this was to signify that David became Jonathan’s replacement. Saul confirmed this by sending David into the war in which Jonathan had previously fought (v. 5).

1 Samuel 19:1-4

The writer details the progression of Saul’s intentions toward David. First, he **loved** him (16:21). Then, as we saw last week, Saul began to **fear** and **desire to kill** him (18:11-12). (He even attempted it!) And in this section of the passage, Saul tried to **get Jonathan to kill** him (19:1). Instead, Jonathan warned David and helped him devise a plan for escape. He even tried to talk his father out of his angry and murderous intentions by saying, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly” (v. 4). Jonathan took a risk to go against the wishes of his father, the king, and he bravely tried to correct Saul’s negative attitude toward David.

1 Samuel 23:15-18

Saul continued plotting to kill David anyway, and in this section, Jonathan reiterated his understanding that David would be king and that his own role would be secondary. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you” (v. 17). Jonathan was humble enough to acknowledge that God was at work in David’s life, and he was mature enough to accept God’s role for him in their relationship, even though culturally, he should have been heir to the kingdom.

In the unstable culture around us today, similar in ways to the atmosphere that David and Jonathan endured, we can recognize that God is never changing. He is consistently at work in the lives of His people, and we can join Him, being confident that He who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

McMillan is a member of Prentiss Church, Prentiss.