

Bible Studies for Life: August 4

David • 1 Samuel 18:5-16

By Jessica McMillan



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1 Samuel 18:5-7

Envy and Jealousy. Some people use these two terms interchangeably, but there is evidence to conclude that they are similar, yet distinct. The Oxford dictionary defines “envy” as a feeling of discontent or resentfulness regarding someone else’s possessions, qualities, or luck. Jealousy, on the other hand, is characterized by feelings of anger, anxiety, fear of losing something you have, and distrust (WG Parrott and RH Smith, 1993). We can see in this account that Saul was likely experiencing both of these emotions. David had been so successful in serving Saul that he was given a high rank in the army by Saul himself. But when others began recognizing David’s accomplishments, singing “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands,” Saul was greatly displeased. Proverbs 14:30 (NIV) says, “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” Envy and jealousy are emotions that God gave us, so we should recognize them and surrender them to Him so He can grow us through our difficulties.

1 Samuel 18:8-11

Anger. Not only was Saul unhappy, the Bible describes him as “very angry.” Anger is a strong emotion that prepares us to fight in response to an alert or threat of danger. Saul felt threatened by the positive response of the people toward David, so he began to suspect David of things that were simply untrue. David was not plotting to overtake Saul’s kingdom. Instead, when Saul was overcome with anxiety and emotional unrest, David played soothing music to calm him. Saul’s response was to try to pin David to the wall with his spear!

David had learned about the consequences of anger and struggled with it often. He wrote in Psalm 37:8 (NIV), "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil." Anger in itself is not a sin – even Jesus was angry, yet He did not sin. When we don't deal with the root of our anger and give it to God, we can, like Saul, cause deep destruction to the relationships around us.

1 Samuel 18:12-16

Fear. Saul became fearful upon realizing that "the Lord was with David but had departed from Saul" (v. 12 NIV) and again when he saw David's widespread success (v. 15 NIV). He was so worried that David would take his kingdom from him that he continued his sneaky and conniving ways as he gave his daughter Merab to be David's wife in order to "be a snare to him" (v. 21 NIV).

Saul's jealousy and envy, rooted in fear, led him to be leery, distrusting, and resentful of David, who had been a faithful servant to him. Emotions are not dependable and can distract us from the truth. Saul mistakenly thought David was his biggest threat, and he was overcome by the thought of it. When we don't allow God to transform us by the renewing of our minds, including our emotions, we can end up discontented, resentful, and bitter, like Saul. The words of Jesus recorded in John 14:7 (NIV) remind us, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Through Christ, we can exchange fear for peace. May we seek to honor God as we continue to love Him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind!

McMillan is a member of Prentiss Church, Prentiss.