

Respected
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2 Samuel 1:22-27; 2:1-7

The Big Idea: God puts people in leadership over His people and we are to respect them. Because the leaders and followers are flawed human beings, respecting leaders can be a challenge at times. Still, RESPECT is what God EXPECTS His people to show to His leaders.

- Imagine how it would feel if a person you admired as your leader and role model became so jealous of you they set out to kill you.
- “Kill you” is not metaphorical or an exaggeration; this person you held in high regard wants you stone cold, without a pulse dead.
- How would it feel if God Himself placed this leader in authority?
- That’s the story of King Saul and soon to be King of Israel David.
- If you’ve studied the Old Testament you know the story, Israel demanded a king; God warned them against it; they persisted; and He gave them what they asked for: King Saul. Though God placed Saul in leadership, and though Saul was a talented warrior who defended God’s people, he was a moral failure.
- So God chose a young shepherd boy to one day replace Saul as king.
- God enabled David to slay Goliath and to serve in Saul’s palace.
- David developed a deep friendship with Saul’s son Jonathan.
- David also became a talented warrior for Israel and when the “headlines” in Israel gave David greater recognition than Saul, Saul became jealous and set out to kill him.
- For ten years David lived on the run with a price on his head.
- 2 Samuel picks up the story of David just as Saul is killed in battle opening up the way for David to become king of Judah and later all of Israel.
- A young Amalekite man came to David to report that the Philistines killed Saul and his sons in battle. Saul was wounded

but still alive and the young man claimed to have put him out of his misery.

¹⁰ “So I killed him,” the Amalekite told David, “for I knew he couldn’t live. Then I took his crown and his armband, and I have brought them here to you, my lord.”

- Let’s pause right here. This Amalekite man tells David that Saul is dead and brings Saul’s crown and royal armband as proof. Further more, he claimed he had personally put Saul out of his misery. **How do you think the Amalekite expected David to respond to this news?**

¹¹ David and his men tore their clothes in sorrow when they heard the news. ¹² They mourned and wept and fasted all day for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the Lord’s army and the nation of Israel, because they had died by the sword that day.

- **Why was this a shocking response from David and his men?**

¹⁴ “Why were you not afraid to kill the Lord’s anointed one?” David asked.

¹⁵ Then David said to one of his men, “Kill him!” So the man thrust his sword into the Amalekite and killed him. ¹⁶ “You have condemned yourself,” David said, “for you yourself confessed that you killed the Lord’s anointed one.”

- Did you see that one coming? This foreigner brought David what would seem like good news; the king who was trying to kill David was dead in battle and finished off by this young man. **Why did David execute him? Why did David consider it a crime to kill the king though Saul was trying to kill HIM? Do the words “kill the Lord’s anointed one” sound familiar in regards to David?**
- David had more than one chance to kill Saul himself but he would not. Remember the time Saul took a “potty break” in a cave and David and his men were near by? David got close enough to cut off the corner of Saul’s robe, yet he didn’t kill him. He DID confront him though:

1 Samuel 24:10 (NLT) David said to Saul:

¹⁰ This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For the Lord placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the Lord's anointed one.'

Saul responded to David:

"You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ ...you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands... may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.ⁱ

- That wasn't the only chance David had to kill Saul. There was the night David's men were able to sneak into Saul's camp.

1 Samuel 26:8–11 (NLT)

⁸ "God has surely handed your enemy over to you this time!" Abishai whispered to David. "Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't need to strike twice!"

⁹ "No!" David said. "Don't kill him. For who can remain innocent after attacking the Lord's anointed one?"

- A footnote regarding the Amalekite: His account of what happened doesn't match 1 Samuel 31 and 1 Chronicles 10. It's likely he was a scavenger who followed armies to swipe the belongings of dead soldiers. No doubt he expected a reward from David. He got a different reward.
- Though Saul had tried to kill David for over ten years, David still held Saul and Saul's son Jonathan in high regard. Such high regard...

¹⁷ Then David composed a funeral song for Saul and Jonathan, ¹⁸ and he commanded that it be taught to the people of Judah.

²² The bow of Jonathan was powerful, and the sword of Saul did its mighty work.

They shed the blood of their enemies and pierced the bodies of mighty heroes.

²³ How beloved and gracious were Saul and Jonathan! They were together in life and in death. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

²⁴ O women of Israel, weep for Saul, for he dressed you in luxurious scarlet clothing, in garments decorated with gold. ²⁵ Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies dead on the hills.

²⁶ How I weep for you, my brother Jonathan! Oh, how much I loved you! And your love for me was deep, deeper than the love of women! ²⁷ Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen!

Stripped of their weapons, they lie dead.

- Jonathan's "bow" was powerful and Saul's "sword" did mighty work. Saul and his son were effective military men.
- They were fast as "eagles" and "stronger than lions." Saul and Jonathan were talented and skillful warriors.
- Saul may have been possessed by demonic forces causing him to turn away from God and try to kill David, but David gives him his due.
- Verse 24 implies that thanks to Saul's success in defending Israel against its enemies there was prosperity among the people of Israel.
- Verse 26 has been misused. This flowery description of David's friendship with Jonathan was NOT speaking of a homosexual bond.
- *"David was not implying that he had a sexual relationship with Jonathan. Homosexual acts were absolutely forbidden in Israel. Leviticus 18:22 calls practicing homosexuality an "abomination," and Leviticus 20:13 decrees the death penalty for those who practice homosexuality. David was simply restating the deep brotherhood and faithful friendship he had with Jonathan."*ⁱⁱ
- We can understand why David was so sad about Jonathan's death. Jonathan had literally stepped aside knowing David would be king instead of him. What about Saul? He had been trying to kill David for ten years. **Why would David have been so sentimental about Saul's death? Why recognize him and pay tribute to him?**
- Here's the point of this poignant, sad poem David wrote about Saul and Jonathan: Humanly speaking David had every right to

hate King Saul and to rejoice at his death. But David was a man after God's own heart and had too much trust and reverence for God to question His sovereign plan.

- In 1 Samuel 26:10-11 David said, ¹⁰ *Surely the Lord will strike Saul down someday, or he will die of old age or in battle.* ¹¹ *The Lord forbid that I should kill the one he has anointed!...*
- 1 Chronicles 10:13–14 (NLT) tells us, ¹³ *So Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord. He failed to obey the Lord's command, and he even consulted a medium ¹⁴ instead of asking the Lord for guidance. So the Lord killed him and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.*
- You see David was an Israelite who had been taught: Leviticus 19:18 (NLT) ¹⁸ *Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.*
- David was mature enough and so spiritually grounded that he understood God put Saul in leadership and only God should remove him.
- Life Application Study Bible: *"...[David] chose to look at the good Saul had done and to ignore the times when Saul had attacked him. It takes courage to lay aside hatred and hurt and to respect the positive side of another person, especially an enemy."*ⁱⁱⁱ
- How does this apply to you and me today? Hopefully your boss and surely the pastor aren't trying to kill you! How do we put this into practice in our lives? Let's wrap up with a discussion:
- **How does David's example with Saul point to Jesus' teaching? How can we do what David did when it comes to leaders God has put in place not only in the church, but also in the workplace or government? What are some practical ways a follower of Christ should respect leaders? What about holding leaders accountable for their actions?**

2 Samuel 2:2b–4 (NLT) tells us

...David and his wives ³ and his men and their families all moved to Judah, and they settled in the villages near Hebron. ⁴ Then the men of Judah came to David and anointed him king over the people of Judah.

So, What's The Takeaway?

- We began by saying, God puts people in leadership over His people and we are to respect them. Because the leaders and followers are flawed human beings, respecting the leaders can be a challenge at times. Still, RESPECT is what God EXPECTS His people to show to His leaders.
- David showed an amazing capacity for maintaining respect for a leader who didn't seem to deserve it. Not only did David not kill Saul when he had the chance, he didn't gloat or celebrate when God took Saul out.
- David seemed to be mirroring what Joseph said to his brothers, in Genesis 50:20 (NLT) ²⁰ *You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*
- God sometimes puts us under difficult leaders so we can mature and grow closer to Him. In David's case it was preparing him to be God's man to lead God's people and the forefather of Jesus himself.
- When we're tempted to criticize our leaders, we need to pray for them that God will correct what needs to be corrected and remove them if necessary. We also need to pray for those God has put in place to hold our leaders accountable trusting Him to give them wisdom in oversight.
- Finally, we just need to do what David did, trust that God has a sovereign plan regarding the leaders He raises up and that we can trust that plan.

ⁱ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (1 Sa 24:17–20). Wheaton:

ⁱⁱ Tyndale. *Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size)* (Kindle Locations 140363-140367). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*