



Lesson 5 October 3rd, 2020

Love and Devotion to Others

Study Scripture – 1 Samuel 19:1-7

Background Scripture – 1 Samuel 18 & 19; Psalm 59

Key Verse:

Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you. ..."

1 Samuel 19:4

INTRODUCTION

1 Samuel 19 deals with the idea of whether or not humanity is essentially good. This Study deals with the fact that there are unreasonable, controlling people who do things because they are envious and jealous. They behave this way because their intentions are not righteous one. We also have to interact with people of that character because we work for them or live with them. They will not disclose the reason for what they do or what is inside them because they fear that that would expose them to public scorn. They might even to cover their tracks then invoke the name of God and sometimes relent temporarily from their evil intentions. But note that that kind of behaviour is of course different from behaving righteously and pledging their life to assist someone. We see a perfect example of the behaviour of such a person in this Study.

Sadly, we learn from our Study that reasoning with such a person will not win the day.

To show us the contrast in human behaviour, our Study also deals with the truths of genuine friendship. The chapters in our Background Scripture defines for us what Scripture tells us about love and the knitting of souls among persons and the resulting making of "covenant" between people.

Our Study therefore will be about the beautiful relationship between David and the son of this most unreasonable and unrighteous king. The son's name was Jonathan.

Now the Scriptures define the depth of the affection between Jonathan and David as a wonderful kind of love which passed the love that men normally have for women.

It should be made clear therefore that the biblical description of love and devotion between men has been bold facedly hijacked and misunderstood for the sake of normalizing and wrongly attributing to the Bible support for homosexual relationships. There are all kind of opposing views on this Text and there are allegations based on a rather superficial reading of the Bible's description of the relationship between David and Jonathan which are characterized by "love", and a "knitting of souls" which led to them making a covenant with each other. One writer therefore tells us plainly for our benefit:

“There are few better examples of Biblical truth colliding against modern cultural views than in Jonathan’s love for David. Their relationship defied social norms and carried political ramifications-but not in a homosexual manner.

These were two faithful men concerned with God's good, and are well versed in the Scriptures. They loved God's law and plan for relationships. To force a homosexual explanation upon Jonathan and David ignores everything we know of them.

If you choose to hang your ideological hat on the use of the word “love” know that the exact same word (in Hebrew and English) is used to describe one of Israel and Judah's love for David (1 Samuel 18:16). Was the entire nation involved in some romantic tryst with David? Certainly not!

Just verses later, the same word describes the feeling of David's wife toward him. There are ambiguities and nuances with the Hebrew word *ahab* (love), as much as there are in our English interpretations of the word “love”. It doesn't always refer to the ‘eros’. To force it upon David and Jonathan isn't true to the text or intent”.

Now we should remember that there are many references in “myth” and “history” of the holy and pure love that men had for one another. Yet modern writers do not accuse these men of homosexual love in those instances. Writers refer us to Orestes and Pylades, Theseus and Pirithous, Nessus and Euryalus, Damon and Pythias which have been used in literature to illustrate the extremely strong “love” possible between two men. We even have closed our eyes to the love of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. That intense relationship could not even be really compared to the love between Jonathan and David.

We have to really wrap our minds around the fact that there is a “love” which exists between the members of the Trinity, and between them and those that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ which have nothing to do with “eros” or sexual love. God loves us in a fashion which is more intense than we can imagine and thus because of this “love” He sent His only begotten Son to leave Glory and live in a corrupt world with a corrupted humanity to suffer a shameful and humiliating death on the Cross and then die for us.

We are called on to share in that love with one another. This is not an ‘eros’ kind of love. We as Jonathan and David are called to an “agape” kind of love and we should expect that the world will use their slanted interpretation of a righteous relationship to slander righteous believers. So when we talk about “love” between men, and “love” between women we must not always think that there are homosexual overtones involved.

Remember therefore that the selflessness which is indicated in our Study and spiritual love is impossible apart from God who can forever change the heart. This God did with David and Jonathan. They had an honourable, intimate, and God revering friendship which had God as its center. It was not centered on themselves but on their God who is a God who keeps covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

One writer warns and we agree that homosexual love is not the same as the selfless love that is on display in Jonathan’s and David’s relationship. That biblically forbidden kind of relationship has at its center or core **“a lust concerned with worshipping the form of someone who mirrors yourself in body and form”**, says one writer.

We note therefore that our Study of Jonathan and David show us that redeemed men don't need sex to relate to one another. Scholars have repeated that they focused on and held fast to



what was good, loved each other with intense brotherly affection and outdid one another in honour. And we are advised:

“It is the common bond of Jesus Christ that can alone lead men to genuine love”.

The same idea applies to women and their relationship. Much of what we call ‘love’ is not the kind of ‘love’ God expects us to have.

Sometimes we fear and tend to hide from real friendship. We therefore tend to go for superficial relationships which lead us to be consistently frustrated with people. We ignore the many teachings in the Book of Proverbs which teach us how to discover and maintain real friendships.

We are taught in Scripture about the deep commitments men and women can have for each other, a friendship which will make them give their lives for each other, the kind of deep friendship Jesus has for us.

The details in biblical friendship might make modern readers assume romantic overtones in this but this is inaccurate. One writer says:

“For example, men kissing each other is not necessarily a sign of homosexuality in an ancient context. Men kissing platonically is unremarkable in the Old Testament in other passages, especially if the men are related. David and Jonathan are only mentioned to have kissed once they were brothers-in-law through David’s marriage to Jonathan’s sister Michal”.

The friendships in Scripture always have certain truths behind them and this helps us understand the nature of true friendships.

First, friendship springs from a strong bond. The Text therefore tell us that their “souls were knit together” and that Jonathan loved David **“as his own soul”**. He therefore made a covenant with David and showed that this covenant was something real to him by giving David his robe, armour and his weapons. Note that the shepherd boy David would not have those kinds of apparel even though he had the ability to fight and to lead men against the Philistines.

Remember he wore no armour when fighting Goliath but carried only his sling and stones.

We should note that **IF** we are in the body of Christ we are a family and this involves real and vital friendships such as that exhibited between Jonathan and David.

Second, Scripture tells us that if we want a strong friendship it involves a shared affection and love for one another. This means that you do not spend all your time on social media to avoid getting people close. Remember therefore that it is God's love toward us that is at the root of genuine friendship. Christ therefore models this genuine friendship and this automatically brings love and devotion to each other as exhibited by Jonathan and David.

Third, friendship demands selfless sacrifice. Jonathan’s attitudes and actions show that if you want to have the friendship that Scripture talks about you cannot be self-centered and be unable to put aside your own preferences.

Jonathan grew up in Saul’s Palace in Gibeah and had proven himself long before he met David to be a great and strong warrior for the nation. We read in chapter 14:14 that Jonathan and his armour bearer killed 20 Philistines and this caused such a panic in the Philistine army they melted away in all direction. He probably would not pay much attention to David on the many occasions David had been called on to play the harp or lyre for Saul when he was tormented by the evil spirit from the Lord that had come to punish him for his sins. See 1 Samuel 17:15.

But their friendship began soon after David slew Goliath when all the Israelite army, including Saul and Jonathan, were afraid of that monstrous warrior. Nobody could believe that the young



shepherd with no military experience (one scholar speculates that David was about 15 when he killed Goliath for he was born in the 10th year of Saul's reign while Jonathan was about 42 years old) had so much faith in God that in the face of this terrible blasphemy against the God of Israel he would risk his life to preserve the honour of God.

Abner, the captain of the Israelite army brought David with the cut off head of Goliath in his hands to formally introduce him to Saul as the successful warrior that had caused a great victory for Israel. When Jonathan communed with David on this occasion the knitting of souls took place and the covenant friendship developed which was sealed with an **oath**. Jonathan obviously had a depth of spiritual insight and discernment as well as the ability of a great warrior. Jonathan came to realize that though he was in line to the throne of Saul his father, the real God appointed king of Israel would be David and Jonathan therefore said in chapter 23:17: ***"You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you"***.

No wonder that when Jonathan died in battle on Mount Gilboa David wrote a lament or funeral dirge expressing his deep undying love:

"The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!

How the mighty have fallen!...

Saul and Jonathan-

***in life they were beloved and pleasant in their lives,
and in their death they were not parted.***

***They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.....***

***I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
you have been very pleasant to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
surpassing the love of women"***.

This Lesson Study therefore involves more complex concepts and relationships than what will appear on the surface. It involves examining

1. The idea of Covenant and what it means, so we can differentiate between God's Covenant and a human covenant, as well as seeing the connection between them.
2. The Providence of God as He establishes, controls and directs the out workings of His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and appoints the man after His own heart as the true King over Israel. God provided a true friend as Jonathan to protect David from death.
3. The inevitable consequences of false human choices. These choices are shown to have much more serious and long-lasting effects than one would normally think. Saul had a most tragic end.
4. It therefore makes clear the ways of love and the ways of envy. It therefore contains a powerful message that we had better take heed of these matters as we live our Christian life and profess that we are children of God.
5. It introduces us to the dangers of a life of passion such as that lived by King Saul.
6. It introduces us to the inner conflicts, encouragement, and the guidance of God as He prepares one of His Saints for their future. It is therefore made clear whether we like it or not, that when God calls any of His children, God has a purpose and a plan for spiritual maturity which involves not only the sweet but also the bitter. These conflicts await us all,



and the first rule is that we must learn to obey, for the trials that the Sovereign purpose of God brings to us is for our benefit.

We will now see what friendship means, and what the word “neighbour” means.

The Baker Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology gives the meaning of the word ‘Covenant’ **“The term “covenant” is of Latin origin (con venire), meaning a coming together. It presupposes two or more parties will come together to make a contract, agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities. In religious and theological circles there has not been agreement on precisely what is to be understood by the biblical term. It is used variously in Biblical contexts. In political situations, it can be translated treaty; in a social setting, it means a lifelong friendship agreement; or it can refer to a marriage. The biblical words most often translated “covenant” are *berit* in the Old Testament (appearing about 280 times) and *diatheke* in the New Testament (at least 33 times) The preferred meaning of this Old Testament word is bond; a covenant refers to two or more parties bound together.....**

When Abimelech and Isaac decided to settle their land dispute, they made a binding agreement, league, or covenant to live in peace. An oath confirmed it (Genesis 26: 26-31). Joshua and the Gibeonites bound themselves, by oath, to live in peace together (Joshua 9: 15), although Yahweh commanded that Israel was not to bind themselves to the people living in the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:2; Judges 2:2). Solomon and Hiram made a binding agreement to live and work in peace together (1 Kings 5:12). A friendship bond was sealed by oath between David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:3, 1 Samuel 20: 16-17). Marriage is a bond (covenant) for life.

The covenants referred to above were between two equal parties; this means that the covenant relationship was bilateral. That bond was sealed by both parties vowing, often by oath, that each, having equal privileges and responsibilities, would carry out their assigned roles”.

With that in mind let us look at the context. God had called the prophet Samuel and given him several titles such as Judge, a Prophet, a Seer, and a Teacher, and all Israel depended on him to administer justice and reconnect the twelve tribes that had separated from each other during the time of the Judges. Israel recognized that Samuel was God's spokesman and so Israel came to Samuel and demanded that Samuel give them a King like the other nations had. Note however that no prophet, priest, pastor or pope in the world can create a King, for God alone directs history, and so it is clear that the elders of Israel were dishonouring the Lord when they treated Samuel as if he were a king- maker. These people could easily see that the nations around them had harsh and generally uncaring rulers and there was chaos for the actions of tyrants are quite predictable. But the elders of Israel foolishly wanted someone like that for themselves, for they thought that a tyrant would offer them security and temporary benefits. Despite God warning the people that they were being foolish, God directed Samuel to give them what they demanded if they rejected the warning. They would then have to live with the consequences.

In line with the desires of their flesh which was now clearly leading them to a choice in defiance to the known will of God, God gave the people what can only be called the “People's Choice”.



Let us therefore remind ourselves of the motivations which lead to the kind of choices that we make in leadership and throughout our Personal life. Maybe we all without exception will learn good lessons from this Study. So Saul was selected. He was the son of Kish, a very rich and obviously powerful man with all the security that come with wealth. Saul's name meant "prayed for" or "desired" and so his father seemed to be somewhat religious for he chose a word which literally meant 'excellent'. God had blessed Saul for he was the tallest, handsome, most muscular in the nation, and quite rich. He was on appearances a natural leader. The people would easily accept someone like that.

But he had some serious weaknesses for though he looked good we note from the account when we first met him in 1 Samuel 9:3-27 he had been sent off with servants to find some missing donkeys and when they couldn't find them a servant had to point out to Saul that there was a prophet in Israel named Samuel and they should go to find out from him where the lost donkeys were. Saul was clearly unaware of Samuel's existence and his role as prophet and so we see that he had some serious spiritual weaknesses. He remained focused on finding the lost animals. His interests and capabilities are obviously quite small. When Samuel introduced him as the chosen king he did not seem to understand what was happening to him and he went and hid himself among the baggage and God had to reveal where he was hiding to the people so that they could run and bring him out for his coronation.

We are not therefore surprised when his judgments proved to be terrible, his policies foolish, and as one writer says

"His attempts at spiritual leadership were misguided. Saul couldn't deal with his own growing jealousy and madness. He couldn't rule himself; he couldn't rule his nation; and finally he died at his own hand without honour. Saul's failures are familiar. What he was on the inside never matched what he looked like on the outside. He couldn't live up to the expectations created by his appearance. And Saul knew he was a nobody. He did not have either personal or spiritual ambitions, an ordinary farmer who happened to be tall and good-looking".

Now as we study this lesson you might be thinking why God would have given him this assignment that he could not live up to. But we have been told over and over again that this is our condition. It is God's right and prerogative to give us responsibility even if we do not want it. Even if He puts us in a family that is not great, and which did not teach us how to love and to bear the burdens of life it is His right. All you have to do is to go down on our knees and ask for help. Saul had never done that and had never admitted that he was not the man he appeared to be. There was no humility. There was only brazen behaviour. So before you get any wrong ideas and blame God we all must note now that God provided remarkably magnificent and powerful help for Saul. So don't you forget that God has provided magnificent help for you! God had provided the great prophet and teacher Samuel on which he could have relied for mentoring. God had also provided a remarkable son in Jonathan who was clearly a remarkably strong believer in God and who was so smart and well behaved and a great warrior that the people loved him. Then God provided a remarkable friend in David who clearly loved Saul and who was patient with Saul and respected the anointing he had received from God despite his wicked behaviour. David was a great warrior and willing to fight the battle against Goliath which was clearly a battle that Saul and Jonathan should have fought. David would fight for Saul at every stage.



So note that when God calls you He already knows your weaknesses and He has already provided all the help that you need. He has given you the Holy Spirit, He has given you friends and brethren around you, and His angels have encamped around you.

So now we will look at what friendship really is and how the people of God should love, be friends with each other, and should relate to each other.

A REVIEW OF THE CONTEXT

When Jonathan died David wrote the most beautiful and touching song of praise and lament.

Saul, as well as Jonathan, knew that because of Saul's behaviour Jonathan and his descendants would be removed from being Kings in Israel. It was David that was appointed for that role as the new king. Yet Jonathan was the penultimate friend to David to the point that he was willing to give up his rights, or the rights that Saul his father thought he had to protect and nurture David. The extent of that friendship was staggering but it is a friendship that believers must have for each other.

Believers are warned against the terrible sin of envy and jealousy which is altogether too common in the church of God.

David had come forward to fight against the enemy Goliath. The king-Saul, his son Jonathan, and the mighty men of Israel including David's own brothers had been too fearful to defend the honour of God. But David was not afraid of Goliath for he depended on the power of God to work and destroy the enemy. When David defeated Goliath the grateful army of Israel pursued the Philistines and destroyed them. David took the head of Goliath and brought it to Saul and was then properly introduced to King Saul by Abner the commander of the armies of Israel. Our Lesson in this verse begins, for now the rich and powerful King Saul the "People's choice" who had really failed in his duty as king to fight the battles of Israel as the elders of Israel had told the prophet Samuel their desired king would do, met David and had a conversation with him to find out who he really was. So this tragic figure apparently reacted in an entirely utilitarian fashion to David for his only concern seem to be how he could profit from the military skill and power of David. He did not want to give up David to go back to his father's house but he now wanted a son to fight for him though this would be a son for whom he felt no affection.

The warning of God through Samuel was now coming to pass. Israel had been warned that the king would take the people's daughters and sons and property to make himself better off and not necessarily make the people better off.

But while Saul remained aloof and uncaring, the soul of Saul's son Jonathan was knit or bonded to the soul of David.

It does seem quite instructive that when David said that he would face the giant Philistine warrior Goliath that Saul offered David his armour and weapon to help him in the fight but now after his success there was no real offer of rich royal clothing. He seemed to forget that he had promised that any warrior who killed Goliath would have his eldest daughter's hand in marriage and that warrior's family would forever pay no taxes. There is little indication the king remembered his oath.

We should now ask you the question whether your soul is knit or bonded to the soul of Jesus the son of David.



But it was Jonathan whose soul was knit to the soul of David and who because of this knitting of his own soul to David's soul because of love thus made a covenant with David.

Now it is to be noted that this is not first time in history we have seen stories of great friendships. We read from the writings of the Roman Cicero of the story of Damon and Pythias where we read of a young statesman in Rome named Pythias who was condemned to die and wanted to go home to his family to bid farewell to them before he died. His great friend Damon took his place in prison as security for Pythias to guarantee his return to face death. The Emperor Dionysus was so impressed by this display of friendship that he pardoned both of them under condition that they include him in the secret of their friendship.

The story of David and Jonathan tells us about a very warm and intimate relationship. But it also tells us the secret of their friendship or how they became friends.

After David without fear and with his absolute trust in God took on himself the responsibility to kill Goliath despite the odds, the friendship between David and Jonathan started with a natural attraction when he heard David talk in his conversation with Saul. Jonathan obviously realized that David thought the same way he did for we know that later on Jonathan displayed that great fearlessness and against great odds would fight the enemy. Read Chapter 14: 1-15 for Jonathan's fearless exploit.

Both these men were willing to die and with valour entrust themselves to the Lord no matter what it might cost. Jonathan himself had said, ***"The Lord will deliver, whether by many or by few"***.

So the friendship started with some sort of attraction for both of them thought the same way, liked the same things, and recognized that they were both interested in following God and doing God's will and had the same perspective on life. This initial attraction was taken to the next step to sustain friendship for Jonathan committed himself to David. We know when we say we are friends we do not necessarily have friends for we have not chosen to commit and so the essence of friendship which is "giving" does not exist. We recall that Jesus said,

"Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life (literally his soul) for his friend".

One writer discloses for our understanding what is involved here and states:

"The question Jonathan asked was this: "What is the one thing David needs which I can give out of my person?" He wanted to give of himself. That is the basis of all friendship. Therefore a friendship is not something which necessarily happens to me; it is something which I initiate toward someone else. My friend is not the person who meets my needs; my friend is the person whose needs I meet.

Therefore I can never say I have no friends. When we say that we betray the fact that we do not really understand what a friend is. We tend to think of a friend in terms of someone who will listen to me, someone who will talk to me when I'm lonely, or someone who will look at things my way. And it is true, if we look at life in this way, that we may never have many friends. But if we see that the key to friendship is giving, and that my friend is the one whose need I meet, then I have no ends of friends. I have hundreds of friends, because there is no end of people who have needs to be met.

The Old Testament concept of a friend is tied to the idea of a neighbour. As a matter of fact, the two Hebrew words are exactly the same. Your friend is your neighbour. We think of our neighbour as the person who lives next door to us. But that is not a neighbour as the Old Testament understands it. My neighbour is the next person I meet who has a need. That is



why the rich young ruler asked Jesus, *“Who is my neighbour?”* Jesus responded by telling the story of the good Samaritan, the point of which is that the next person you meet who has a need is your neighbour.

This sets us free from going out and looking for friends everywhere, in the sense that we look for someone to minister to us, and then we feel depressed and sorry for ourselves because we don't find that kind of friend. In biblical terms, that is not my friend. My friend is a person who has the need, and whose need I can meet by pouring out my soul to him”.

So the covenant was made between Jonathan and David. There was a lot of affection. A bond was created.

What is fundamentally important is that Jonathan stripped himself of his robe and gave it to David. He even gave him his sword, bow, and belt. He knew that this poor shepherd boy from the hills did not have the proper kind of clothes to wear in the royal court and did not have any weapons of his own. So because of love, the bond, and the covenant Jonathan filled the need that David had.

As a result of this David became very successful. When Saul sent him to fight or to do any kind of work he did this wisely. The people came to love him and the Army accepted him. Saul's servants came to love and respect David.

You can now understand why despite these loyal and efficient works by David Saul's animosity grew and his hatred and envy multiplied especially when the welcoming women celebrated the death of Goliath and the slaughter of the Philistines by saying

***“Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousand”.***

So Saul looked on David with more and more suspicion and was afraid of David especially when the Lord had departed from Saul because of Saul's disobedience. Saul now regarded David as the usurper despite the fact that he knew God had removed him and appointed David. Saul still regarded his eldest son Jonathan as the rightful heir to the throne as being careless, and selfless about his own goals and purposes in life, only wanting to magnify David. The flames of envy now raged, but only in Saul. Hatred and envy which started in the mind developed into murder. Saul wanted David to fight his battles but yet first secretly but then openly he wanted to murder him. But this of course contrasted with the covenant love and friendship of Jonathan which burned brighter and brighter.

Note that David prospered because of the ministry of Jonathan in his life for Jonathan's friendship and his desire to elevate David and equip him for life in the court was pivotal to his success in life. The covenant made Jonathan the reconciler, trying to mend relations between David and Saul. He was an intercessor on behalf of David, healing relationships though it would have been easy for him to take his father's side and be critical of David and remain silent at his father's criticism.

We should note that when we fall into the same trap it is a shameful thing. We sometimes remain silent in the face of the strong and powerful personalities who criticize the brothers or sisters. When we do that, we know that we are not friends of others and we are not giving to others.

Be careful therefore that your love for friends is not defective. One interesting statement that was made of the typical friendship is,

“ They begin to love late, they cease early, they love little”.



THE TEXT CHAPTER 19:1-7

The tragedy of King Saul is now made plain for it is now into the open. Saul had received a great deal of attention and had received a great deal of light from the Lord God. God provided Samuel the prophet to help him along but he did not respond to the light that God had given him. He was obviously so weak spiritually and so neglected the word of God that he became filled with jealousy, awe, and a dread of David. He had to keep at it against David by giving him the hand of his daughter Michal so that she would be a “snare” to him. 1 Samuel 18:21. This rich spoiled daughter obviously had severe character flaws which Saul knew about but he wanted to unload her on David to cause David trouble. We learn later she was an idolater and had a house god.

This is the tragedy that happens when people tried to match their strength with God's strength in conflict. When they become spiritually weak and ignore the word of God and the help of those that are close to God they sometimes forget that the fight with God is a losing battle for Ephesians 1 tells us that God works all things according to the counsel of His own will.

Psalms 135:5-6 along with many of the Psalms of Scriptures tells us exactly that same thing. But the problem with us is that despite knowing that we still do things thinking that we can win whatever little conflicts we are in.

This chapter looks at David's life as an outlaw and that life lasted for seven years while Saul was still on the throne.

It is really most important for us to realize that David wrote Psalm 59 as an internal, personal look at these events and reveals the reasons for David's composure and faith during these very terrible years.

David was mistreated by Saul and his messengers at every turn. Sometimes Saul acted as if he loved David and that made him even more dangerous. It was really only the intervention of Jonathan that often saved David. Psalm 59 tells us that David well knew that fierce men among his people had set ambushes to kill him but he knew and stated that this was not for his transgressions nor for any of his sins for he was innocent. David knew that God would laugh at them for God was his “stronghold” and his “strength”. David stated God had possessed him. He had done Saul no harm. His difficulties were related to the life that God has laid out for him. David was dependent on God and submissive to God.

He was the object of covenantal love and so he would “wait” on God. So he would sing of God's strength and His lovingkindness. He would praise God.

What a great lesson for us as we begin to look at what Saul now does.

It is to be noted that Jonathan had to intercede with Saul not to kill David and David had been restored to his former role of playing and singing to Saul when the evil spirit came on him. But it was after David had fought and defeated the Philistines one more time and the people were happy about that that Saul went into a jealous and psychotic rage.

In Saul's mind, given the fact that the people held David in high esteem for his valour and military successes, David was his rival and he wanted to put an end to David's life.



Verse 1. Saul was now desperate and told his son and his servants that they should kill David. Saul established an official policy, and made his unrighteous and ungodly choice. Jonathan now had to accept or reject an established policy. He had to make a choice and decide whether he wanted to go along with what his father had set in motion. Jonathan however made his choice based on his covenant love and friendship for David. For him the covenant status still remained in force.

Verse 2. Jonathan was caught in the middle, and he had to decide to put his life on the line. He wanted not only to save David but he also wanted to save Saul.

But Saul is in no mood to recognize what David has done for him and for Israel. One writer gives us a warning:

“Grammarians make a distinction between envy and jealousy. Envy is wanting what someone else has; jealousy is worrying that someone will take what you have. Saul is both envious and jealous. He wants David’s popularity and he’s worried that David will take the kingdom from him.

If you give in to envy or jealousy, you may misread what’s going on. If you’re vigilant to protect your position, you’ll become sensitive-- even hypersensitive-- that any potential threat or rival exists. Through the lens of envy or jealousy, you will see threats and rivalries where none exists. Like Saul, you would feel slighted when no slight is intended. A Russian proverb says, “Envy looks at a juniper bush and sees a pine forest”.

Remember that when you do as the writer above warns against that you are opening the door to evil.

We are now told that Jonathan disclosed to David that his father king Saul was determined to kill David. Jonathan therefore told David to be a little patient but to be on his guard until the morning and hiding himself in a secret place.

Verse 3. Jonathan wanted one last chance to personally persuade his father to give up his murderous intent. He told David that he would go with his father into a field where David was hiding. He would speak to his father and whatever his father finally decided he would tell him.

Verse 4. Jonathan the mediator and intercessor pointed out to his father that whatever he was planning to do to David was a sin. David was one of his faithful servants and had never sinned against him.

In fact, David had done nothing but good for Saul. Killing him would have been a grave sin.

Jonathan encouraged his father not to sin.

Do you tell others plainly not to sin? Or are you afraid of the mercenary spirit in your intentions? Do you refrain from pointing out sin to someone because you do not want to offend them, lose their friendship, and lose any possibility of getting some benefit from them?

Verse 5. Jonathan reminded Saul that David had taken his life in his hands by fighting and killing the Philistine Goliath when they could not do that for they were all terrified and they were too afraid of Goliath. David had by killing Goliath brought a great deliverance to Israel. Saul himself had seen the great deliverance and had rejoiced. So why then would he sin against innocent blood to kill David without a cause?

Note that Jonathan’s argument was that David had risked his life to help Saul and Israel. But now he himself was risking his life with this argument for any hint of disloyalty put his life in danger as well as his position as next in line to the throne. Jonathan’s love and devotion to David was certainly exemplary.



Verse 6. The powerful argument got through even to Saul's envious, jealous, and somewhat deranged mind, and Saul swore that he would not kill David. It is to be noted however that Saul had fears he could not control at the time but at this time his madness did not seem to dominate his conduct.

Verse 7. Jonathan stood up to Saul and this led to Saul making a godly choice this time. He certainly was brave and willing to take a tremendous risk to save David. But we should never forget that Jonathan loved his father. Remember that there was one incident when Saul wanted to kill Jonathan for disobeying one of Saul's ridiculous commands that Jonathan did not even know about but the people in the army had to stop Saul from this mad act.

We see now that when Jonathan spoke to him Saul listened with his ears. The appeal for the life of David went to his ears but not to his heart. He heard but it did not penetrate to his heart. The problem was that he refused to deal with the truth and confront his envy and jealousy. So Saul opened the door again to evil and he became what Jesus and Paul calls a slave to sin. See John 8:34 and Romans 6:22.

When that happened Saul's vow "***As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed***", went out the door. Saul had invoked the name of God but that vow meant nothing.

But we know that Saul was right with the words that he spoke. David was not going to be put to death for God was with him and so David will escape from Saul once again.

As we contrast the love and devotion of Jonathan for David and David for Jonathan we must understand that all behaviour is a choice. Some of the so-called "mental illnesses" and insanity develop when people are not prepared to repent of their sins and their iniquity even when rebuked by God but instead blame others. This appears to be the case with Saul for his psychotic, delusional, and paranoid behaviours started at a particular point in time. He was not always like that but he gradually went on to behave this way and blame innocent David.

The focus of Saul's life was to remain to be King and this came from his lack of overall faith. We see this when he treated religion as something for political convenience which he would use to gain popularity. So he would beg Samuel to come with him before the troops so that he could worship "***the Lord your God***". He did not say that he wanted Samuel to go with him to worship "his" God.

As a result of this Saul developed into a man that was incapable to see the true nature of Samuel, Jonathan, or David and he would misjudge Jonathan as an unworthy son, and David as a treacherous man who intended to overthrow him.

There was clearly no great amount of love and devotion as far as Saul was concerned. He made personal decisions with moral choices and this led to his behaviour patterns. In a real sense therefore Saul drove himself insane.

If there is love and devotion to God and others around us (our neighbours as defined in Scripture) one will accept God's judgment. One will repent, resign from one's position and then sit down in what we would call "the back benches". Saul could not do that but instead chose to badmouth David and try to blame him. He transferred the blame for his anxieties onto someone else, namely David, and that became the cause of his disaster rather than the solution. Scriptures say only Samuel, Jonathan, and David in the court circles knew that Saul was slated to be replaced as the king of the land. but that did not matter for he was trying in every way to remain king. That was his moral choice.



The great tragedy was Saul soon slipped back into his madness and again threatened David and finally locked himself into a position from which he could not retreat. In chapter 20 Jonathan again had to face a choice for Saul began his death threats and began trying to kill David. Saul even tried to get messengers to kill David at his house and chased David all the way to where Samuel was.

We must be careful never to get into the situation where sin so controls and dominates our minds that we return to the dump from which God took us. We should never want to prefer darkness to light.

CONCLUSION

What is clear to us from this Study is that people are driven by deeply rooted envy and jealousy that cannot be eradicated from them by one reasonable argument. Jonathan's argument was quite reasonable. But remember that some people can't be reasoned with no matter how well you have developed your case and how well you have delivered it brilliantly. The persons hearing your argument might seem to be convinced by your argument but be warned that their repentance will often be short-lived.

People often open the door to evil a little bit and that whole opening has become so wide that they have become warped by evil and there can be no going back for them. Their ears and their hearts have no connection with each other.

We might think that reasoning with people will persuade them by reason. But never forget that research is showing us that human beings are not very reasonable at all. Their decisions are often, more often than not based on emotion and on motivations that they don't even understand. The human heart is really not open to reason. History shows us that even professing believers could not be persuaded not to be slave owners. More often than not many men cannot be persuaded not to abuse women and children. History has shown that you cannot persuade powerful countries not to take what they want from other weaker countries. You can talk all you want but that will not persuade them.

Other countries and statesmen tried but it was not possible to talk Hitler out of invading European countries and triggering the Second World War. Do you seriously think that it was possible to talk Saul out of pursuing David to kill him?

The only way to change people is by the work of the Holy Spirit. When you come up against a jealous, envious, and controlling person the best thing to do is to put some distance between you and them. Sometimes it is not possible to do that and you really have only to put emotional distance between you and them and cry to the Holy Spirit to help you.

Love and devotion and delighting in Christ the son of David should excite and challenge us.

We do not have any excuse for not making righteous choices. Jonathan made a righteous choice against his own father and even though he stood by and fought in battle with his father to the end he was not afraid when his father labelled him as his enemy and cursed him in a disgraceful fashion.

But Jonathan stayed with his father all through his bouts of mental illness. He failed to reconcile his father and David but he will remain faithful fighting for his father's survival and Israel's survival.



Our Lesson therefore teaches that there is such a thing as covenant love and friendship. There is also such a thing as loyalty. This Lesson Study defines those terms for us.

Believers should learn to classify people by their love and their actions, or sadly by their lack of love. That is the way to assess others.

We thank God for His work on our behalf and committing Himself to us, teaching us to love our enemies and enable righteous men and women to keep on making righteous choices. We thank God for keeping us firm in those righteous choices and committed to these choices so that God will be glorified and the world will realize that believers are not unloving.

So like Jonathan delighted in David and loved him we are to delight in the people of God.

We are to learn like David in Psalm 59 to delight in the Lord and in His covenant love for we realize that He has unbreakable covenant love for us. So remember in the Covenant there is a Stronghold and God will triumph over all your foes.

So continue to praise Him and be faithful, for your Covenant love and relationship defines who you are.

