

DISCUSSION NOTES

MARCH 1, 2020

Start by praying and asking for God's help as you seek to grow as authentic followers of Jesus.

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

1. Read 1 Samuel 18:1-30. Make 5-7 observations. What is surprising? What do we see about God? What things are repeated (about David, about Saul, about God)? What stands out most to you?
2. In verses 1-5, what is symbolized by the action that Jonathan takes toward David? How is this a step of faith for Jonathan? How would this be countercultural to the normal way of acting in the world?
3. What motivates Saul's aggression towards David? In what ways does Saul's descent into madness coincide with David's ascent toward greatness?
4. The section on marriage in 1 Samuel 18:17-30 seems very strange in our minds. In ancient Israel, it was common for a man to pay a "bride price" to the family of the woman he was to marry. This is what is being negotiated with Saul regarding his daughters, Merab and Michal. With Merab, David acknowledges that he does not have the ability to pay a worthy price, so she is given to another in marriage. With Michal, Saul decides to offer a bride price of physical cost fighting against his enemy, and then David doubles the bloody bounty awarded to Saul. What motivated Saul's decisions in these matters? What differing results did this produce for Saul and for David (see verses 28-30)?
5. In chapter 18, Saul's son and Saul's daughter both express fondness for David, and then in chapter 19 we will see that they each help to protect David from Saul's attacks. When you consider these facts, how do you think this would add to Saul's jealousy and to the family tension?

LIVING IT OUT

6. How do you feel when others seem to be better off than you? How do you feel when others experience recognition and you do not? What do you think is at the root of those feelings?
7. Why is it important to recognize that you can be an "unreliable narrator" of the events in your life, misreading your circumstances and what they mean? How do you combat the "internal chatter" that tells you a story about your life that is not true?
8. How can your trust in God and his Word help you overcome feelings of inadequacy, bitterness, or envy?
9. Have you ever experienced a season where you felt like you did all the right things but life just seemed to keep getting worse? How tough was it for you to trust the Lord in that season? Did you find it difficult to look beyond the circumstances to see God's hand in it all? Why or why not?
10. William Blaikie said, "It pleased God, in infinite love, to make David pass through a long period of hard discipline and salutary training." Do you agree or disagree? Why do you think God takes us through difficult times in order to train us for deeper trust?
11. What is one thing from this lesson that you will seek to live out this week?