

Week Three: Rise and Fall and Marriage

May 25-31, 2008

This issue of The Vine will focus on the rise of one Bible character and the impending fall of another. As we look at the progression of their stories, watch the decisions they make and how their relationships are affected. Can we identify the role God plays in the course of their lives? Sometimes it seems that our purpose is to plug away at life, trying our best to achieve all our goals. Looking at the stories of David and Saul we might determine that our purpose is more about where we place God in our lives and to what degree is He our focus.

If you wish to receive The Vine via e-mail each week you may register online at www.kentwoodcommunitychurch.com/thevine by following the directions listed there.

*First Encounter***Read 1 Samuel 18:1-9**

What are the words used to describe Jonathan's feelings toward David? In what tangible way did Jonathan express those feelings to David? What was the basis for Jonathan to have such strong feelings toward David?

Who else admired David? Why?

What event made Saul angry over David's popularity? What other emotions did Saul feel toward David?

What do you think it meant to the people of that time that “the women” came out to meet King Saul? In the male-dominated world of that time, why would Saul care what women sing about?

Are Saul’s feelings toward David justified? Why or why not? Where has Saul placed God in his life?

When someone is successful around you, do you respond more like Saul or Jonathan? Why?

Prayer Reflection: Pray and ask the Lord to show any jealousy you may have in your heart. Give it to God and pray for a softer heart.

Second Encounter

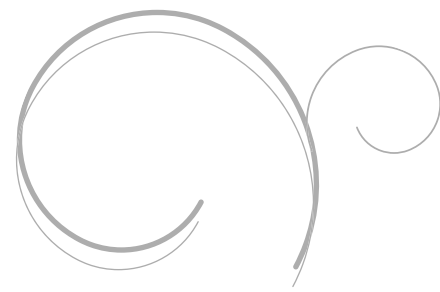
Read 1 Samuel 18:10-19

What role did God play in Saul’s attitude toward David? List the different ways Saul tried to “eliminate” David. What did Saul recognize as one major difference between him and David?

How has Saul’s feelings toward David changed? How does David view himself in relation to Saul? Why doesn’t David take Merab to be his wife?

Who Wants a King?

Installing Saul as a King over Israel was not God’s idea but the demand of the people. In doing so, the Lord willingly agreed to remove the theocratic form of leadership in favor of what was demanded: the worldly model that a people should be led by a human King. Raising up David to be a leader among the people of Israel was God’s idea, and the stories of the two leaders reveal much about our ability to decide what’s best for ourselves. For more on this part of the story, read 1 Samuel 8 & 9.





Compare the presence of God in Saul's life with the presence of God in David's life.

If you could insert yourself in the place of Saul in this part of the story, how would the story be different? How might it be the same?

What does it mean that "the Lord was with David"?

Prayer Reflection: Praise that Lord that He is with you. And be bold in your prayer and ask for more of His presence, more of the Lord actively working in your life.

Third Encounter

Read 1 Samuel 18:20-30

List the things Saul requests David to do according to these passages. Describe David's perspective toward each of Saul's requests.

How does David's relationship to Saul change? Why? What status has David achieved in the Israelite community?



In what ways, if any, was David's rise dependent upon Saul? In what ways, if any, was Saul's demise dependent upon David?

What factors played a role in David's rise and Saul's demise? Do those same factors play a role in your story?

Prayer Reflection: Pray that you can have a strong character like David even in the face of all the scheming to which he was subjected.

Fourth Encounter

Read 1 Samuel 18:20-30. As you read, focus on the marriage aspects of the passage.

What was Saul's motivation in the marriage of Michal and David? What was Michal's motivation?

In those days, it would be natural to have a bride price, which would be money or other resources paid to the bride's family (this would be the opposite of a dowry practiced in other cultures). Why didn't David think he was able to marry Michal? What did Saul offer as the bride price? What did David pay?

Who did David have supporting him? How did Saul feel about this?

Prayer Reflection: Pray for the marriages closest to you. Pray that Lord will be the center of the relationships.





Small Group Guide



NOTE: This guide is provided to help Small Group Leaders take their groups through the passage. The following questions are suggestions. As you plan your group, you have flexibility to use the questions below or above as you wish. Pray well. Consider your group and may the Lord bless your time in scripture.

1. What does this passage show about David's character?
 2. Discuss the different marriage options given to David. What are some reasons Michal was a better option for him than Merab?
 3. Saul seems torn about David. What is tearing at him? Does he want him close or far away? Why?
 4. Discuss a time that jealousy affected you greatly. This could be when you were jealous, or someone was jealous of you.
 5. Discuss the marriage between David and Michal. How did it start? What were the good points of the beginning? What were some strange facts about the beginning?
 6. Discuss the way David responds to all the drama. How would you respond?
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