



## GOD TESTS DAVID • The Righteous and Faithful will be Rewarded

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

1 Samuel 26:1-25

For the third straight chapter, the LORD tests David by putting an opportunity to kill someone in his way. No doubt most people would have ended the heartache and pain by putting Saul to death. Not David. He wanted to be faithful to God and His anointed king. As in chapter 24, David has someone telling him to do evil (kind of like that little devil on people's shoulders), but David listens to the LORD's command instead. This chapter shows us that we can experience hope and encouragement because God protects those who trust in Him. If it hasn't by now, your group should definitely be learning that it is not only better, but it is right and holy, to leave matters in God's hand instead of trying to fix things ourselves.

#### David Spares Saul's Life Again (26:1-12)

Most people would consider David the luckiest man in the world throughout the 1 Samuel narrative. There are hundreds of men with Saul seeking his life, but God always provides a way of escape. In our chapter, Saul's men find where David is once again. I'm sure that Saul's intelligence officers would put any other's to shame – they always know exactly where David hides! Nevertheless, because God is with David and he is the new anointed king, harm will not come his way.

In verse 6, David feels daring and he asks his men, "Who will go down with me into the camp of Saul?" Immediately Abishai says, "I will go down with you." Certainly if David had this many narrow escapes, his men could trust him. The two proceed to go to the camp at night. When they see Saul, he is sleeping, for the LORD caused a deep sleep to fall upon him and his men (v. 12). Abishai tells David that the LORD has delivered Saul into his hand. Abishai played devil's advocate in this passage. "Go ahead!" he says. "God has given you Saul!" Abishai uses the Lord's name in vain. Without a doubt, this is a test of David's faith, character, and dependence upon God instead of an opportunity for deliverance. David responds with knowledge and wisdom, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish" (v. 10). David knows that Saul's end will come and that it is not for him to determine – it's the LORD's decision. David simply takes Saul's spear and water jug, again showing Saul that he could have taken his life. Your group should be looking for areas in their own lives where they need to look to God in faith for His vindication, instead of trying to bring it about themselves. Help them understand that even in the smallest things in life, we must surrender ourselves to God and let Him decide the circumstances.

### What's the Big Idea?

David has a second chance to kill Saul, but he spares him. Again, we learn the wonderful truth that God protects His people, delivers them, and vindicates them as they trust in Him. This lesson should lead us to experience hope and encouragement because of God's ultimate protection and vindication through His Son Jesus.

### What's the Problem?

We are selfish, impatient people who want situations to work out the way we want them to and at the time we want them to.



### David's Appeal to Abner and Saul (26:13-25)

After moving to the other side of the mountain, David calls out to Abner, Saul's right-hand man, "This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the LORD's anointed." Though David is Saul's enemy, he still has high regard for him because he is anointed by the LORD as king of Israel. While David is yelling to Abner, Saul recognizes his voice. David again asks what he has done to deserve this affliction. Saul confesses to acting foolishly and blesses David (same song, same verse as chapter 24). David shows Saul his spear and says, "The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the LORD's anointed" (v. 23). In other words, David says that he is acting righteously by not killing Saul. "God will bless me, though you curse me," David cries. Notice David's utter dependence on God, though most would think the situation calls for drastic measures. David has been anointed and promised the throne and he understands that God is his judge. Like David, we are to remain patient and confident in the Lord, that all His promises have their truth in Christ (see 2 Cor. 1:20).

Let your group see the beauty in depending on God for vindication instead of trying to manufacture revenge for ourselves. God is the ultimate judge and we are to be subject to Him in every circumstance, even when it appears as if we have divine opportunities for deliverance. Discuss this with your group and seek God for how to distinguish between sinful temptation and divine opportunity.

### What's Our Response?

We should live by faith that God's perfect plan will come in His timing.

## What Are the Questions?

I Samuel 26:1-25

### LAUNCH

When are you most tempted to trust yourself and take matters into your own hands instead of trusting God?

### EXPLORE

Read I Samuel 26:1-5

1. Describe the setting of the narrative in your own words.

Read I Samuel 26:6-16

2. Summarize the action in verse 6-7.

3. How does Abishai interpret David's success in sneaking into Saul's camp?

4. How does David respond to Abishai's suggestion?

5. How does David express trust in God as he responds to Abishai?

6. If you follow Christ, what are you dealing with right now that calls for the assurance that God is for you?

7. What does David do before he leaves Saul's camp?

8. What insight does verse 12 give about the reason for David's success?

9. What does David do next?

Read I Samuel 26:17-25

10. What is David's point as he interacts with Saul?

11. How does Saul respond to David's words?

12. How does David express trust in the LORD in his closing words to Saul?

### APPLY

13. What are the main things we learn in this passage about God's care for His people?

14. Read John 7:29-30. How does David's experience anticipate the way God would later defend his Son Jesus?

15. If God is for you in the same way He was for David, what encouragement can you draw as you think over this chapter?

16. Look again at I Samuel 26:10-11a. Just as David trusted God and chose not to take matters into his own hands, in what way do you think God is calling you to do the same?

### What Are the Answers?

1. Saul discovers where David is and gathers 3,000 men to search for him. But David tracks Saul and comes to the outskirts of his camp.
2. David recruits two of his men and sneaks into Saul's camp while he is sleeping.
3. He sees it as God delivering Saul into David's hands, and he volunteers to kill him.
4. He won't let Abishai kill Saul because Saul is God's chosen king.
5. He leaves it to God to end Saul's life in His time and on His terms.
6. Allow the group to discuss.
7. He takes Saul's spear and water jug.
8. The LORD caused a sound sleep to fall on Saul and his men so that David and his men were safe.
9. He distances himself from Saul's camp and calls to Abner, Saul's general, to call him to account for not protecting King Saul.
10. He questions why Saul would pursue him when he has done no wrong, wonders if someone provoked him to do this, and asks why he would spend his time pursuing someone as insignificant as him.
11. He acknowledges his sin in being hostile to David and asks him to return to him.
12. He entrusts himself to the LORD's justice, recognizes that the LORD is the one who delivered Saul into his hand, and affirms his trust in God's ability to deliver him from all distress.
13. He is the one who deals with our enemies as He delivers His people from trouble.
14. Just as Saul couldn't harm David, so Jesus' enemies couldn't harm Him until the appointed time.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Allow the group to discuss.

### Memorize

The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the LORD's anointed.

I Samuel 26:23