

# STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California

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by

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1 Samuel 29, 30 Lesson #18 August 12, 1979

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We are continuing to look at David in light of I John 2:15-17.

**Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.**

"Lust" here is simply a strong passionate desire for either good or evil. In the context above it is for evil. There are normally three avenues of attack in temptation. First, the lust of the flesh. The "flesh" here obviously means the physical body, because all three of them are the "flesh" in the ethical sense. So the normal attack from temptation will come through the physical processes in life. In David's case it was simply his desire "to preserve his life." He says in I Samuel 27:1, "...Now, I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me..." So a basic natural desire to preserve his physical life drives David away from Judah, where he knows he belongs, into the hands of the Philistines where he has something to offer. He has 600 armed men, well experienced in guerrilla warfare. Achish has suffered a loss at the hands of Saul and would love to replenish his army with these trained men.

Second: the lust of the eyes, possession of material things. David has an opportunity, now, to really start making hay. All his life he has been poor. His dowry for Michal, the daughter of Saul, the king of Israel, was 100 foreskins of the Philistines. He could afford nothing more. With 600 armed men and the city of Ziklag, he can assault the wandering tribes to the south of the Philistine country. They are nomadic. They live by booty and plunder themselves. They are Amalekites, Geshurites, Gezrites, and they wander back and forth across the Sinai peninsula between Arabia and Egypt. They have no permanent residence and can be attacked and destroyed without a trace. He makes a number of incursions down there, raiding these tribes, slaughtering man, woman, child, even babies, leaving no trace and he becomes quite wealthy in the process.

Third: the pride of life. Achish thinks he is a very loyal subject and is out attacking the tribes of Judah, since he says he is. He has been deceiving his feudal lord Achish and getting away with it for 16 months. By now he is a little god in his own eyes, really Mr. Big. For the first time in 10 long years he has acceptance; he has victory; he has power; he has prestige; he has status; he has everything. It's a lot smaller scale perhaps than being King of Israel, but he is Mr. Big. He is loaded, and he is preserving his life.

Now God begins to move in redemption. God's redemption is to allow us to reap the "the wrath of God," which is his settled abhorrence of sin. He allows us to reap, in our life, the effects of our rebellion. So here he allows David to be trapped. David has become a hero in the eyes of Achish, the feudal lord, the king of Gath of the Philistines. When the Philistines decide to make a massive incursion into Israelite country by going way

up north, cutting across below the Lake of Galilee and chopping Israel in half, Achish says to David, "I'm going to take you with me." Boy, old David's heart begins to flutter and he almost has cardiac arrest. Ever deceitful he says, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do," a nice broad diplomatic answer that says nothing.

Well, Achish takes it as a positive response from David meaning, "I'll go up there and I'll fight my best for you." So Achish replies, "You know what I'll do? I'll make you my personal bodyguard for life," which totally destroys David's whole future. If he is the king's bodyguard, he can't live in Ziklag. He has to go live in the city of Gath, under the king's eyes. He has to go with the king to fight the Israelites where he will be sandwiched between Achish's army and the other Lords of the Philistines. So God begins to chip away at this "god" named David and his resources. First thing David does is panic. His strategy has backfired on him.

God's second step in redemption is, to an oriental, the loss of face. God is going to rescue David from his problem, all right, but he is going to rub his nose in the dust.

I Samuel, Chapter 29, verse 1, begins redemptive step 2. God has David panic stricken. He is trapped. He doesn't know what to do. It would appear his only option is to get in the middle of the fight, rebel against his Philistine comrades and become a turncoat. Mind you, we are talking about God's anointed king over Israel. The Philistines are uncircumcised pagans, enemies of God, and God is now going to humiliate David in front of them.

I Samuel, 29:1:

**Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek** [which is about 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem on the coastal plains] **while the Israelites were camping by the spring which is in Jezreel** [up north about 30 miles southwest of Galilee. In other words the two armies are gathered together about 40-50 miles apart. One on the plain. One up in the mountains. The Philistines are going to come sweeping up just below Galilee and assault the Israelites. The Israelites having a lesser force and being more lightly armed, want the Philistines in the mountains where they have the advantage] **And the lords of the Philistines were proceeding on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were proceeding on in the rear with Achish.** [The Philistines were an oligarchy not a monarchy. There were five lords who ruled over the country. Each one had his own capitol city. Achish had Gath. There was one at Gaza, one at Ashkelon, one at Ashdod and one at Ekron. Normally they each ran their own little territory but on occasion, they united for military and self-preservation purposes. This was one of those occasions. Israel had been disintegrating while Saul wasted his time chasing David. Now thousands of Philistines were moving up the coastal plain to gather into a vast army and move against the Israelites. David, as part of Achish's army, was at the head of the army surrounding the king, so thousands of Achish's men were behind him. Also thousands upon thousands of the men of the other four Lords were ahead of him. He was boxed in with nowhere to go. He couldn't just suddenly fade away.] **Then the commanders of the Philistines** [The field commanders] **said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years,** [Achish even exaggerates to protect his friend David who has only been there a year and four months] **and I have found no fault in him from the day he deserted to me to this day?** [Notice that the "flesh" of Achish is a lot nicer than the "flesh" of David. Achish is really quite a delightful chap from a pagan standpoint. He totally trusts David. He obviously has a deep love for David and even lies a little for him.] **But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man go back, that he may return to his place where you have assigned him** [Which, of course, is way down at the end of Philistine country, as far from the battle as possible. They don't want David anywhere near the battle.] **and do not let him go down to battle with us, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For with what could this man make himself acceptable to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of these men?**

This is very interesting. The Philistines don't trust David as far as they can hurl the Rock of Gibraltar and with good reason. You will remember in I Samuel 14, just a few years earlier, when Jonathan assaulted and pursued the Philistines, the Hebrew mercenaries in the Philistine army turned on their masters, joined the Israelites and began slaughtering Philistines. The Philistines could see exactly the same thing happening again.

And secondly, "lest in the battle he become an 'adversary'," the word in Hebrew for Satan. In the context here, it is a perfect picture of Satan.

Satan appears like one of us, on our side, until the crucial time, when he will turn on us and butcher us. Paul says he appears as an "angel of light" and a "minister of righteousness." He never says, "I am Satan; I am adversary, or I am the Devil; I am a liar." He may even appear in public in a lovely robe or a reverse collar. He may bring that three-part message, read the text, depart from the text, and never return to the text. He will not look evil. We prayed today for a young fellow, a very dear Christian friend of mine, who is down the tube right now. What took him down the tube was nothing that looked evil, but it has gripped him and he cannot break loose. Satan never looks bad. He always looks good. He offers you something you need, and want, and he knows it. He did it with Eve and he did it with Adam. He has just done it with David. David needed security from Saul. He was tired of being poor and needed money. He needed status. He needed self-worth. Satan said, "Stick with me. Let's go to Achish. He'll appreciate you." And Achish did. He gave David Ziklag where he became a Big Man on Campus. But now, he is boxed in and is going to have to fight the armies of the God of Israel. David is the anointed king of the armies of the God of Israel, and now he is on the opposing side from Jehovah. How did he get there? He is wondering that himself. The pagan Philistines seem to have a sense of honor that the flesh of David does not have, nor the flesh of the Jews for that matter. There is no way out for David except, as I said, to become a turncoat when he gets close to the Israelite lines. The Philistines can smell a rat, though, and they quote the proof text, David's favorite song.

I Samuel, 29:5

**Is this not David of whom they sing in the dances, saying, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?"**

David wants to play both sides of the street. He wants to be a hero in Israel slaying Philistines. Now he wants to be a hero in Philistine country supposedly killing Israelites.

Who else had the same problem about a thousand years before? One of God's great men, Abraham. And how many times did it happen to Abraham? Twice. And who were the kings? Pharaoh, king of Egypt and Abimelech, king of Gerar of the Philistines. In both cases these men had a higher standard of honor than Abraham did. God has given light to the pagans. There is a standard of justice among the pagans, and there are honorable men among the pagans. That is not enough for salvation, but there are some very fine pagans. You see this in Achish. Achish may be a pagan, and he may be a cruel Philistine, but the Philistines had a very high culture, don't forget. They are not a bunch of aborigines. They came out of the Aegean area through Crete down to Egypt. They fought the Egyptians and were driven up to the coastal plain of what is now the Gaza Strip. At least from their standpoint, they also apparently had a very high moral standard, well, honorable standard anyway. Their gods were abominable, Dagon, Ashtoreth and Baal, but their personal integrity, in spite of this black religious background, was phenomenal, and once they went to David, they stayed with David until the end, as I described in Lesson #17. They honored their word. David surrounded himself with Philistines not Jews.

OK, God has humiliated him. Now comes the guilt trip.

I Samuel, 29:6

**Then Achish called David and said to him, "As Yahweh lives [Boy, that must have struck David right in the heart. He hasn't called on Yahweh for months] you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army are pleasing in my sight; for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day [What has David been doing for the last 16 months? Just exactly the opposite. He has been shafting Achish. He has been deceiving Achish. He has been butchering babies to hide his sin. He has been an evil man, a deceitful man and Achish comes up with Yahweh, David's God. The guilt must begin to weight a little heavy about now] Nevertheless you are not pleasing in the sight of the lords. [You are pleasing in my sight, but not in the sight of the lords] Now therefore return, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."**

One of the troubles with deceit is that even when you begin to feel guilt, there is no easy way out. You find you must keep on deceiving in order to work your way out. Liars need brilliant memories. Truth you can put in the air and forget it. If it comes out partial truth, it still ends up justified as truth. But deceit, no! You have to remember all the details. Poor David is caught here. Now he has to keep on deceiving and the guilt is getting pretty heavy. He can't agree to return. He must object somewhat in order to keep his poise, if he is loyal, yet not too strongly lest Achish change his mind and keep him up front. So he gives another of his famous mean nothing answers.]

I Samuel 29:9:

**And David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant from the day when I came before you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"**

What had David told Goliath of Gath 15 years back? He told him he was fighting against God and "the armies of the living Lord." Here David is talking about those same armies as being enemies of God. He is having to carry on his deceit, down, down, farther and farther. So he makes this kind of vague statement. He also probably wants to find out, with probably a little deceit here too, just how much Achish really knows. He is beginning to have some real struggle with guilt by now. Here God sticks it to him worse.

I Samuel, 29:9

**But Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are pleasing in my sight like an angel of God; [He didn't have to say that. That is a Hebrew idiom spoken of persons who are wonderful and gracious. It means you are like God in prudence and wisdom. David is neither prudent nor wise right now. He has been practicing evil for 16 months and all his wisdom has backfired and squeezed him into a sandwich.] nevertheless the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us to the battle.' Now then arise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you, and as soon as you have arisen early in the morning and have light, depart." ["The Philistines don't want you in camp any longer than necessary. As soon as it becomes daylight get out of here." He is totally rejected.] So David arose early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.**

David goes back home in humiliation, but I suspect deep inside he is rejoicing a little, "Well, I got out of it and once again I made it." However, God has something waiting for him. He is dealing with the problem. First David's pride and now he has to deal with the problem of David's possessions, the lust of the eyes. There is also the problem of David's self-sufficiency regarding his personal security. By the way, it is interesting the depth at which God is operating. When David took the trip from Ziklag at the very foot of the Philistine country to Apek at the very top of the Philistine country, he got a perfect picture of the geography where he will later fight. And the personal bodyguard of Achish sat in on the tactical, strategic maneuvers of the Philistines. So he learned both about their attack strategy and also about the kind of country in which he would later be fighting. And God brings him back now to bring the Philistines under subjection. So God does redeem something out of the situation even though he had to bring David back in humiliation.

Now David, still walking in the flesh, let's see what happens to him.

I Samuel, 30:1:

**Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire. [Their loot is gone. Their homes are gone. Everything is gone.] and they took captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, [Of course, David, doesn't know that yet] and carried them off and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep. Now David's two wives have been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Camelite.**

Having dealt with the "Pride of Life," God now deals with the lust of the eyes, and through the burning of Ziklag, totally wipes out the property of David and his men. David begins now to feel much like the Amalekites, the Geshurites and the Gezrites must have felt as he raided and butchered them. The thing that began to get him was the lust of the flesh, the desire to preserve his life by his own means instead of trusting God. We look at that in verse 6

I Samuel, 30:6

**Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters.**

Up to now, David has been taking credit for his wisdom in escaping Saul's pursuit of him. He's responsible for their being down in Ziklag where they are making themselves rich. David thinking he has wiped out the Amalekites and that the city of Ziklag is quite safe, takes most of his men with him up north. There are very few left in camp, so few, as a matter of fact, that the Amalekites can overwhelm them without having to kill anyone. There was no defence of the city. The Amalekites took everything, men, women, children, all the spoils. They, by the grace of God, were so greedy, instead of vindictive, that they took the women and children to sell as slaves in Egypt rather than butcher them as David had been doing to them.

Now totally wiped out, David displays the difference between himself and Saul. Last part of verse 6.

I Samuel 30:6b

**But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

Even though he does all kinds of dastardly deeds, one of the marks you see all the way through David's life is that when the finger is on him, when the pressure comes down on him, he always turns to God. The beautiful part about it is there is immediate restoration.

I Samuel 30:7

**Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." [The one with the Urim and the Thummim, the lights and the perfections, from which you get a yes or no answer from God] So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of the Lord saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" [He asks two questions right off the bat] And He [God] said to him, "Pursue, [#1 answer Go. #2] for you shall surely overtake them and [#3] you shall surely rescue all."**

That final question was probably a question David did not want to ask. He had ask two questions in a row, and he had gotten two yes answers, so he mustered enough courage to ask the third. This one was really critical "What about the people? Have they done to our people what we did to their people?" God says, "No, you will rescue them all." There is something interesting here. What is lacking in the way God deals with David? David has turned from God and gone away from His presence for 16 months. He repents because he is driven to his knees. He's belly up looking at the sky. What does God not do when David turns to him? What would I do if my children had behaved this way to me? Yeah! "I told you so. OK, now these are the new terms I'm laying down. You have my acceptance and my forgiveness, but this and this and this will be the requirements from now on." What does God do? He accepts David totally, completely, immediately with no terms; no terms. That is a gracious God. Then David obeys.

I Samuel 30:9

**So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him...**

I won't go through this whole passage, but as he pursued the Amalekites, David ran into an Egyptian slave of theirs who was sick and had been left behind to die. David restored him with food and water, and this Egyptian led them to the camp of the Amalekites. We pick up the story in verse 16.

I Samuel 30:16

**And when he [the Egyptian slave] had brought him [David] down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing [David is way up in Philistine country. We are way down here, who needs guards?] because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. And David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.**

The sun at twilight is right on the horizon. You can't see anything when you are driving a car. It is totally blinding. Anything coming right out of the sun could hit you and you wouldn't even see it. David is no fool when it comes to fighting. He just waits on the western side until the sun gets down in their eyes and then right out of that sunlight he comes. He hits them with a night assault and butchers them until the very next day. 24 hours he spends butchering the Amalekites.

In Exodus 17:14-16, God tells Moses "I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" Then Moses says, "The Lord has sworn; the Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." The Amalekites are a picture of the flesh. They attack the nation of Israel as they come out of Egypt and pick off the weak and the sick straggling in the rear. They do this to a God who has just displayed his power and might by bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. They have no fear of Yahweh. So, if the Amalekites are a picture of the flesh, how is it that God had 400 of them escape on camels when he had ordered David and all Israel to blot out their name from under heaven? He had also made the comment that there would be war with Amalek from generation to generation. What does this say about the flesh in this life? Yes! you are never going to eliminate it. You are constantly going to have to fight it. You are going to have war with it from generation to generation. Don't ever, ever kid yourself that you can crucify the flesh once for all. Romans 6 says the flesh has been rendered inoperative (in the original language) not destroyed, not annihilated. That is beautifully picked up in I John 1, verse 5

I John 1:5:

**And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son [keeps on] cleansing us from all sin.**

It says even while I am walking in the light of God, in total and unbroken fellowship with God and with my fellow believers, there are errors in my life because of my immaturity, or my blindness, that are still a stench in the nostrils of God. Don't sweat it though! God will keep on cleansing us as long as we learn to walk in the light. The very next verse says:

I John 1:8:

**If we say that we have no sin, [singular, the sin nature, Adamic nature] ourselves we are deceiving [literally] and the truth is not in us.**

Don't ever kid yourself that the flesh is not always waiting there. You are to fight the flesh the rest of your natural life in the power of the Spirit of God, from generation to generation. Until you go to be with Jesus Christ, there will always be 400 of those fellows on camels getting away for the next time. And if you say you have no old nature anymore, that you have it licked, "yourself you are deceiving", nobody else. Ask your wife or your mother. Don't kid yourself.

We finish with a beautiful passage.

I Samuel 30:18:

**So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives. But nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken for themselves; David brought it all back.**

When God restores and redeems he goes first class. David has spent 16 months in deliberate disobedience to God. The moment he repents and turns back to God, total restoration, total redemption. Now he has scars that will have to work their way out, but the fellowship, the restoration, the access to God, the experience of God in His purity and His power and holiness, is immediately restored. Look at that verse, Chapter 1, verse 9.

I John 1:9:

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and His word is not in us.**

The basis for forgiveness is not penance but repentance, confession. The moment I agree with God, he is faithful; he will always do it, and he is righteous; he has to do it. Christ has paid for that sin. He will forgive me of all my sins and cleanse me from all my unrighteous. Total restoration. Total redemption based upon confession, true confession.

Let me answer a question that was raised concerning the fact that everything was restored and there seemed to be no scars. David got his wives back; he got his children back, and nothing was missing small or great. That is true, but his kids were nowhere. He lost Abigail somewhere along the line to death. His life of rebellion reflected in his children. Every one of his kids, except Solomon, rebelled. Saul's kids, as we will see, go down to death with Saul. At the time David was out there doing his thing, he was drilling into his family deep, deep sin, deep deep rebellion. It comes out down the line and almost gets him killed. You are restored with fellowship, but the scars of sin work their way out.

Next time, now, I want to look at Saul's rebellion and how he handled it. I would like to take I Samuel, 28:3-25 and then I Samuel, 31, the death of Saul.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you for your Word. We thank you for the way it reveals our hearts. Mostly, Father, we thank you for the way it reveals your heart that even though we stray and do it by stupid, stubborn rebelliousness, that you will bring certain things into our lives that may be humiliating and may cost us moments of anguish, but you love us enough and care enough for us that you will hurt us in order to bring us home. Thank you, Father, that your grace will bring us home, and there will be a total restoration. We may have some scars, but we will be totally restored. Thank you for much, Father, for your grace that reaches down to us no matter where we are and no matter what our needs. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

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