

**The Inspiring Story of David Sparing Saul's Life**  
Message 5 of 6 in the series: "Stories to Make Us Bold!"

**A. David became a national hero after he killed Goliath, and Saul became insanely jealous.**

"When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. This was their song: 'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!' This made Saul very angry. 'What's this?' he said. 'They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!' So **from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.**"

1 Samuel 18:6-9 (NLT)

"Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, '...As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. **Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!**'" 1 Samuel 20:30-31 (NIV)

*Warning:* Jealousy is serious sin! "For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find **disorder and evil of every kind.**" James 3:15-16 (NLT)

*Note:* Although David had been anointed Israel's next king and had done nothing wrong, Saul's madness forced him to live as a fugitive. While in hiding, David became the leader of a small army. "So David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. Soon his brothers and all his other relatives joined him there. Then others began coming—men who were in trouble or in debt or who were just discontented—until David was the captain of about 400 men." 1 Samuel 22:1-2 (NLT)

**B. One day, God providentially placed Saul in circumstances that tested David's motives and revealed his character.**

"After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of En-gedi. So, Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats. At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave! 'Now's your opportunity!' David's men whispered to him. 'Today the Lord is telling you, "I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'" So, **David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.** But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. He said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the Lord's anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him.' So, David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul."

1 Samuel 24:1-7a (NLT)

*Life Application:* We need to boldly trust God to providentially guide our lives. "The Lord says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.'" Psalm 32:8-9 (NLT)

*Note:* David could show respect to Saul because he boldly trusted that the Lord who had put Saul in office would remove Saul from office at the right time. "Be still before the Lord and **wait patiently for him; do not fret** when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes... For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land." Psalm 37:7 & 9 (NIV)

*Life Application:* We can show respect for people we didn't vote for because we trust that God is working in ways we cannot comprehend to accomplish more than we can imagine. "Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and **those in positions of authority have been placed there by God... give respect and honor to those who are in authority.**" Romans 13:1 & 7b (NLT)

*Note:* David kept his conscience tender so that he could hear God's voice above all the other voices telling him what to do. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. **Point out anything in me that offends you**, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

**C. Because he trusted God, David boldly came out of hiding and confronted Saul.**

"After Saul had left the cave and gone on his way, David came out and shouted after him, 'My lord the king!' And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him. Then he shouted to Saul, 'Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For

the Lord placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, "I will never harm the king—he is the Lord's anointed one." Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me. May the Lord judge between us. **Perhaps the Lord will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you.** As that old proverb says, "From evil people come evil deeds." So you can be sure I will never harm you... May the Lord therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power! When David had finished speaking, Saul called back, 'Is that really you, my son David?' Then he began to cry. And he said to David, '**You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil.** Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the Lord put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn't do it. Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the Lord reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today. And now I realize that you are surely going to be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will flourish under your rule. Now swear to me by the Lord that when that happens you will not kill my family and destroy my line of descendants!' So, David promised this to Saul with an oath. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went back to their stronghold." 1 Samuel 24:7b-22 (NLT)

**Life Application:** God wants us to love our enemies and boldly trust Him to settle the score with those who have hurt us/done us wrong. "Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, '**I will take revenge; I will pay them back,**' says the Lord. Instead, '**If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.**' Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good." Romans 12:17-21 (NLT) (*Deuteronomy 32:35, Proverbs 25:21-22*)

*Note:* David went back to his stronghold after meeting with Saul because Saul's entire reign had been about appearances rather than doing the right thing. "Then Saul admitted to Samuel, 'Yes, I have sinned. I have disobeyed your instructions and the Lord's command, for I was afraid of the people and did what they demanded. But now, please forgive my sin and come back with me so that I may worship the Lord.' But Samuel replied, 'I will not go back with you! Since you have rejected the Lord's command, he has rejected you as king of Israel.' As Samuel turned to go, **Saul tried to hold him back and tore the hem of his robe.** And Samuel said to him, '**The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else—one who is better than you.**'" 1 Samuel 15:24-28 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 09-17-23 • [john@centeringlives.com](mailto:john@centeringlives.com)

### Connect Group Questions:

Read the inspiring story of David sparing Saul's life. (1 Samuel 24) Then discuss the following questions:

1. Share a time in your life when you were jealous of someone. What did you do about it?
2. Why was Saul so jealous that he wanted to kill David? (1 Samuel 18:5-9 & 20:30-33, James 3:13-16)
3. How did David's faith in God enable him to show respect for King Saul who was out to kill him? (1 Samuel 24:10-12, Psalm 32:8-9 & 37:7-9)
4. How should we treat people in office that we didn't vote for and we don't like? (Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-4) How does our relationship with God help us to do this? (Philippians 2:13)
5. Read Romans 12:17-21, Deuteronomy 32:35, & Proverbs 25:21-22. Share a time in your life when you saw someone intentionally repay evil with good. What happened?
6. When David offered to fight Goliath, David's brother and King Saul said there was no way David could win. When Saul was at David's mercy in the cave, David's men encouraged him to kill Saul. Why didn't David listen either time? How did he know the right way to go? (Psalm 139:23-24, Psalm 18:30-33)
7. Reflect on the following verses:  
"See how many enemies I have and how viciously they hate me! **Protect me! Rescue my life from them!** Do not let me be disgraced, for in you I take refuge. May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you." Psalm 25:19-21 (NLT)

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

“What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.” James 4:1-3 (NLT)