

1 Samuel 24 “When God is Real in our Lives”[\[1\]](#)

Series: “*Learning to Wait on God: The Life of David Before He Became King*”

1 Samuel 16-31

Think about it: How can you tell if God is real in a person's life?

The Lord was real in David's life. David was a man who truly practiced Psalm 89:15, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance." David walked in the light of God's presence. He made his decisions based on what would please God, not by his own feelings or opinions. This is especially apparent in 1 Samuel 24.

Review: In 1 Samuel 23, what happened? David must have felt the world was against him. He protected the city of Keilah , and they turned on him. So did the Ziphites. And Saul hunted him like a wild animal. But David trusted God. From 1 Samuel 23, we learned two key lessons...

1. *David was a man who looked at obstacles as opportunities to glorify God. So must we.*
2. *David's focus was not on getting rid of the trial, but on being God's kind of person in the midst of the trial. That must be our focus, too.*

Now let's take a look at 1 Samuel 24...

I. Consider the Conflict between Saul and David.

We left off last week with Saul leaving David to defend Israel against the Philistines. With that problem alleviated, Saul returns to his evil intent to get David.

A. Saul hunted David (1-2).

1. Where? En Gedi (1)--see map
2. Who helped him? Some informers (1), and 3,000 men (2)

Think of the odds. How many men does David have? 600 (23:13). Saul had 3,000! But David had God on his side, and that makes a majority no matter what the odds!

B. David spared Saul (3-7).

1. Where? In a cave near En Gedi (3)

That must have been some, huge cave! Were all 600 men hiding in the same cave? The text doesn't say. It just says "David and his men were far back in the cave." As we've seen in the story thus far, the number of David's men seems to fluctuate (first it was 400 in 22:2, then 600 in 23:13; perhaps due to their going and coming).

Listen to the following observation about caves in Judah , taken from *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*:

"...Caves in the rocks, in which it is still common for shepherds and their flocks to lodge. Dr. Pococke observes, 'Beyond the valley [of Tekoa,] there is a very large grotto, which the Arabs call El-Maamah, a hiding place: the high rocks on each side of the valley are almost perpendicular; and the way to the grotto is by a terrace formed in the rock, which is very narrow. There are two entrances into it; we went by the farthest, which leads by a narrow passage into a very large grotto, the rock being supported by natural pillars; the top of it rises in several places like domes; the grotto is perfectly dry. There is a tradition, that the people of the country, to the number of 30,000, retired into this grotto, to avoid a bad air. This place is so strong, that one would imagine it to be one of the strong holds of En-gedi, to which David and his men fled from Saul: and possibly it may be that very cave in which he cut off Saul's skirt; for David and his men might, with good ease, lie hid there and not be seen by him.'" ^[2]

Q: What happened? V 3 Saul went in to lit. "cover his feet" (NIV "to relieve himself") (see Judges 3:24--there were no "Road-side Reststops" in Israel !)

Q: How did David spare Saul's life? V 4...

2. How? Instead of cutting Saul's throat, he cut his robe (4)

Q: Why did David spare Saul, according to his words in vv 5-7?

3. Why? Because he feared God more than men (5-7)

Q: What were David's men ready to do, according to v 7? Kill Saul!

Afterwards, Saul left the cave and never even knew what had happened!

C. David confronted Saul verbally (8-15).

This is quite a dramatic scene

Q: What posture did David take before Saul? V 8 "bowed" Why? Out of respect

Q: What did David say to Saul?

1. "Why do you listen to liars?" (9)

2. "Although I had the chance, I did not harm you." (10)

3. "I am not guilty." (11)

4. "May the Lord judge between you and me." (12, 15)

Q: How did David address Saul in v 11? "my father"

Q: What does David refer to in v 13? An ancient proverb (not in the Bible)

D. Saul wavered (16-22).

Q: How did Saul respond?

1. He wept aloud (16).
2. He recognized David's innocence and integrity (17).
3. He acknowledged that God was with David (18).
4. He asks the Lord to reward David (19). Is he sincere?
5. He admits that David will be king (20).
6. He asks David to promise to protect his descendants (21-22).

Discuss: Did Saul really repent? Did he really change?

Saul wavered. He seems to change, but his change will be short-lived. Saul lived by his whims and emotions. He does not exhibit true repentance here.

Discuss: What is true repentance? Is there an imitation repentance? What's the difference? The key is fruit. It's hard to tell the difference when the person is weeping in front of a church by the altar. Tears are not a true measure of whether repentance is genuine. Saul wept (16). It's sad, yet true. There will be more than a few people in hell who wept at altars in front of churches, who never truly repented.

Let's take another look at the story from a different vantage point.

II. Consider the Contrast between Saul and David.

A. Saul knew about God, talked about God, even tried to pacify God.

Saul talked about God. He even called on the Lord to bless David. But what was missing in Saul's life? He did not allow the Lord to make a difference in his own life. He played games with God. He tried to use God. But when all was said and done, who was #1 in Saul's life? God? No. Saul was.

Warren Wiersbe offers this helpful insight: "Saul's persecution of David is an illustration of the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. It also pictures Satan's persecution of the church today: Saul was not the king, yet he was reigning; David was the king, but he was not yet on the throne. Satan seems to be "reigning" today, but Christ is King and one day He will take His rightful throne."^[3]

B. David truly lived the light of God's presence.

Discuss: In what ways is it apparent that God was REAL in David's life?

Q: What does v 4 indicate David had been doing with his 600 men? He had been teaching them about the Lord. He had shared with them the truths God had shared with him. They said, (1 Sam 24:4): "The men said, 'This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe."

This points out the first area...

1. Though he was on the run, and though he could have become bitter and disheartened, David still taught others about God (4).

2. Instead of taking matters in his own hands, David trusted God to take care of things. He could have killed Saul, but he didn't (4).

Q: Why didn't David kill Saul when he had the chance?

3. Whereas Saul's conscience was seared and hardened, David's conscience was sensitive to the presence and will of God (5).

Q: How did David feel after he cut Saul's robe? V 5 "His heart smote him." Contrast that with Saul, who could order 85 priests killed, not bat an eye, and convince himself he was doing right!

Q: How can we keep our conscience pure? Don't compromise in the little things.

4. David truly believed that God would take care of his problems. He determined to let God be the Judge (12).

5. David did not develop a bitter, "get-even" spirit towards Saul. He was willing to forgive him for past hurts, and return good for evil (21-22).

Note: David did not excuse sin. He did not say to Saul, "Oh, let's forget it. What you did to me was no big deal." No, he called what Saul did "wrong" and "evil" (12, 13).

6. The way David viewed God affected the way he viewed himself (14).

Note: Modern psychology would say David had a bad self-esteem, that he had a low view of himself (referred to himself as a "dead dog" and a "flea"). Actually, what he had was not a low view of himself, but a great view of God!

Lessons: What must we do in light of 1 Samuel 24?

1. *We must ask ourselves, "Is God real in my life, or am I going through the motions?"*

2. *We must look at trials from God's perspective, and submit to Him in them.*

3. *When we are wronged by another person, we must commit the matter to God, and resolve to do what's right.*

[1] These are unedited teaching notes used initially for a Wednesday evening Bible study at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . They are provided for your edification as you personally study God's life-changing Word. Pastor Brad Brandt

[2] *The treasury of scripture knowledge : Five hundred thousand scripture references and parallel passages.* 1995. Introduction by R.A. Torrey. (1 Sa 24:3). Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc.

^[3]Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament (1 Sa 22:1)*. Wheaton , IL : Victor Books.