

1 Samuel 31 “Whatever a Man Sows...”[\[1\]](#)

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

1 Samuel 16-31

Finish the statement. Whatever a man sows," We reap what we sow, for good or for bad. Such was the case with both David and Saul. David, by God's grace, resolved to please God no matter what the personal cost. Saul, on the other hand, sought to please himself and paid quite a cost for it.

Tonight we are finishing our series: “*Learning to Wait on God: The Life of David before He Became King*” from 1 Samuel. We began this series back in May in conjunction with our Sunday morning series in the Psalms of David.

Quiz: The Life of David in 1 Samuel

True or False (if the statement is false, write down why it is false)

1. David is the main character in 1 Samuel.
2. The example of Jonathan teaches us that loyalty to God must supersede any other loyalty, including family ties.
3. What made David and Jonathan's friendship so strong was that they had a lot in common.
4. Some of the best lessons in life are learned when we are facing a great trial.
5. Abiathar was the informant who massacred 85 priests at Saul's command.
6. The Ziphites were a self-seeking people who notified Saul of David's whereabouts.
7. David could have killed Saul but he didn't because he trusted God to take care of the situation.
8. Next to Jonathan, Nabal was David's most trusted friend.
9. What made David a great man of God was that he never wrestled with feelings of doubt.
10. David's example teaches us that our goal must not be to try to avoid stress, but to be God's kind of person in the midst of it.

Bonus: God used an abandoned Assyrian servant to direct David to the Amalekite raiders that had taken hostage his family.

1. False--God is.
2. True (ch 19)
3. False--What made it strong was their mutual commitment to the Lord (20:42).

4. True (ch 21)
 5. False--Doeg was (ch 22). Abiathar was the only priest to survive.
 6. True (ch 23)
 7. True (ch 24)
 8. False--Nabal ("fool") was the man who showed ingratitude to David (ch 25).
 9. False--He doubted (ch 27), but he chose to do right regardless of how he felt.
 10. True (ch 29)
- Bonus: False--It was an Egyptian servant (ch 30).

Note: David is not mentioned in ch 31. Chapter 31 is pivotal, for in it David's running comes to an end.

I. Saul's final battle (1-3)

What happened?

A. The Philistines attacked (1).

Q: Where did the battle occur? V 1 Mount Gilboa (see map)

B. The Israelites fled (2-3).

Q: What were the results of the battle?

1. Saul's sons were killed.

Note: Saul did have a fourth son. Who? 2 Sam 3:8 Ish-bosheth

Q: What happened to Saul? V 3

2. Saul was wounded.

Key: Why did the Israelites flee and lose the battle? One, it happened just as Samuel had predicted (28:19). Two, the Philistines had a tactical advantage. What was it acc. to 2 Sam 1:6? Chariots (very effective in warfare in the flat valley of Jezreel).

II. Saul's final breath (4-7)

Watch the fast-paced sequence of events.

A. Saul's armor-bearer disobeyed an order (4).

Q: What was that order? V 4 Kill me before the Philistines torture me.

Q: Why did the man disobey? V 4 Very much afraid

B. Saul took his own life (4).

C. Saul's armor-bearer takes his life (5).

D. The battle results are reviewed (6-7).

1. *Saul died.*
2. *Saul's sons died.*
3. *Saul's armor-bearer died.*
4. *God's people fled.*
5. *The Philistines took over.*

E. Summary: The Tragic Decline in Saul's Life

Saul's life is truly tragic to consider.

1. *A Man with great Potential (9:2)*
2. *Partial obedience (13:9)* He sacrificed which only priests were to do.
3. *Total disobedience--rebellion (15:9)* He spared Agag.
4. *Wrong attitudes develop*
Anger, Fear, Jealousy (ch 18)
5. *Wrong actions follow*
Attempted murder of David and Jonathan (ch 20)
Massacre of Priests (ch 22)
Witchcraft (ch 28)
Suicide (ch 31)

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* says this, "His death by his own hand climaxed a life which had been led in independence of God."

III. Saul's final treatment (8-13)

Notice the contrast between two groups...

A. Saul's treatment by the Philistines (8-10)

Q: What did they do in vv 8-9? While stripping the dead, they found Saul and his sons. They decapitated Saul, and spread the news. Saul had been a problem to them for years. In other words...

1. *They gloated (8-9).*

Key: You can tell a lot about a people by the way they treat their dead.

Q: To whom did the Philistines attribute the victory? V 9 Their gods

2. *They gloried in their false gods (10).*

Q: Who was Ashtaroth? A pagan fertility goddess (?)

Q: Where did they put Saul's body? V 10 Beth Shan (a prominent city on the eastern slopes of Mount Gilboa overlooking the Jordan Valley)

Key: The most tragic thing that happened in ch 31 was that God's name was blasphemed. Yes, the real issue is what has happened to God's reputation and honor...

[Read Dale Ralph Davis, p. 264]

B. Saul's treatment by the people of Jabesh Gilead (11-13).

Q: Where was Jabesh? 10 miles east, across the Jordan River

1. *They jeopardized themselves (11).*

2. *They showed respect to God's servant (12-13).*

Note: David later reburied Saul and Jonathan in Benjamin (2 Sam 21).

Q: Why would the inhabitants of Jabesh have reason to risk their lives for Saul?

Saul's first public deed as king, 40 years earlier, was to rescue Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonites (1 Sam 11). They hadn't forgotten.

Lessons:

1. The men of Jabesh Gilead teach us that:

*We can respect a person's God-given position even though we may disapprove of the person's behavior.

*Giving respect involves more than saying the right words.

2. We don't sin in a vacuum. Our sin affects those around us, even those we love.

Again, *whatever a man sows...*

3. But for the grace of God, we'd all be like Saul.

Discuss: What do we learn about God from this chapter

[\[1\]](#) 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