

1 Samuel 30 “How David Responded to Adversity”[\[1\]](#)

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

1 Samuel 16-31

You can tell a lot about people by the way they respond to adversity. Some folks who seem to be spiritual giants when things are going well fall apart when a trial hits. Others face the raging storm with great calm and confidence in the Lord. What made David such a great man of God was not a lack of hardships in his life, but that he had learned to respond to hardships in a godly way.

Review: Last time we saw in 1 Samuel 29...

I. Hardship #1: David's integrity was attacked (29:1-11).

II. Hardship #2: David's family was attacked (30:1-6).

Lessons:

1. Don't be disheartened by closed doors.
2. Be grateful God doesn't always give us what we think we want.
3. Stressful situations can either destroy us or develop us.
4. Our goal is not to avoid stress, but to be God's kind of person in the midst of it.

The question tonight is this. How did David respond to his hardships? What can we learn from him, and what particularly does 1 Samuel 30 teach us about God? Let's look into God's Word for the answers...

I. David faced a great hardship (1-6).

Don't underestimate the severity of this hardship. How bad was it according to v 4? David and his men wept until they had no more strength to weep. It got so bad that David's men turned on him (6).

Q: How did David make it through this trial, acc to v 6? “But David found strength in the Lord his God” [See quote by Dale Ralph Davis, top of p. 253]

But that wasn't all he did...

II. David sought God's help (7-20).

Q: Who did David call for in v 7? Abiathar

Q: What did David ask him to bring? The Ephod

What's going on? David sought God's help in a specific way...

A. He trusted God for guidance (7-15).

David needed guidance. And God gave it to him, using two means...

1. God used the Ephod (7-8).

The ephod was an apron-like garment that the High Priest wore. The ephod contained the Urim and Thummim, which were two sacred stones used to discern the will of God. William LaSor's *OT Survey* suggests, "The lots (urim) may have been flat disks with 'yes' and 'no' sides. When both agreed the answer was clear. When they disagreed, further guidance was sought (241)." (see also: Ex 28:30; Deut 33:8)

Notice the yes-and-no questions David asked of the Lord in v 8:

"Shall I pursue after this troop?"

"Shall I overtake them?"

What was God's answer? V 8 Go! You'll recover all!

2. God used an abandoned Egyptian (9-15).

David set out with his 600 men. Notice the geography (see map). They left Ziklag and headed south until they came to the brook Basor (20 miles south).

Q: What happened there? Vv 9-10 200 men were too faint to keep going (remember, they had already traveled about 7 days--3 days from Ziklag to Aphek, 3 days back to Ziklag, and at least one day from Ziklag to the Basor)

Recommendation: See pictures of the rugged terrain

Q: What did David's men find in v 11? An abandoned Egyptian

God uses unlikely sources to help his people! In this case God used this man's illness to save David's family as well as his men's.

Q: How bad of shape was this fellow in? V 12 3 days without food and water

Q: What had happened to him? V 13 Got sick and was left to die.

Don't miss that! What does this tell you about the kind of people the Amalekites were? They had little concern for human need. That makes what we'll see next remarkable, that none of David's men's family members were harmed in this ordeal!

Q: When asked if he could lead David to the Amalekites, how does the servant respond, in v 15? Two conditions...

Here's the point. David asked God for guidance, and God guided David. God sovereignly used the ephod and even sickness to lead His servant.

Discuss: What encouragement can this episode offer us?

B. He trusted God for victory (16-20).

Q: Describe the mood of the Amalekites when David found them? V 16 Cocky

Q: What were the results of the battle? V 17

Don't miss two important truths about this victory.

1. David fought, but God gave the victory (17).

Trusting God doesn't mean we sit back in an easy chair. Living a victorious Christian life takes effort, discipline, energy, desire, and commitment. God gives the victory through Jesus Christ, but He expects us to take action in dependence upon Him.

2. The victory was complete (18-19).

Notice the word 'everything' in v 18 [The KJV uses the word 'all.'], and the phrase in v 19, "Nothing was missing."

Discuss: Think about something. Why would God allow them to lose "all" if He was merely going to turn around and give it "all" back to them? What was God doing?

III. David responded to God's help in a godly way (21-31).

What's the godly way to respond to God's glory? Watch David...

A. He gave God the glory for His help (21-25).

Q: What happened when David's men returned to the Besor Ravine in v 22?

Some of David's men wanted to snub the 200 who remained behind.

Q: How does v 22 describe these men? NIV 'troublemakers;' 'wicked men and men of Belial' in the KJV; 'wicked and worthless men' in the NKJV

Notice this. David accepted people the way they were, but he would not tolerate their wicked behavior when it robbed God of the glory due to Him. Notice three ways David gave God the glory for His help.

1. He would not let troublemakers rob God of His glory (21-23).

Q: What did David say in v 23? “No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us.”

Key: Don't miss this. David didn't let a vocal, unspiritual minority make decisions for him or for the rest of the group. How did he make his decisions? He made his decisions based on what was right, and what would bring glory to God.

2. He taught selfish men how to please God (24).

Q: David asserted his leadership. He made an administrative decision. What? V 24

David functioned with a theology of grace, whereas the troublemakers operated by a philosophy of works. [Read Dale Ralph Davis's observation on p. 257]

3. He learned a lesson which he applied the rest of his life (25).

One of our problems is that we fail to learn from the past. David learned a lesson here from this situation God allowed in his life, and he took that lesson with him to the kingship.

Q: What did David do when he got back to Ziklag? V 26

B. He encouraged others to glorify God for His help (26-31).

How? With two actions...

1. He shared gifts with them (26).

Q: Who did David send the gifts to? V 26 The elders of Judah

Q: Who had the Amalekites plundered? V 14 Those in Judah

Key: David is returning goods to people who had been robbed!

Note: He sent packages to people in at least 13 cities (vv 27-31). Remember something. David could have harbored bitterness. After all, where were all these "friends" when David needed them during the past 10 years of running from Saul? He could have thought, "You turned your back on me when I needed you, so why should I return the spoils to you now?" But he didn't.

Key: People that please God don't let wrongs from the past fester and produce anger and bitterness in them.

Lesson: An important way to diffuse anger is seen in David's example. He did something good for those towards whom he could have been bitter (see: Rom 12:21 "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.")

2. He prompted them to focus on the Lord (26).

Lessons:

- 1. Our aim must not be to avoid hardships, but to respond to them in a godly way.*
- 2. We can know that no matter how bleak the situation, God is still in control.*
- 3. Never forget that hardships are opportunities for God to bring glory to Himself.*

[\[1\]](#) 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